

# The Experienced Traveller

by Mike Ferguson

The one thing I was disappointed with in *Traveller* was the lack of any suitable substitute for experience. Once your character has been diced for, the only thing he can do is earn enough money to allow himself to sink gracefully into senile decay. The limited self improvement given in Book 2 is both time and money consuming, and I have not yet had a player in my campaign willing to sacrifice so much for what is really so little.

It seems obvious to me that continued use of a skill over one's lifetime will naturally improve it. This first article is about continued improvement of skills already possessed by the character.

First I will deal with improvement of combat skills. As in D&D the rate of improvement is directly proportional to the amount of personal risk taken. Unlike D&D, experience points are not gained directly, so, barring death, improvement is certain. But at the end of every combat situation a percentage chance of improvement can be calculated from what has happened in the battle. This chance may be expressed as twice the number of melee rounds fought with that particular weapon, minus the present level of skill in using that weapon. An example is probably the best way of showing how these figures are used:

Capt. Carlton Fisk RB (ret.), was walking home one evening after dark, when he was waylaid in an alleyway by three ruffians armed with blades. Drawing his cutlass (in which he has a skill of level 2) he proceeds to lay into them, as it were. After 10 melee rounds he has knocked one robber unconscious, but due to wounds he is no longer able to use the cutlass effectively, so dropping it he pulls out his dagger (in which he has a skill level 1). In the next 7 melee rounds he succeeds in killing one robber and K.O.-ing the last of his attackers. Wiping his dagger clean he puts it away and proceeds to drag the bodies of his assailants into the shadows. However, while he is attempting this the first victim whom he K.O.ed suddenly regains consciousness and tries to grapple with our hero. Having no weapon immediately available, Capt. Fisk delivers two mighty blows to his opponent with the last of his failing strength and once more renders him oblivious to his surroundings.

The chances of him increasing his skills in his various combat weapons abilities are as follows — for the cutlass it is  $10 \times 2 - 2 = 18\%$ ; for the dagger the chance is  $7 \times 2 - 1 = 13\%$ ; and for brawling it is  $2 \times 2 - 0 = 4\%$ . At the end of combat roll percentile dice for each skill and if the score equals or is below the required percentage then an additional layer of skill is attained. Simple, isn't it?

Gun combat skills are slightly harder to deal with. I think

the best way to show this is to allow a 2% cumulative chance per hit of gaining an extra level of skill (minus, of course, the present level of skill). The roll must be done at the end of combat and cannot be carried forward to the next melee.

For non-combat skills the method is similar. Some skills of course cannot be increased even by constant use and these will be mentioned at the end.

## PILOTING

The chance for gaining an extra skill is 1% cumulative per successful flight, +5% for such manoeuvres as skimming gas giants for fuel, also cumulative. Additional supplements may be added for complex manoeuvres during space battles at the SM's discretion, if an error is made in flight, such as an over-jump or collision, then the percentage chance accumulated up to that point is reduced immediately to zero and the player must begin again. A player may roll at any time he chooses. This may be after only 10 percentage points have been accumulated or he may decide to risk the possibility of a mistake occurring and attempt to gain 100 percentage points to be sure of gaining the next skill level.

## GAMBLING

For each 500,000 cr. won there is a 10% minus the present skill level chance of gaining an additional level. This chance is non-cumulative, i.e. roll separately for each 500,000 cr. won. For each 100,000 cr. lost (net) there is a 2% cumulative chance of losing a skill level of gambling. Roll for this, where applicable, at the end of each gambling spree.

## BRIBERY

Depending on the risks taken, there is a 1–5% cumulative chance that another level is gained. However, if the bribe is not accepted then twice the percentage chance that would have been gained had the bribe been accepted, is in fact lost.

*Example:* A character with a level 2 skill in bribery succeeds in bribing three policemen for minor law infringements (1%) each, four petty officials to help speed up cargo inspections (2% each), a customs officer to miss a few watches and other small items he is smuggling (3%), and a high court judge to acquit him of a major law infringement (5%). His present chance of gaining an extra level is 16% (18%–2% for present skill level).

## FORGERY

For each successfully forged document there is a 2–5% cumulative chance of gaining another level (depending on the complexity of the forgery) if a forged document is detected twice the experience that would have been gained is lost.

## AIRCRAFT

For each use of duration two hours or longer in unfamiliar territory there is a 1% cumulative chance of gaining an extra skill level. For each flight of duration thirty minutes or longer in decidedly hostile territory there is a 3% cumulative chance.

As with piloting, if a mistake is made then the experience accumulated so far is lost.

**A.T.V.** As above.

## SHIP'S BOAT

There is a 1% cumulative chance per flight, plus extras at the SM's discretion for hostile conditions, that another skill level will be reached.

## COMPUTER

Cumulative percentage chances equal to the cost of the programme, with a minimum of 1%, are gained with each successful new programme used. If an error is made, then, as lives are certain to be at risk due to the error the accumulated experience so far is lost.

## MECHANICAL

For each month spent in employment using this skill there is a 1% cumulative chance of reaching the next level. For each major repair there is an additional 2–5% to be added at the SM's discretion.

**ELECTRONIC** See above.

**ENGINEER** See above.

## NAVIGATION

For each successful trip there is a 1% cumulative chance of gaining an additional level of skill. In an overjump is made and the navigator does not find out the present location of the ship within six hours then his experience is reduced to zero. If he does find the ship's location within that time he gains an additional 5% to add to his accumulated experience so far.

To find the location of an overjumped ship, the navigator must roll 12 on two dice with DM's of +1 for each level of skill above the first. He may roll once per hour but after six hours of continuous work on this he must rest for six hours or suffer DM's of -1 per hour after the sixth hour until he does rest.

## GUNNERY

As with guncombat.

## STEWARD

For each month aboard a ship there is a 1% cumulative chance of reaching the next skill level provided stewardship is the only category in which the character serves.

## MEDICAL

For each month served aboard a ship in this capacity only or in a job requiring at least 80% medical work there is a 2% chance of reaching the next level. Additional plusses may be given at the SM's discretion for any major or out of the ordinary doctoring that is done. For levels 3 and higher after the required roll on the percentile dice is made at least one month must be spent at a medical centre at the end of which an exam will be taken. This exam requires a roll of 9+ to pass with DM's of +1 if social level above 8 or education above 9, and +2 if intelligence is above 9. If the exam is failed then although the required level of skill has been reached it is not recognised by the medical authorities. The exam may be retaken within three months of first taking it. If it is failed a second time then the newly gained level is lost and the player must begin to collect experience again. The first exam costs 750 cr. and the retake 150 cr.

## VACC-SUIT

For each successful prolonged use (more than one hour) there is a 1% cumulative chance of gaining the next skill level. For each successful repair there is an additional 3%.

## STREETWISE

This is one of the more unusual skills and can be gained by any character with an intelligence of 7 or more at a chance equal to half that he would have accumulated had he already developed the skill. If the skill is possessed there is a 10% cumulative chance for each new culture in which he spends at least one month mixing with normal natives he will be able to gain the new skill level. A temporary streetwise skill, equivalent to getting to know the right people, may be developed with respect to a single culture. This is equal to 1 level every four months spent living in the culture without a break of more than one week every two months. This new level will apply to that culture only and in any other culture the original level still applies. For each two months spent away from the culture one of the temporary skill levels is lost.

It should be remembered that even in real life, experience accumulated this way, without any sort of formal training, takes time. This is why the percentages are so small. If you feel they are too small then by all means make them larger. Although I have not said this in each case, subtract the present skill level from the earned experience before rolling the dice. Unless otherwise specified the player may roll for the next level whenever he chooses. If the character's life or lives of his friends are threatened or lost as a direct result of a mistake by him in a field in which he has earned experience, then due to him losing confidence in himself all experience gained so far is lost.

I feel that the following skills are either too nebulous or are not used frequently enough to deal with in a similar manner to the other skills. They are Administration, Leadership, Tactics and Forward Observer.

Next time I shall complete the article by dealing with how characters can gain new skills and increase their requisites. So until then, happy Travelling.



... at last the long-awaited **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook** has been released and is available on both sides of the Atlantic. **TSR** have also released six **Dungeon Modules** which are ready-made dungeons of varying levels and, lastly, **Gamma World** a boxed science fantasy role-playing game of survival on post-atomic Earth...

... three new games from **Chaosium**. **Lords of the Middle Sea** is a futuristic game of land and sea warfare in post-holocaust America, in **King Arthur's Knights** players, as knights, through jousts etc., earn their place at the Round Table. **Runequest** is a rulebook for role-playing based on **White Bear & Red Moon**...

... from **Fantasy Games Unlimited** comes the first of the planned expansions to **Chivalry & Sorcery** entitled **Swords & Sorcerers** which covers Vikings, Mongols, Gauls, Picts and Celts. **Homes & Hovels** and **Towers for Tyrants** are 25mm scale, three dimensional components for building towns, villages and castles. **Dragonlords** is a two player game of conflict between two wizards using magic, economics and warfare...

... new from **Judges Guild** comes **Citadel of Fire** which is another ready-made dungeon, **War Cry** and **Battle Lust** is a simple set of mass action Ancients rules, and **Sea-Steeds** and **Wave Riders** to solve the problems of water transportation...

... **Game Designers' Workshop** have released their first supplement to **Traveller** entitled **1001 Characters**, and it is exactly that...

... three new companies have recently emerged with differing products. **Dimension Six** manufacture boxed games and have two space games called **Second Empire** and **Dimension Six**. **Legacy Press** publish a set of rules entitled **Legacy** for role assumption simulations. **Conflict Interaction Associates** have produced a set of postal rules for computer moderated games entitled **Pellic Quest**...

... **Imperium Publishing** continue to expand their EPT material with two new releases. **The Book of Ebon Bindings** concerns the demons of **Tekumel** whilst **The Armies of Tekumel Volume 1 - Tsoyanu** is a detailed description of those armies with statistics...

... **Phoenix Games** have released a very interesting and novel game entitled **Elementary Watson**, a role-playing detective game...

... it is almost impossible to keep up with the new miniature figure releases and rather than try to mention them all, we suggest you take a look at **Molten Magic**...

... people await the film of **Lord of the Rings** with mixed feelings as everybody has their own image of the characters. Nevertheless, it is to be released in the States on November 15th, but will not appear in the UK until Spring...

... there will be two guests of honour at **Games Day IV** on October 28th - **Scott Bizar** of **Fantasy Games Unlimited** and **Glenn Kidd** of **Ral Partha**...

... if all goes according to plan, there should be a half page article on SF/F games in the **Observer Colour Supplement** on October 22nd...

... latest zine releases are **Dungeoneer No 8**, **Illusionist's Vision No 2** and **Underworld Oracle No 6**...





# The Experienced Traveller

## Part II

by Mike Ferguson



t the back of Book 2 in *Traveller* two pages are spent detailing how a character may increase skills already possessed, or temporarily increase his combat requisites (strength, endurance and dexterity). What it basically boils down to is if you spend 8 years training you can increase a skill by +1. Even then there is only a 40% chance that your character will be able to stick the course (8+ on 2D6). Although the book does not say it, presumably you can do other things during those 8 years and just attend a regular refresher course – a sort of night school. Whatever happened to good old full time education? In the *Traveller* universe it seems to be ignored once you reach the age of 18.

Last issue I presented methods of increasing skills already possessed by continuous use. That part was fairly straight forward and can be applied to most SM's universes. This time I shall describe ways of gaining new skills through various means of full and part time education. This means that the methods are purely subjective and depend very much on how the SM has decided to run his universe. What I am providing here is merely notes and ideas for you to adapt as you see fit to your particular campaign.

First of all I'll deal with the hard slog method of enrolment at a school or university and spending 5 days a week learning the subject(s) desired. This should take a relatively short time depending on the number being learned. Assume that up to four subjects can be studied at one time as long as they are fairly compatible (see *Table 1* below).

**Table 1**

I	II	III	IV
Piloting	Computing	Admin	Medic
Ship's Boat	Navigation	Steward	(count as
Air/Raft	Electronics	Leadership	two
Vacc Suit	Mechanics	Tactics	choices)
	Engineering		

Taking combinations of subjects in the same column should be relatively easy. It should be possible, though more difficult, to take subjects from two columns. (Remember we are dealing with, or may be dealing with, university or college equivalents with planned curricula and usually only those courses that are relatively popular will be available – I suggest a roll of 7+ on 2D6 to see if a choice is possible). Choices from three columns should be hard to accommodate (12+) and should usually only be available through private education.

The time taken for such education should also depend on the number of courses being taken. Assume that the university or college operates all year round and that there are regular 3 month examinations in each subject, and when you pass an exam it means you are qualified in that subject at level 1. See *Table II* below for the length of time a course should take and the basic scores on 2D6 needed to pass.

Allow the following modifications. Intelligence 8+ = DM +1. Education 8+ = DM +1 except for those subjects which require an education of 8+ to take in the first place (see *Book 1* page 11). Intelligence 5- = DM -1; Education 5- = DM

-1. Also roll 3D6 and consult *Table III* for further modifications due to attitude to study.

**Table II**

No. of subjects taken	Length of Course	Score needed to pass each Exam.
1	6 months	5+
2	9 months	6+
3	12 months	6+
3	9 months	7+
4	12 months	7+

**Table III**

Die roll	Effect	DM
3	Only here for the social life	-3
4	Only here for the beer	-2
5-6	Doesn't work hard at all (optionally extend course by 6 months or suffer DM)	-1
7	Still doesn't like hard work but not as bad as before (optionally extend course by 3 months or suffer DM)	-1
8-13	Perfectly average student	none
14-15	Hard working	+1
16	Very hard working – reduce length of course by 3 months	+1
17	Burns the midnight oil – reduce length of course by 3 months	+2
18	Takes to courses like a duck to water. Half length of course. Also when taking exams any natural roll of 11 or 12 means that he has qualified at a skill level of +2 in that subject	+3

Having obtained a skill level of 1 in the required ability the character can now go on to increase his skill through continued use, as outlined last issue, or spend more time at college training to higher levels. For skills above +1 I would suggest that no more than 2 subjects be taken at one time and that the length of time increases rapidly with the skill level, eg. +2 = 18 months, +3 = 48 months (+3 Medic is equivalent to a doctor which requires 5 or 6 years at present day standards).

Of course the details given here are assuming that the education methods are not much different from present day methods. We can assume that technologies of the future will probably develop much better teaching aids than are available to us today. I shall include here a short section on educational aids developed for use in my campaign. Once again the use of these methods, and their availability is purely subjective – you may not even have such methods in your universe.

There are two main types available. They are:

(a) *Hypnotapes*: the subject goes into periodic trances while details of the necessary information are fed into his mind. Hypnotape technology starts in worlds of Technological level 7, where applied use of tapes will halve the time taken to study a course and give an exam DM of +1, to Technological level 12 hypnotapes where 24 hrs application will give you a skill level of +1.

(b) *RNA*: the subject is given regular doses of RNA which has the same effect as various hypnotapes. The advantages of RNA are (i) any skill, including combat skills can be learned, and not just those listed on *Table 1*, which are all hypnotapes will cover, and (ii) there is no theoretical limit to the skill level to which RNA can raise you. However, I have ruled that there is a practical limit of +3, although higher levels can be researched. Technology for RNA should begin around level 12, and end at about level 15 or 16.

The second sort of education available is apprenticeship. Here you can be taken on as an apprentice in a trade that can teach you the skill you want. Any non-combat skills can usually be learned here at least to level +1. 'Free Trader' type ships are the best to enroll with as the types of skills they need and use cover nearly all the skills found on the table in *Book 1*. (The only exceptions I can think of would be Admin, Tactics and Forward Observer and these aren't the most popular skills anyway).

Apprenticeship should be for a number of voyages or years (although I can imagine that any 'bright' pupil would be quite welcome to stay on as a full member of the crew of most 'Free Trader' ships). For every 3 voyages or 6 months roll two dice to see if the character has learned his 'trade'. To succeed in this a score of 8+ must be rolled. However, add to the score +1 for every skill level of the person teaching the character and any DMs generated on *Table IV* below.

**Table IV**

Score		DM
2	Uncommunicative person, very poor teacher	-2
3 - 5	Poor teacher, does not put ideas over well	-1
6 - 8	Average teacher	none
9 - 11	Good teacher	+1
12	Excellent teacher	+2

Of course the player should not know (except possibly by rumour) what sort of teacher his 'boss' is. More than one subject may be taken at a time and if this is done add an extra two months or one voyage for each extra skill being learned to a maximum of 4 skills (1 year or 6 voyages).

One advantage of apprenticeships over universities or colleges is the cost. Fees are very expensive for universities, while a favourable reaction will result in the apprentice being paid a wage. However, apprenticeships do turn out to be unreliable and can be terminated by the 'employer' at any time.

Some skills, such as gambling, will require only a short time to master at level 1. Allow, say, five weeks hard study minus 1 week for each level of the tutor. For this skill, apprenticeship or universities are not needed, merely a willing teacher.

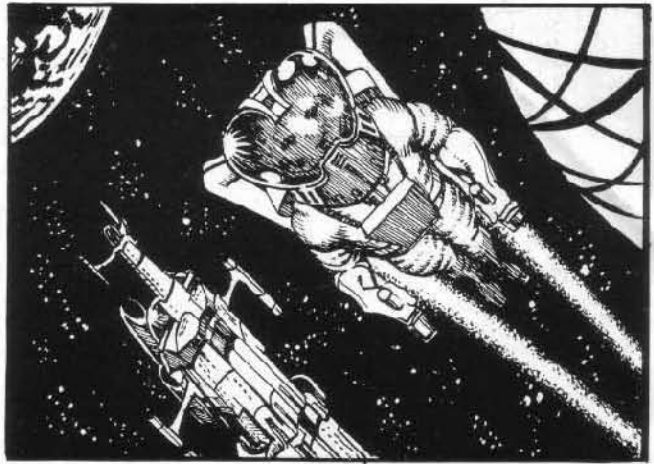
Similar ideas also apply to combat skills. In fact a good swordsman may even set up an official fencing school to teach blade combat and there may be marksman's clubs to learn gun combat. Usually 'legal' lessons in weapons specifically used for combat will be available only through private tutors (this is where streetwise skills come in handy in locating tutors) but weapons used for 'sport' will be quite easy to be taught the use of. (It all depends on the law level of the planet). For combat skills allow 10 weeks minus 1 week for every skill level of the teacher to reach level +1, 6 months to reach level +2 and 18 months to reach level +3.

Another thing about combat skills is once you've learned to use a sword it's not too difficult to use a foil, and firing a revolver is not too different from firing a body pistol. In *Table V* below I have listed the weapons available in *Book 1* into groups. Once you have learned the use of one weapon in a group then you will be able to use any of the others in the same group at a skill level of half the skill in the particular weapon you are specialising in (round half levels down).

**Table V**

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Dagger	Foil	Spear	Body Pistol	Carbine	SMG	Shotgun
Blade	Cutlass	Halberd	Auto Pistol	Laser Carbine		
Cudgel	Sword	Pike	Revolver	Laser Rifle		
	Broadsword	Bayonet	Carbine	Auto Rifle		

Finally we get to the increase in requisites. Theoretically it should be impossible to make a person stronger, or more dextrous, or give him greater endurance without undergoing major surgery. Yet any of the forces you can join will increase your requisites if you get the right die roll, and this increase is permanent. The only way I can see in which this can be justified is that although there is no actual increase in physique the character receives training in how to use his abilities more effectively. (Think of Japanese Samurai; originally these men were no more dextrous than their neighbours, but because of



training moved faster, reached faster and outfought most other 'hand-to-hand' combatants.)

If a character wishes to increase his combat requisites he must find a teacher (such teachers should be fairly rare and will probably be booked up well in advance) and spend time learning how to increase these scores. Every three months he must roll 7+ for each ability to gain +1 up to a maximum of 4 more than his original roll. (Eg. if a person originally rolled 9 for strength and then joined the Navy and during his time there added 2, if when he left he wished to increase his strength further he could add a maximum of 2 more to it, to total 13.)

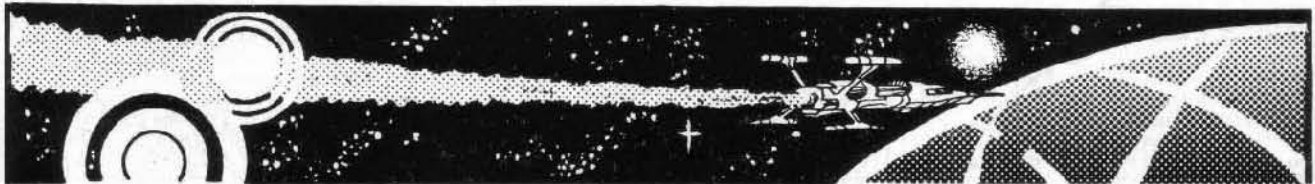
Alternate to the above method I have worked out an experience system for those that continually fight hand-to-hand combat and thus gain more skill in combat. It is based purely on the damage caused in melee with modifiers. After a melee, if a character has survived, calculate the total number of points of damage inflicted by that character and multiply this score by 20 and divide by the average damage done by the weapon(s) he was using. (Average damage = minimum score + maximum score divided by two, eg. a cutlass does 20 + 4 damage, average damage = 6 + 16 ÷ 2 = 11). The resulting score is the earned experience. Once earned experience has been earned (see *Table VI* below) increase the requisite by 1 and start earning experience all over again.

**Table VI**

Increase requisite from	Experience
2 - 3	250
" 3 - 4	450
" 4 - 5	600
" 7 - 8	800
" 8 - 9	1000
" 9 - 10	1200
" 10 - 11	1400
" 11 - 12	1600
" 12 - 13	1800
" 13 - 14	2000
" 14 - 15	2200

Non-combat requisites, with the exception of social status, can be increased as outlined for the first part of combat requisites. For increase in social status have a look at *En Garde* for a few ideas of what it involves.

Well I guess that just about wraps it up for experience in the game of *Traveller*. If anyone has any comments or ideas on improving the system I would certainly like to hear from them. Please write to me care of *White Dwarf*.






# FIRE-ARMS: 3000 A.D.

Weapons additions  
for Traveller

by Brian Asbury



 While weapons are quite comprehensively dealt with in the *Traveller* rules, in some ways this is one of the most disappointing sections of the rulebooks. Most of the weapons listed are readily available today, and thus there is little "Science Fiction" feel to combat. Thus, in an attempt to do something about this, I've devised some additional weaponry details, some being based on descriptions in SF novels, and others of my own creation.

**1. The Hand Blaster:** This is a handgun-sized atomic energy weapon, firing a tiny 3mm x 15mm projectile at 700 to 800 metres per second. Once it is set in motion, anything that stops the projectile trips a tiny atomic trigger which converts a sub-microscopic fraction of its mass into energy. A magazine carrying six charges is inserted into the gun's handle, one charge being fired for each pull of the trigger. Reloading takes one combat round, but two if the firer is treated as evading.

Disadvantages of this weapon are its obvious expense, plus the fact that any target blasted by it becomes radioactive for twenty four hours. The effective radius of this radiation is only about half a metre, however. If desired, the blaster can be used to cut through solid steel of up to 15cm thickness, blasting a circular opening of approximately 1 metre diameter.

**2. The Blast Rifle:** The rifle version of the above, firing a slightly larger 4mm calibre projectile at 1000 metres per second. A magazine containing 10 charges is fitted into the stock of the rifle; one round may be fired per pull of the trigger. Replacement of the magazine takes one combat round. The blast rifle has a slightly wider blast radius than its hand counterpart, being 1.5 metres rather than one metre. Neither weapon is suitable for use at close quarters.

**3. Concussion Rifle:** This is basically a sonic weapon, firing a directed blast of sound which has the effect of a heavy hammer-blow upon any target hit. No projectile is fired. The power pack supplying the energy for this weapon is capable of producing 20 shots before it needs recharging; it is fitted into the underside of the weapon forward of the trigger guard, and takes two hours to recharge. Replacement of the power pack with a fresh one takes two combat rounds. Damage done by this weapon varies with range, being 4D at close, 3D at short, 2D at medium and 1D at long. At close and short ranges, the concussion rifle *always* stuns, and at all ranges will knock the target off his feet unless a saving throw of 7+ is made. [DMs: -3 at close, -1 at medium (assuming for some reason the stunned individual doesn't automatically fall), +1 at long, +1 for dexterity 7+, +2 for dexterity 11+].

**4. The L.P.L. Stungun** (Full title Low Power Laser directed electrical shock Stun weapon): A pistol-sized weapon which uses a low power laser beam to ionise the air in a path along its line, and then sends a burst of electrical energy along the path. This has the effect of stunning any human-sized opponent it hits, without causing any actual damage. The saving throw against such a stun is 11+ for a human (DM: +1 for endurance 10+), but becomes proportionately lower for larger species, e.g. an elephant's save would be 3+. The power pack for this weapon

forms the pistol's handle, carries 8 charges and takes four hours to recharge. Power packs may be changed during combat, taking one combat round to do so, in which the firer is treated as evading. This weapon does not function in vacuum or trace atmosphere and is subject to a DM of -4 in high crosswinds.

**5. Incendiary Rifle:** About the size of a carbine but with a much wider 12mm calibre. The incendiary rifle fires hollow 40mm length bullet-shaped projectiles, each of which is divided into two compartments. The forward compartment of an incendiary projectile contains a small pellet of white phosphorus plus a tiny detonator, the rear compartment contains napalm. On impact the projectile does 3D-3 damage, but then bursts into flame doing an additional 2D damage per turn for four turns or until extinguished. The magazine for this weapon contains 15 rounds and is clipped in front of the trigger guard. One round is fired for each pull of the trigger. Changing the magazine takes 1 combat round. The projectile is ejected at 500-600 metres per second.

This weapon is unsuitable for use aboard ship due to the obvious fire risks and is also ineffective in vacuum or trace atmospheres.

**6. The Anagun:** This useful weapon appears as a small pistol with a very slim barrel. It fires not bullets but tiny 15mm x 1mm needles at a velocity of 400-500 metres per second. The needles have a ridge which prevents skin penetration deeper than 2-3mm, and are designed to inject the target with a small quantity of a powerful anaesthetic. The drugs take effect in one combat round anaesthetising the victim for one hour. They are very potent, the saving throw being 13+ with a DM of +1 for endurance 9+ and +1 for endurance of 12+ (accumulative). Creatures larger than human-sized have proportionately lower saves, a hippo for example requiring only 4+. Creatures much bigger than this will not be affected.

Standard ana-needles will be ineffective against mesh, cloth, ablat or battledress. However, special extra-penetrative needles are available for use in these situations; the Type P needle is designed to penetrate the first named three, and a power-injection needle, the Type PX, designed to drill through battle armour. This latter requires a special power-injection adaptor to be fitted to the anagun around and in front of the barrel.

A clip of twenty standard (Type S) or Type P needles, or ten Type PX needles can be fitted into the pistol handle and are fired one at a time. The clip takes one combat round to replace with a fresh one and the power-injection adaptor also takes one combat round to fit or remove.

**7. The Plasma Blade:** Effectively this is an energy sword. Activating a contact on the hilt causes a blade-shaped magnetic

field to spring from it. Within one combat round the field fills with the high-energy plasma — the “fourth state of matter” at stellar temperatures. The blade length is approximately 800mm and this is a formidable weapon indeed being able to slice off a limb in less than a second with very little effort or cut through 10cm-thick steel plate. However, it does have disadvantages. Its high working temperature requires its wielder to wear protective clothing such as a Vacc Suit or battledress. A special arm covering for use with Plasma Blades is available at a cost of CR 1000.

The Plasma Blade is powered by a back-worn power pack, which provides enough energy to activate the Plasma Blade for one hour's continuous use. The hilt of the Blade is connected to the power pack by a flexible cable which is usually fixed along the sleeve of the Vacc Suit/battledress. The purpose-built arm protector has its own built-in cable. The power pack when exhausted requires eight hours to recharge it via a suitable high-energy source.

**8. Pellet Clip Bracelet:** This is not in itself a weapon but is a special wrist bracelet divided into six compartments each of which can hold four special mini-grenade pellets. The compartments can be rotated about the bracelet to facilitate use and pressure on the face of a compartment causes a pellet to be ejected and flipped into the wearer's hand. So fast and efficient is the action that a pellet can be flipped into the hand, activated and tossed in a single combat turn. The bracelet is small and compact enough to be concealed up a character's sleeve. Pellet Clip Bracelets are constructed from high-impact plastic and will thus avoid detection by most metal detectors.

**9. Pellet Grenades:** Tiny 5mm diameter spherical grenades which may be fitted with delay fuses or with contact detonators. The standard *Explosive Pellet Grenade* has a blast radius of three metres doing 3D damage to all caught in the blast. It is usually hand-hurled although grenades with timer fuses can be planted in a specific location to detonate after a pre-set period of time. Each grenade contains a tiny stud-pin which is either pulled out or set for timing depending upon the type to activate the grenade. Other Pellet Grenade types include:

*Knockout Gas Grenades* release a powerful quick-acting nerve gas of temporary effect which renders all who breathe it unconscious within one combat turn. Each grenade releases a cloud of 1000 cubic metres volume.

*Blackout Grenades* release a colourless and odourless gas which brings about a complete but temporary paralysis of the optic nerve. Within one combat turn anyone breathing the gas is rendered totally blind for a period of two hours. The cloud released is of the same volume as above.

Both of the above types of gas pellet are activated in the same way as the Explosive Pellet and both can be easily deployed from a Pellet Clip Bracelet.

**10. The Power Holster:** This unique automated holster is worn strapped to the forearm. The gun is connected to it by a flexible cable. When the wearer wishes to draw his weapon, he merely shapes the fingers of his gun hand as though grasping an imaginary gun butt. Sensitive actuators built into the holster react to the pattern formed by the tendons of the wrist, and cause the cable connected to the gun to become a stiff curved rod. This flips the gun from the holster and into the hand in a motion almost too fast for the eye to follow. Thus in situations where weapons need to be drawn or raised, the wearer of a power holster will *always*, without exception, draw first.

Power Holsters can be made to fit automatic pistols or Hand Blasters but are expensive as each Power Holster must be individually constructed and specially tailored to fit its user. One man's Power Holster cannot be worn by another. The gun to be used must also be partially rebuilt to be incorporated into the power holster, the cable must be fitted and also the trigger guard must be removed.

To use a Power Holster a character must be at least +1 expertise in the weapon involved and must also practice for three months to achieve +½ expertise with the holster itself. Characters may elect to take out expertise with a Power Holster if he rolls a “Gun Combat” skill. Each level of expertise with the Holster is equivalent to adding a level of expertise with the weapon it contains. A Power Holster will function for 3 months before it requires recharging from a suitable energy source.



TABLE 1: WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT WEIGHTS AND PRICES

Item	Weight	Ammo Wt	Rds/Clip	Length	Base Price	Ammo Price
Hand Blaster	1,200	200	6	200	4,000	200
LPL Stungun	500	—	—	175	1,500	—
Anagun	250	—	—	150	500	—
Blast Rifle	6,500	400	10	1,000	6,000	350
Concussion Rifle	5,000	—	—	850	3,500	—
Incendiary Rifle	5,000	500	15	1,000	1,500	250
Plasma Blade	500	—	—	950	10,000	—
LPL Power Pack	300	—	8	—	200	16*
PB Power Pack	4,000	—	—	—	1,500	300*
CR Power Pack	750	—	20	—	500	20*
Anagun ammo S	50	—	20	—	30	—
Anagun ammo P	75	—	20	—	55	—
Anagun ammo PX	90	—	10	—	100	—
Explosive PG (10)	50	—	10	—	200	—
KO Gas PG (10)	70	—	10	—	250	—
BO Gas PG (10)	70	—	10	—	275	—
Pellet Clip B'let	100	—	—	50	150	—
Power Holster	300	—	—	220	5,000	50*
Power Injection Adtr	100	—	—	100	300	—

\* Indicates cost to recharge at a suitable energy source.

TABLE 2: WEAPONS MATRIX

Attacker's Weapon	Defender's Armour						
	Nothing	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat	Battle
Hand Blaster	+4	+4	+1	-1	+4	+1	4
LPL Stungun	+2	+2	+1	+1	-8	-7	6
Anagun	+1	+1	-2*	-3*	+1	-2*	-5*
Blast Rifle	+6	+6	+3	-1	+6	+4	-2
Concussion Rifle	+1	+1	0	-1	+1	-1	-5
Incendiary Rifle	+5	+5	+4	+2	+1	-6**	-6
Plasma Blade	+7	+7	+4	+3	+7	+3**	-1

\* Hits against these armour types by Anagun fire is possible only if the appropriate required needle types are used, i.e. Type P or PX.

\*\* Each time it is hit by Incendiary fire or Plasma Blade, the ablat's DM is decreased by 1.

TABLE 3: RANGE MATRIX

Attacker's Weapon	Range					Wound Inflicted
	Close	Short	Medium	Long	Very Long	
Hand Blaster	-6	0	+1	-5	no	5D
LPL Stungun	+2	+2	-1	no	no	*
Anagun	+1	+2	-4	-7	no	*
Blast Rifle	-8	+1	+3	+1	-1	6D
Concussion Rifle	+2	+4	+1	-5	no	2D
Incendiary Rifle	-4	+1	2	-4	-5	3D-3; *
Plasma Blade	-2	+2	no	no	no	4D+4

\* = Special (see written description)

That just about winds it up. My apologies to Harry Harrison, in particular, for ideas stolen for the purpose of this article! May your jumps through Hyperspace never throw you off course, and may the Galactic Spirit always guide you safely on your journeyings.





# EXPANDING UNIVERSE

by Andy Slack

ADDITIONS TO TRAVELLER RULES:

PART 1

## SKILLS AND THEIR USE

### General Use of Skills

Normally, for combat, 8+ on 2D6 must be rolled to succeed, with a positive Die Modifier (DM) equal to expertise level in the relevant skill. Thus a throw of 6 plus expertise level 2 gives 8 — a success. For consistency, it would be best to adopt this system throughout, as the existing rules produce a great variety of DM's in other skills.

Parrying can be introduced into blade combat; the defending player simply subtracts his expertise level from his opponent's attack roll.

Similarly, if for any reason another character has booby-trapped or jinxed an item, the dice are rolled, the expertise level (hereafter denoted by EL) of the operator is added and the EL of the jinxer is subtracted; a score of 8+ after all other modifiers have been taken into account, means the device will operate correctly.

### Persons Without Relevant Expertise

A person attempting something he has no skill in is subject to a DM of -3, additionally he may well use the wrong tools or technique. So the player rolls 3D6: if the result is less than or equal to his personal Intelligence, then he has guessed the correct tool or technique to use. If the result is greater, he has picked the wrong way to do it, and is subject to a further DM of -2, making -5 in all. (Referees may prefer to use Education, not intelligence, or two dice instead of three.) Either way he adds to this his EL (if any) in Jack-of-Trades, as a positive DM.

This makes J-O-T expertise very valuable, especially if a player should reach a high level. So the J-O-T skill should be considered to be an inborn ability, as I believe it was intended. Thus it cannot be learnt after leaving the Services, or increased by most normal means.

### Effects of Culture Shock

All player-characters are supposed to have expertise ½ in all weapons. This has its drawbacks though. The hero is, shall we say, an Army veteran. All his life he has been using rifles, etc. But stick him on a low tech level planet and he instinctively knows how to use a *kontos*. Players should be larger than life; but not to such an extent.

Players should have expertise ½ in all devices that are *common* on their home planet (except exotic ones like Starships, fusion power plants etc.). Each character is assigned his home planet; its tech level is the one he is familiar with. It must be noted on his character sheet. The numerical difference between the character's tech level and the tech level of any device he is attempting to use we call D. There are two basic possibilities: the character has been trained in something similar (or at least has heard of the thing) or he hasn't. If he has, he is subject to a negative DM equal in size to D/EL. Example: The character has rifle 4, and is given a thermonuclear *phase-interlocked* grunge rifle produced on a world two tech levels higher than his home planet. His DM on the to-hit roll would be -½, and is, therefore, ignored. (If the grunge rifle had been 8 tech levels higher, the DM would have been -2.) If he hasn't then we must find out if he looks at it and thinks, "Hmm, that looks trigger shaped. I'll pull that bit." If the device is of a higher tech level than the would-be operator, the personal characteristic used is intelligence; if the tech level is equal to or lower than the operator's, he uses his education. He rolls 3D6 and adds D. If the result is less than or equal to the characteristic used he has figured it out. (Or he will figure it out — only the referee knows how long it will take. Additional DM's are needed if the object is totally alien, e.g. produced by animate 12' cockroach-eating plants on the Galactic rim.)

### The Invention and Design of Devices.

The total number of appropriate expertise levels of those present in the research group must equal twice the tech level of the proposed device, as set by the referee for any chance of success. The referee must work out how long it will take them, and whether additional expertise over and above that required will help or hinder the effort.

To succeed, the group must roll its average intelligence or less on 3D6. Computer Aided Design can save a lot of wasted effort, so subtract from the roll the sum of the model numbers of the computers used, divided by the number of people involved — effectively raising the average intelligence.

### Repair and Maintenance of Devices.

This aspect of skill use is similar to *Invention and Design* (*Culture Shock* is particularly relevant) and one expertise level is required in the repair crew per tech level of the device, e.g. Level 5 device needs one man of EL5, or two of EL2 and one of EL1, and so on.

### Implied Skills.

(This section was brought in because at one stage in our campaign we had a player of Engineering-4 who couldn't change the wheel on his car — no mechanical skill. But for 16 years this man has been sticking melted starships back together with sellotape. This aspect is still under scrutiny, but Pilot, Engineering and Weapon skills have been tackled.)

A pilot has an implied skill in ship's boat equal to half his pilot expertise level. Thus a man learning pilot-2 would have ship's boat 1. (The culture shock rule should also apply.) A man wishing to learn pilot skills has to first learn ship's boat to level 2. Only then can he become a pilot. (This only applies on leaving the services of course, or nobody could learn pilot *and* something else.) With regard to engineering skills, Engineer-1 also has implied skills of Electrical-1 and a Mechanical-1.

In the matter of weapons, the Umpire must use more discretion: but if a person with Revolver-4 didn't know where the trigger was on an automatic pistol, it would be nonsensical. He might not know any gun maintenance — though I suspect he could make a very good guess — but the firing technique isn't that different. And, as was forcibly pointed out to me during one adventure, a character with both rifle and submachinegun skills ought to have vague ideas about the use of automatic rifles.

### Learning by Experience

Each time the character successfully uses a skill in a crisis (lasering a computer training simulation apart doesn't prove much, I think), he gains experience points equal in number to his intelligence. One thousand of these can be traded in for another expertise level. Whether to keep separate e.p. records for each skill; sum all e.p.; or — my preference — split them into weapon e.p. and non-weapon e.p., is left to the referee.

Should the character do something he has no skill in, he also gets one e.p. per intelligence point, but this should be recorded separately. Since it is a much harder way to make a living, only 100 of these e.p. are required to learn a new skill to expertise level one.

It is up to the referee whether the player should be allowed to allocate his new expertise level or skill himself, or whether it should be determined randomly: players will doubtless prefer the former method.

Some check must be kept on how many skills a player can have, though: so add the player's intelligence to his education and take that as the maximum number of skills (not experience levels) he can have.

### Language

An amusing way to use education is in languages. A character speaks his native language with fluency 5. For each point of education over 5, the player gains another fluency level, to use as he pleases. Thus he may hold it in reserve or learn another tongue. The more fluency levels devoted to a language, the better it will be spoken. Level 5 is only just distinguishable from a native. Level 1 is suitable for "Help!", "Me hungry", and so on. Fluency level can be used as a DM on a roll to understand jargon or whispers, or when attempting to communicate something unusual — in which case a very low roll might be insulting to the listener!

If languages are used, it is advisable to have some patois which is vaguely understood by all spacemen and starport officials so that players can speak to someone. (According to our dice, many patrons are Serbo-Croatian, and how many players pick that to learn?) This also gives more point to education, which didn't seem much use originally.

#### Skill in Tactics

Tactical skill is difficult to simulate. In fairly large combats, use simultaneous movement to brief written orders, then Tactics expertise can be used in two ways: first, the Tactician can "guess" the position (translation: he is told by the referee) of hidden forces on the other side; in which case if he muffs the die roll, the referee tells him a false position — so he shouldn't know what he threw on the dice for this, or he'd know he was being lied to and take no notice — and second, the Tactician can write his orders, or just move, after seeing what the other side has done that turn. In either case he must throw 8+ to succeed, with DMs of plus his expertise and minus the opponent's tactical expertise. Military personnel should, I think, all have fractional tactics, especially if commissioned.

#### Leader Skills

Leader skill is even worse. However, one may find some use for it, as follows: It influences the behaviour of the Leader's minions. If told to do something dangerous, or bribed, or tortured, or not paid for a long time, etc., the minion must roll his Loyalty score or less to obey orders or not betray his boss, as appropriate. His boss may subtract his Leader expertise from the die roll. (Loyalty will be covered next issue).

Leaders will be eligible for experience points for Leader skill in the following situations:

- On obtaining a commission for his group.
- On successful completion of a mission.
- Each time his DM for expertise on a Loyalty Check as detailed above is both necessary and successful.

Military officers should have fractional Leader skill.

## POISONS AND CHEMICAL WARFARE

#### Saving Throws

The basic saving throw is successfully achieved by rolling endurance or less on 3D6. This must be done three times. Those failing to save at all take the Tertiary effect of the poison or agent, those saving once take the Secondary effect. Those saving twice take the primary effect and anyone saving three times in a row has completely avoided any effects of the poison.

#### Saving Throw Modifications

Persons in vacc suits are immune to all gaseous poisons; persons in filter masks or respirators gain a DM of -3 to their saving throws against gaseous agents. First aid has the effect of an additional DM to each saving throw of plus or minus the attendant medical expertise, depending on the Medic's feelings about the person he is treating. If several medics are involved, sum their expertise levels to get the DM. Assorted wide- or narrow-spectrum immunisations and antidotes of varying DM may be made available by the referee.

#### Masking when under Gas Attack

To successfully mask himself the individual must throw his dexterity or less on 3D6\*.

#### Poisons and Agents

In general, a poison will have previously been rated by the referee in the following:

**Dosage:** This is a relatively simple matter; it is suggested that dosages range from 1-15, where they can usually be determined by a roll of 3D6-3.

**Effects:** All three effects of a poison — that is, primary, secondary, and tertiary — must be specified. The referee should

\*The reason for using 3D6 in these throws is to allow for persons with characteristics over 12. If the referee feels this is too harsh, alternatives are to use two dice, or give a blanket DM of -3 to all saves, thus moving the range of the scores from (3-18) down to (0-15), which is a bit gentler or a blanket DM of -2, which means there is a slight chance of a 1 endurance surviving unharmed, and an equal chance of a 15 endurance being poisoned.

draw up a random determination chart or specify all his poisons before commencing play. Possible effects are:

Death	Euphoria	Insanity	Paralysis
Stimulant	Sedative	Hallucinations	Corrosion
Confusion	Tranquilliser	Convulsions	Twitching
Nausea	Choking	Fever	Blistering
Acute pain	Weeping	Blindness	Irritation

Alternative effects are to add or subtract from strength, dexterity, endurance, or intelligence, either permanently or temporarily. Death should always be a Tertiary effect. Stinging animals will generally use some poison that leaves their victims amenable to digestion, such as a sedative or paralyzing agent. Persons with expertise in untested skills such as chemist or biochemist might be allowed to design their own agents for chemical warfare.

**Speed of Action:** This is given by a simple formula and the characteristic of the poison. The formula is:

$$Time = \frac{Factor \times Target Mass \times Target Endurance}{Dosage \times Attacker's Mass}$$

Where *Time* is the time until the effects of the poison are felt; *Dosage* is as detailed above; *Target Mass* is the victim's mass in kilogrammes (about 70 for an average human male); *Attacker's Mass* is either the weight in kg of the munition delivering the chemical, or the mass in kg of the attacking animal, or the amount in kg of poison introduced into the victim by any other means; *Target Endurance* is either the player's endurance or the amount of damage required to stun an animal.

**Factor** is another item to be specified by the referee; normally roll percentile dice and call this the *Factor* in seconds. Then by working out the formula the referee can warn the adventurer when he first feels something is wrong. It is suggested that the player then has a while to get medical aid before being incapacitated. For example, the referee rolls the player's saves in secret and fails to save at all. Then after the period denoted by *Time* the referee will inform him that he is feeling the primary effect; after another period — not necessarily the same — he is told that he is feeling the secondary effect; and finally after a third period of time he is told he has suffered the Tertiary effect. The process should not be irreversible until the tertiary effect is felt. Until that point, help is still possible; if the victim is hospitalised or given medical aid by a medic called in, a fresh set of saves should be made against whatever effects remain to be felt.

#### Cumulative Poisons

If a person has, for example, been fed small quantities of a cumulative poison in his feed, or been repeatedly exposed to cumulative toxins, the *Dosage* is regarded as being equal to the sum of the individual *Dosages* the individual has previously received. The same process can be used with catalytic poisons, where one substance has no effect until a dose of a second chemical is administered, whereupon the product of the reaction between the two becomes poisonous.

#### Burst Radii of Chemical Munitions.

Anyone caught within the burst radius of a chemical munition is regarded as being affected by the agent; he must commence saving throws. If outside the burst radius, he is assumed to escape the effects of the chemical agent. Such agents seem to persist in the burst area for periods of several hours to several days before becoming harmless. Anyone passing through the area in that time must save or take the effects of the agent.

Munition	Launcher	Rough "Attacker's Mass" in Metres	Burst Radius*
Grenade	Rifle	1 kg	10
	Grenade Launcher		
	Hand		
"Shell"	Sandcaster	50 kg	35
Missile	Missile Rack	100 kg	50
Bomb	Missile Rack	1000 kg	100

\*These burst radii are only a rough guide calculated from the burst radii for roughly similar amounts of TNT:



## EXPANDING UNIVERSE

Generally, rain will clear an area more quickly, and the effects will persist longer in vegetated areas. The effects will also be more efficient in confined spaces. Decontaminants are normally available as they may be improvised from such materials as bleach; fire will almost always decontaminate. Military Chemical Warfare Officers can normally specify roughly the *Factor* and *Dosage* of their agents.

After the initial bombardment the agents will naturally tend to spread and thin out saves for each additional 'radius' the victim is away from the burst point. Also, persons outside the burst radius will almost certainly have time to mask themselves.

### "Antique Equivalents" of Chemical Agents\*

Information on these is surprisingly easy to find, and a trip to the library would well repay the effort. Here are brief details for several war gases:

**Phosgene:** A few hours after exposure, the lungs begin to fill with fluid, rendering breathing difficult; this leads eventually to death by anoxia.

**Nerve Gases — Tabun, Sarin, Soman:** These are very similar in effect. In only a few minutes, the victim develops influenza-like symptoms, accompanied by twitching and vomiting followed by confusion and drowsiness, convulsions, and death. The entire process seldom takes more than 15 minutes, and is normally considered irreversible without immediate first aid (injection of atropine tartrate, I am told) and subsequent hospitalisation. Even so, recovery is doubtful.

**Hydrogen Cyanide:** Persons affected by this have an increased respiration rate, and generally die within a few minutes at most.

**Cyanogen Chloride:** This takes several minutes to affect a person. The lungs and exposed skin become irritated; this is followed by a decrease in the respiratory rate and choking, then death.

**Arsine:** Taking up to several days to show its effects, arsine causes headaches and uneasiness, followed by chills and nausea; its victim does not normally die, but remains anaemic thereafter.

**Mustard Gas:** Several hours after inhalation/contact, the victim's eyes and skin become inflamed. Blisters and ulcers on exposed skin follow; then, finally, inflammation of the lungs, throat, and so on, which can prove fatal.

**Nitrogen Mustards:** A group of gases with similar effects; up to three or four days after exposure are required for the full effects to show. First the eyes and skin become inflamed, followed by the blisters characteristic of all mustard type gases, and irritation of the lungs, nose and throat. Then, as a result, loss of voice, followed by fever and severe diarrhoea.

**Lewisite:** A much improved(?) type of mustard gas that acts within a quarter of an hour, first producing blisters and ulcers, then blindness and irritation of the lungs, followed by death.

**Vomiting Gases:** A group (e.g. training and riot control gases) which, like tear gases, are not normally fatal but can be so in confined spaces. They take effect in a few minutes, irritating the eyes and nose; then a headache and symptoms of a cold appear, followed by acute chest pains, nausea, and vomiting.

**Tear Gases:** There are several of these, all with similar symptoms. They take effect within half a minute normally, irritating the eyes and lungs and causing weeping. Continued exposure results in itching and an effect similar to sunburn on exposed flesh. Severe exposure will cause blisters and nausea.

\*The details of this section may well be inaccurate as I have little or no chemical knowledge; however, I am fairly confident of their accuracy as they are derived from declassified (and hence out of date) U.S. Army chemical warfare manuals which, to my astonishment, I found on a second hand bookstall in London.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the members, past and present, of *Reading University Wargames Association* for their help, suggestions, and above all patience with a referee who changed the rules they were playing under almost weekly.

# OPEN BOX



OPEN BOX examines Science Fiction and Fantasy games and rulebooks currently in the shops. The reviews have been written by either independent authorities or members of the White Dwarf Test Panel. The OVERALL figures on a 1-10 scale, rates the game itself taking all factors into consideration.

## DUNGEON MODULES

TSR Hobbies Inc.

B1 (Introductory Module) *In Search of the Unknown* — £2.50  
S1 (Special Module) *Tomb of Horrors* — £2.50

At the end of Module D3 (reviewed in *White Dwarf 11*) we were promised greater horrors in a forthcoming module Q1 — *Queen of the Demonweb Pits*. So far we are spared these horrors — presumably that module is still in development. However two new modules have appeared since then, and in some respects they are as different as chalk and cheese so must be dealt with individually.

Certain factors are common, however, to these modules and the previous G and D series — the excellent format, for instance, and the comprehensive way in which the scenario is introduced. TSR's high quality has not been in any way compromised, and in S1 it has even been improved upon.

To deal with S1 first, this is another 'tough' module, designed for at least 6 characters of 9th level or higher. The quest is to penetrate the crypt of a demi-Lich (though what is demi- about this creature of enormous powers, apart from the fact that only his skull remains, is arguable: the skull, in combination with the special arrangements which have been made to guard it, exhibits terrifying powers, and the 'rumour' which players will hear at the start, to the effect that this being possesses powers which make him well-nigh undefeatable, is well founded!). The adventurers presumably hope to gain riches from the quest, but there is more than an even chance that all they will gain is their deaths, for this module is sprinkled extensively with subtle, insidious and carefully-laid traps, and it will be a fortunate adventurer who manages to avoid them. (I'm not giving secrets away — the players get this information at the start).



# EXPANDING UNIVERSE

by Andy Slack

## SUGGESTED ADDITIONS TO TRAVELLER RULES PART 2

### Failures & Breakdowns

Many things may go wrong with such a highly complex mechanism as a starship. The percent chance of a failure in a given day is calculated as follows:

$$\% \text{ chance of failure per day} = E \times \frac{\text{Hull Displacement}}{100 \text{ Tonnes}}$$

Where E is the environment weighting, which is 1.5 for civil vessels and 4 for military vessels. Some players may build ships of standard types with second-hand military engines in order to reduce the chance of misjumping when running on unrefined fuel, in which case the chance of failure is increased by 10%. If the % chance of failure exceeds 100, as it well may for large vessels, each 100% indicates a certain failure that day, and any remaining figure under 100 is the percent chance of an additional failure.

Percentage dice are rolled once for each day when not in port; if the result is less than the calculated chance a failure has occurred. Next, two six-sided dice are rolled consecutively, for severity and reparability. For severity, a 1, 2, or 3 indicates a "Fail-Operational" condition, where back-up systems or voting units are able to continue the ship's normal functioning without the failed part. A 4 or 5 indicates a "Fail-Safe" condition, where although the component which failed was vital to the function of the ship, safety interlocks prevent any danger to passengers or crew which might have been caused by the failure. This roll has a Die Modifier of -1 for all hulls which are not custom built, and a further DM of +1 for every annual overhaul which has been missed, thus, for well-maintained ships, it is impossible to get a score of 6 which is a single-point failure, where a vital component fails without warning in a totally unexpected manner, with possibly fatal consequences. Next a roll for reparability is made; 1, 2, or 3 indicates that the faulty part can be replaced from ship's stores, a 4 or 5 indicates that although a spare is not carried, the faulty part can be repaired and replaced by the crew; and a 6 indicates that the ship's crew has neither the skill nor the spares to put things right - a shipyard or some fast thinking is required!

For the location of the fault, roll percentile dice and consult the table below.

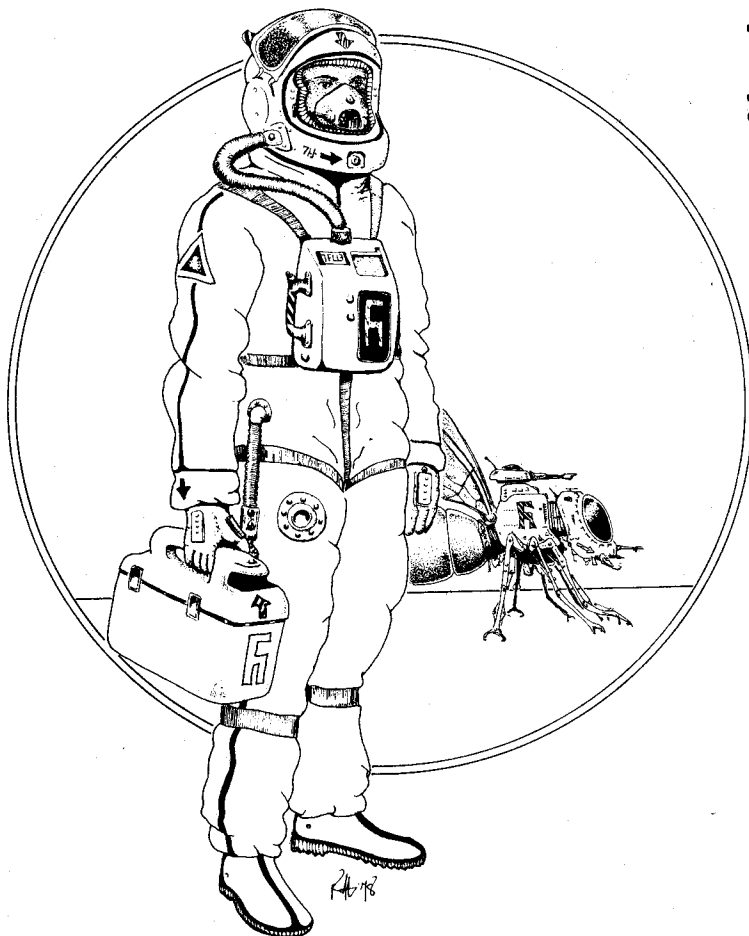
### Starship Fault Location

01-40	False Alarm; the testing circuitry is faulty.
41-60	Computer Crash
61-64	Structural Failure in the Hull
65-72	Life Support System failure
73-76	Power Plant Failure
77-78	Manoeuvre Drive Failure
79-80	Jump Drive Failure
81-82	Fuel Supply Failure
83-92	Sensor Failure
93-98	Throw twice ignoring 93-00
99-00	Throw thrice ignoring 93-00

### Acceleration Damage

Acceleration at high G causes damage to the crew. They take one D6 of damage for every G of acceleration above one; this damage is removed as they stop accelerating, unless it has rendered them unconscious.

*Example:* A ship's boat - or a ship - accelerates at 4G. Its crew take 3D6 of damage each. Later it eases off to 2G, so the crew regain 2D6 of hit points, except for Alphonso the gunner who had an unfortunate endurance of 1 and lies unconscious on his couch, and is dealt with under normal wounding rules.



## STARSHIPS

### Launching & Landing

Streamlining should not apply to any sized hull; anything bigger than an 800 tonne hull cannot be re-entered in one piece. (This can lead to ingenious starship designs.)

On planets of size 8 or greater and of the same order of density as Earth, a Free Trader - or anything with a 1G drive - cannot take off. Thus, strap-on boosters are available for hire at starports of classes A or B. These help launch a vessel, and may be subsidised by local government or a purely private enterprise. In the former case, a flat rate is charged for launch at the standard ground-to-orbit cargo cost of 10 Credits per tonne; in the latter case, exorbitant fees may be charged for launch depending on circumstances. Alternatively, the vessel may remain in orbit and shuttles used.

There are jump boosters, manoeuvre boosters and combination boosters. The jump and manoeuvre boosters are both a small (100-400 tonne) hull with only fuel, controls, and drives/power plants. The general specification for boosters is, for example, A5FBR-type Booster. The first character gives the hull size or type; the second indicates a booster variant of that hull, as distinct from other variants designed by the Referee or players, and is always "5"; the third is the jump drive classification, if any; the fourth is the classification of both manoeuvre drive and power plant, if any; the final figure may be either "R" for "Reusable" or "T" for "Throw-away". Throw-away boosters are relatively expensive and normally reserved for emergency or military use.

The purchase price of a booster is the prices of the hull, drives, power plants and controls added together and divided by 2 if reusable, by 4 if throw-away. Any space not taken up by these components will usually be fuel tankage; some users may reserve hold and computer space in order to use the booster as an unmanned exploration vessel, a "message torpedo", etc.

Reusable boosters may be used 10 times without maintenance; thereafter it requires an overhaul as laid out in the starship maintenance rules. Throw-away boosters of course are only used once. Both varieties may be built in half the time given in the tables for starship construction.



A DM is applied to the dice thrown for acceleration damage. This is +2 if the victim is not protected, i.e. lying on the floor or similar; 0 if a standard acceleration couch is used; -2 for oil baths (mentioned in Niven & Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye* and other books); and -4 for fluorocarbon tanks (as used in Haldeman's *Forever War* stories).

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## COMPUTERS

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### Damage

The hits on computers outlined in the original rules are too lenient; a similar system to that used on engines is better, so that for example, a Mod-5 taking 3 hits in combat becomes reduced to the effectiveness of a Mod-2. This necessitates the introduction of back-up and front-end type computers to take over in the event of destruction or to relieve the main machine of some burden.

### Programs

Many and varied are the possibilities for new computer programs; some examples are:\*

*Anti-crash Program:* This is loaded into a back-up computer. If the main machine crashes or is reduced by combat to a Mod-0, i.e. non-working, the back-up computer loads into its own CPU all programs currently being run on the main machine, excepting any which caused a crash. Thus the action of the computer unit is kept up.

*Double Jump Program:* This is especially useful for attacking heavily defended ground targets. The ship jumps in, looses off a spread of missiles, and then immediately jumps out again; the entire process taking about a tenth of a second.

*Deliberate Misjump Program:* This causes the drive to make a misjump deliberately. It can be used to avoid the forces of law and order or escape from a system if there is fuel for a jump but not enough to reach the next star. It is, however, a risky business.

### Programming Skills into the Computer

Any skill may be programmed into a computer but the programmer must have at least the same expertise in the skill as is desired for the program, and at least a like amount of computer expertise. The cost of such a program is Cr. 2 million if a consultant is hired (consultants will never program computer skill into a machine!), or whatever a sufficiently skilled player character will do the job for. The space required is 2 units per level of expertise. A non-detectable failure in the program reduces the expertise level programmed in by several levels.

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## ENGINEERING

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### Nature of Manoeuvre Drive

Manoeuvre drives operate on an antigravity principle, as this does not vaporise everything within several miles and render beam weapons useless.

### Misjumps

Any engine making a misjump will use up fuel for the misjump or the maximum normal jump possible, whichever is the larger. For each jump number that the size of the misjump exceeds the maximum possible normal jump, the jump drive will take one hit of damage.

### Blowing the Drive

A pilot or engineer on a doomed vessel can elect to blow the drive. (This tactic can be used to take some enemies with you or to blow up starports if you are dying and cannot leave). When the drive is blown, it explodes with the force of a strategic nuclear device (see below), the size of which depends on the power plant size. (Type A = 1 megatonne, B = 2 megatonnes, etc.)

### Tractor Beams

To generate a tractor beam, 20 tons of additional control gear are required. It has the effect of making the target ship behave

\*All these programs were originally mooted by players of *Reading University Wargames Association*. To them therefore goes the credit.

as if it were being accelerated by the M-drive unit attached to the tractor beam device in a direction indicated by the wielder of the beam, in addition to any other acceleration it undergoes. Extra manoeuvre drives and power plants may be built in so that the wielder's own engines are free.

### Warp Scramblers.

These operate on a similar system to tractor beams. Another 20 tons of controls are required, and the effect is that the target ship misjumps immediately the next movement phase comes around under the normal or amended misjump rules. The operator of the scrambler pays the fuel cost for this, as he does for tractor beams.

### Matter Transporters

These require another 20 tons of control gear and behave as laid down in the teleportation rules under psionics. Their equivalent psi strength is determined by the class of power plant driving them: A type A has psi strength 10, a type B - 20, and so on.

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## GUNNERY AND MISSILES

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### Hit Equivalents

One 'Hit' is assumed equivalent to 20D of damage. A ship's hull will take 3-18 dice of Hits, as will an AFV hull; a ship's boat hull will take 2-12 dice, and an ATV, aircraft etc. 1-6 dice. Any remaining damage is carried through and distributed evenly between any crew behind the wall when it caves in. Alternatively, the remaining damage can be split into 4D6 "parcels" and disposed of as if shotguns were fired at the occupants. Note that any Hit getting through the skin of a vac suit punctures it. Civilian vac suits are about equal to jack, and military ones to mesh or ablat. Armour can be worn over them.

### Types of Missile

*General:* A ship's main defence is its laser batteries, as for all practical purposes they cannot be seen coming, whereas missiles may be spotted in time for evasive action. Thus, missiles tend to be reserved for infighting, when ships are a few inches apart.

Missiles are assumed to accelerate continuously at 10G. For quadruple the normal cost they can be custom-built to achieve 25G.

*HE Missiles:* These are the standard variety mentioned in the rules. They weigh 1 ton, cost Cr. 5000, and do 1D6 Hits on impact. In ground actions they will be treated as 100 kg fragmentation weapons (see below).

*Tactical Nuclear Missiles:* These weigh one ton but cost 50,000 credits. They are treated as 100 kilotonne nukes in ground actions. A ship hit by one of these suffers (1-6)D6 Hits. If it is not in atmosphere at the time of the attack, its streamlining, if any, is destroyed and due to spallation from the walls all the crew are considered to be attacked by a shotgun wielded by someone of expertise 1.

*Strategic Nuclear Missiles:* These are hydrogen bombs of 1 megatonne yield. They cost half a million credits. If the ship is not in atmosphere when attacked, the streamlining is destroyed and the crew are attacked as if by shotguns as for the tactical nuke above; but the "strat" does more damage. Throw one dice. Each spot represents a die. Throw this number of dice. This result is then the number of dice to be thrown for Hits done to the target. Further, if in atmosphere, any ship hit which survives must immediately make a forced landing, although if in atmosphere the spallation and destruction of streamlining do not occur. The strategic nuke in atmosphere also creates blackout, so for 1-6 turns no radio or radar in the neighbourhood functions, and missiles attack in or behind the fireball at -5.

*HE Bombs:* Weight one ton, cost 2000; 2D6 of Hits vs. ship, counts as 1000 kg fragmentation weapon. Alternatively it could contain gas or germs.

*Drop Tank:* Cost 1000 credits. This is merely a tank containing one ton of fuel.

*Mobile Infantry Drop Capsule:* Direct from Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, this capsule costs 4000 credits and holds but one man in powered battle armour. It re-enters under the rules for re-entry in a vac suit, but any weapons fired at the trooper on his way down have a DM of -3 imposed. ▶

## EXPANDING UNIVERSE

**Dump Box:** This is a cheap re-entry capsule for emergency escape or delivering cargo. It re-enters under the vac suit rules, costing 5000 credits and capable of holding 5 men plus equipment or 500kg of cargo.

### Missile Failures

Available data suggest that modern missiles have a failure rate of about 25%. As this is quite probably wrong and things will surely be improved in the future, missiles will fail to explode on target even though they have hit if an unmodified 12 is scored.

### Types of Sandcaster Ammunition

**Sand:** Straight from the book, this costs 400 credits, weighs 50 kg and imposes a DM of -3 on any laser fire through it.

**Window:** This costs 400 credits for a 50 kg cannister. Its effect is a DM of -3 on missile fire.

**Gravel:** This is just what it says - gravel. (Or scrap iron and other such junk). Its cost is 100 credits for a 50 kg cannister and it is the best sandcaster weapon normally available. Missiles passing through it are total write-offs and fail to explode. It does damage on ships as follows: calculate the velocity vector of the target relative to the gravel as it hits. For each 1" (1,000 miles) of magnitude this vector has, the gravel does one Hit of damage. A ship orbiting through gravel around a planet takes Hits, as would one leaving orbit or lifting off.

**Example:** A vessel in a low orbit around an Earth-sized planet is doing about 17,500 mph, perhaps more; this is about 2.9 inches per turn, so a stationary cloud of Gravel - i.e. one tossed up so that the vessel hit it when it had no relative velocity toward the target, just before it fell back - would do 3 Hits of damage; one orbiting the opposite way entirely would do 6 Hits. If the target were attempting to leave the planet, it must reach at least 25,000 mph for an Earth sized world, which is about 4.2 inches per turn. If it ran into a "stationary" cloud, it would take 4 Hits, and by dropping some Gravel over the side from a great height one could probably score up to 8 Hits.

Also, "dead" missiles, i.e. those which have failed to detonate or been burnt out by a nearby "nuke", could count as Gravel with a greatly reduced hit probability; alternatively Gravel warheads could be carried, which could do a lot of damage.

**HE Shell:** This does 1-3 Hits against a ship, counts as a 50 kg fragmentation weapon, costs 500 credits and weighs 50 kg. It is most useful for ship defence on the ground.

### Force Fields

The force field is (tentatively) assigned to tech level 14. Its cost is 100,000 credits per point, it weighs 0.1 tons per point. The point value of the field is the number of Hits it will absorb from missiles, lasers etc. Imperial warships have about 100 points of field, their ship's boats about 10, and naval bases several hundred to a thousand. The field can re-radiate absorbed energy at 10% of its point value per turn. When the sum of all Hits inflicted so far minus the sum of those so far re-radiated exceeds the point value of the field, it burns out, and further Hits attack the ship's structure in the normal way.

**Example:** A pinnacle with a 10 point field is hit by two HE missiles doing 6 Hits. The 6 are absorbed and one is re-radiated, leaving 5. Next turn another missile hits it doing 6 Hits. This makes a total of 11. One is re-radiated, leaving 10. At this point the generators burn out and the pinnacle is on its own.

### Use of Radar for Ship Defence

Ship's radars are very powerful, capable of detecting a ship many hundreds of thousands of miles away. So men not within ships or hard cover can be attacked by radar as if by a laser rifle, and all men within range will be affected together, i.e. simultaneously. Electronic devices not protected by ships' hulls or similar will burn out unless specifically designed for this contingency at quadruple cost.

### Slaved Turrets

In order to reduce manpower requirements, two or more turrets may be "slaved"; in this case there is a master turret, and when it attains a target and locks on, all other turrets slaved to it also lock onto that target. N.B. this can only be done if all the turrets so slaved can point in the same direction!

## EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

### Craters

Anything or any person who would be within the crater after detonation is considered totally destroyed. Crater depths and radii are as follows:

10 MT (Megatonne) groundburst	Radius 640 m	Depth 150 m
1 MT groundburst	Radius 290 m	Depth 70 m

NB: A "groundburst" is an explosion which takes place on or very near to the surface; this is contrasted with an "airburst", where the weapon is set off high above the ground, which causes no crater.

### Blast Effects

**10 MT Groundburst:** Within a radius of 9.6 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 14.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 24.8 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

**1 MT Groundburst:** Within a radius of 4.3 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 6.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 11.5 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

**10 MT Airburst:** Within a radius of 12.8 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 22.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 42.5 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

**1 MT Airburst:** Within a radius of 5.6 km, buildings etc are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 10.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 20.8 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

Damage is not cumulative; take the highest applicable.

Grounded aircraft and civilian ATV, groundcars etc. take severe damage if within the "buildings damaged" radius; airborne vehicles must immediately force-land.

Airborne vehicles and AFV are destroyed if within the "buildings destroyed" radius. (Starships count as AFV for this purpose.)

Persons within the "hurricane force winds" radius need not take damage if they seek refuge in stout structures.

Within the "hurricane force winds" radius, objects and bodies up to several hundred kg in weight in the open are hurled about at potentially lethal speeds.

### Fire Effects

**10 MT Groundburst:** Within a radius of 23.2 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 37.6 km, there will be blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 38.4 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

**1 MT Groundburst:** Within a radius of 9 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 15 km, blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 15.2 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

**10 MT Airburst:** Within a radius of 28 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 42.4 km, blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 44.8 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

**1 MT Airburst:** Within a radius of 9.6 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 17.6 km, blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 18.4 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

Damage is not cumulative, take the highest applicable.

Even though a person may well survive the fire damage, the "nuke" will cause a firestorm of "fabrics and paper ignite" radius. If records from World War II are accurate, the chance of a person escaping or surviving a firestorm is very small. It is the responsibility of the players to specify how they will attempt to do so, and of the Referee to consider if they would succeed.

## Radiation Effect

**Electromagnetic Pulses:** EMP occur when a "nuke" is detonated. It is safest to use the "fabric and paper ignite" radius since accurate information on the effect is difficult to obtain. This EMP will severely damage or immobilize electrical or electronic equipment, though measures may be taken to avoid this at great expense. There is also a slight chance that false signals will be generated in computers, communications systems, and detectors.

**Fallout:** The materials remaining after a nuclear explosion are radioactive, and emit radiation for a long time. When they mix with earth etc. thrown up by the explosion, radioactive clouds form and create a fallout hazard for people who are downwind. Because groundbursts cause craters they throw up more dirt: so the fallout is more dangerous since there is more of it.

**Blackout:** Blackout weapons are specially designed devices which maximise the blackout effect of the detonation. The area covered by the blackout increases with the size of the device and the altitude at which it is detonated. The exact figures seem to be classified; one source suggests a blackout cloud of 100 km radius from a device of several MT at a "suitably high altitude". This cloud might endure for hours, and certainly for a few minutes at least. (The exact duration can be controlled by the attacker by careful design of his bomb, and careful choice of the number and location of the explosions.) Radar and radio systems are "blacked out" and cannot "see" through the cloud. The duration of the blackout is less for devices transmitting higher frequencies; it goes approximately as the square of the radar/radio frequency. Thus UHF is out of action for perhaps 10 minutes while S-band radar is covered for only a few seconds. However, even after the radars can "see" again, their pulses are refracted. Thus substantial errors — up to tens of kilometres — in estimates of positions occur. This problem may be overcome in the absence of Window or decoys by using two frequencies which differ widely, e.g. S-band and UHF, and comparing the estimates from both. This is the reason for the substantial DM on missile fire through blackout above. Blackout is due to atmospheric ionisation in part, and thus its effect is reduced when it is used in deep space.

**Blindness:** People facing a "nuke" when it detonates may have their sight seriously damaged or destroyed. For the radius of this effect use the "ignition of fabrics and paper" radius. (This is an estimate based on little information).

**Effect of Radiation on Characters:** After a nuclear explosion, persons in or passing through the affected area or the area below or in the fallout cloud, or an area the fallout cloud has passed over, must "save" by throwing their endurance or less on 3D6. Failure to save indicates 1D6 of radiation damage taken. The associated DMs are:

Antiradiation suit or similar: -4

Airburst: -3 to -1 depending on viciousness of the attack.

These are applied to the damage die roll, not the save. Each day thereafter that the character remains in such an area, he must save again. On leaving the area a final save is rolled; failure on this final save means that the victim will continue to take 1D6 damage per day until hospitalised. (The DMs above still apply.)

### A Note on the Devices

The nuclear devices considered are hydrogen bombs of standard types. It is possible by careful design to enhance any one of the three types of effect — i.e. radiation, fire, or blast — at the expense of the others. In all cases, the airbursts are assumed to occur at that height which would do most damage. Airbursts at lower altitudes cause less fire and blast damage, but more fallout. The effects of weapons of different sizes is calculated as follows: for each factor of ten times larger, multiply all radii by 2.2; each factor of ten times smaller, divide all radii by 2.2. Thus, a 10 kilotonne device, being 1,000 times smaller than a 10 MT device, affects an area with a radius  $2.2 \times 2.2 \times 2.2 = 10.648$  times smaller, i.e. a radius about 9½% as large.

It is recommended that "nukes" be very rare.



## EFFECTS OF EXPLOSIVES

### Blast Radii for Chemical Explosives.

Any person within the blast radius of the explosion may be hit for (1-6)D6 of damage. The explosive needs a base of 8+ to "hit", with an armour DM as shotgun if the victim is more than half the blast radius away from it, or as assault rifle if closer.

Weight of Explosive	Blast Radius*
1,000 kg	101 m
100 kg	46 m
10 kg	21 m
1 kg	9.5 m
100 grammes	4.5 m
10 grammes	2 m
1 gramme	0.9 m

### Effect of Fragmentation Jackets

Most munitions, as opposed to explosive charges, are fragmentation weapons which on detonation throw out shrapnel. To simulate this effect, fragmentation weapons have *double* the blast radius indicated for their size. Normal charges can be easily converted to fragmentation weapons by closely packing them with bits of gravel, nails, etc.

### Grenades

Grenades are assumed to be 1 kg fragmentation weapons. (This makes them slightly less effective than real grenades.) Characters may throw grenades a distance equal to three times their strength in metres. (This means they will sometimes be inside the blast radius themselves!) The hit probability for a grenade is the same as for thrown daggers, i.e. 2D6 + expertise + dexterity, an 18 or higher indicating a hit. If a grenade fails to hit, where it actually lands is determined by dicing for the direction on an imagined hex grid. Having found this direction, the distance, in metres, by which the grenade missed is found by subtracting the modified dice roll from 18.

## ARTILLERY

### Skill use

When using direct fire, i.e. the target is visible to the gun crew, the gunner applies his gunnery expertise to the shot, and picks up any resulting experience. If the target is out of sight a forward observer must be used, he applied his expertise to the shot and if successful acquires the experience. To hit, a score of 18 is required, with appropriate DM for expertise, and gunner's dexterity added, to a two-dice roll, with an additional DM of +4 for rangefinders if used by the appropriate party, i.e. gunner for direct fire and forward observer for indirect fire. (Alternatively heavy weapons may be treated as normal gun weapons with no required dexterity, or a referee-assigned required dexterity; or as starship turret-mounted weapons.) Normally bunkers, AFV etc. require a direct hit to "kill" them, whereas men may be killed even if the 25-pounder shell misses them by several feet. Use the sections on *blast radii* and *fragmentation* above for heavy weapon fire; though the weight of the shell must be established. If the projectile misses, determine as for *grenades* above. The distance in metres, it missed by is determined by subtracting the Gunner's/Fwd. Observer's expertise level from a 3D6 roll, (or by subtracting the modified "to hit" score from 18).

### Camouflage and Defences

These have an adverse effect on heavy weapon fire: after the attacker has added his expertise to the roll, the target may, if he has prepared for the shelling, subtract any expertise he holds in gunnery, tactics or forward observer from the attacker's roll, and, if the shell misses, add the same amount to the distance by which it missed (this latter is done by making dummy emplacements etc). If this subtraction is instrumental in making the shell miss, the defender should be awarded experience for it. Parties with no such expertise *and* no training in surface combat (i.e. not marines or army) are subject to a DM or +3 added to the gunner's attack roll.

\*To find blast radii for bombs of mass between those values listed, the blast radius increases as the cube root of the mass.



## HOW TO LOSE HIT POINTS AND SURVIVE

creatures might be reasonably adept at avoiding being wounded, whereas an umber hulk is just an out-and-out slogger.

### Spells and Fatigue (Optional)

Since hit points are strongly related to fatigue in this system, they can very easily double-up for a spell point or fatigue factor system. I would suggest that casting a magic user spell costs 2 hit points per spell level, while a clerical spell would cost half that amount. The magician who casts a spell costing more hit points than he has ruptures himself with the strain! In fairness, first level magic users should be given 1d4+1 for hit points.

The two implications of this, that wounded magic users are impaired in their casting ability, and that the strain of casting spells has a deleterious effect on fighting ability, both, I think, stand up to scrutiny. Other fatiguing activities (pushing boulders aside, etc.) can be reckoned similarly in terms of hit point loss according to taste. However, be warned that to use this sort of hit-point/spell-point system is tough on magic users who have no other line of defence besides their spells, and the system will fit in better with some campaigns than others. Also it is a matter of taste whether reading a spell from a scroll should count as equally fatiguing to casting it from memory. I favour the ruling that it should, and at the same time to do away with the *read magic* spell in favour of treating the reading of magic as an ability which all magic users receive in their training.

### General Remarks

That concludes the basic system; a few remarks of a quasi-general kind will do to finish off with.

Firstly, one of the crucial parameters of the system is the figure 5 used as the base in the calculating of which hits wound. This can be altered to taste, according to the effect desired. The given value is appropriate to my own dungeon, which is pretty lenient as dungeons go, with really nasty monsters confined strictly to very low levels, and few of those suicide squads that attack parties on sight. For heavier dungeons, increasing the figure may achieve a better balance for that particular dungeon. Monsters that deal out heavy damage at high hit probability are really dangerous (and so they should be) — if a stone golem lands a good blow it will stove anyone's head in.

Secondly, if any problems crop up, as in any aspect of *D&D*, common sense should be the final arbiter, with the DM's idea of common sense having the last word. Obviously, peculiar cases will crop up occasionally, especially when really weird monsters appear (nilbogs?). It should be possible for the average DM to play any particular instance by ear; if anything really horrendous occurs you could in desperation write to me c/o *White Dwarf* (if I've overlooked some vital flaw I wouldn't mind knowing about it, anyway).

Thirdly, please note that I don't believe in universal truth (as opposed to Universal Truth). There's no need to take all the above personally if you don't agree with the principles behind it; if you are contented with things as they are, good for you.

Lastly, the effects of the above system are pretty wide-ranging, but I think most of them are to the players' advantage. For instance, take the matter of the coup de grace. Suppose three adventurers are fighting a troll, and one loses all his hit points at one swipe from the troll. Normally, he would be just dead, but under this system he is lying on the ground with his head in his hands muttering "what hit me?". The troll could despatch him then and there, but it would mean taking his eyes off his other two assailants, and he is unlikely to do that. And if they rout the troll, they can rescue their companion, who will be much recovered after a short rest. Result: less fatalities but with no loss of excitement. Dishing out mortal wounds rather than critical hits is a touch which allows remedial healing, but also (for those with a morbid humour) opportunities for uttering famous last words. There is an increase in complexity, but I think it is relatively slight in proportion to the gains in detail and credibility. Any minor section which players find too bothersome can, of course, be changed or discarded to taste. And if the desired effect of reducing the need for players to gain access to magic in order to survive is attained, then perhaps even Gary Gygax won't object too strenuously.



by Andy Slack

## SUGGESTED ADDITIONS TO TRAVELLER RULES PART 3

### CAMPAIGN LOCATION

There are several sorts of region where a campaign is "plausible". These are:

#### Globular Clusters

These clusters are distributed in a sphere about the Galactic Nucleus. Usually there are no O, B, or A class stars still radiating, though they may be present as "Remnants". They are spherical in form, with a diameter up to about 150 hexes, and contain 1,000 to 100,000 stars. There are about 1-100 stellar systems per hex. (Thus they are ideal for a huge campaign — but require great patience.)

#### Open Clusters

A favourite for a campaign setting, the open clusters are distributed in the plane of the Galactic Spiral Arms. They have no consistent shape, but average about 2-20 hexes in "diameter". Stars of classes O, B, A, F, G, K, and M are present. They have around 2D6 — 2 stellar systems per hex.

#### Associations

These compose rough groupings of 24-500 stars, all of similar spectral type, and have open clusters as nuclei, surrounded by single star systems. They are up to 200 hexes across.

#### Spiral Arms

These contain clusters and associations, but also there are single stellar systems not in any groups. These are found in a hex not part of a cluster or association on a throw of 9 (exactly) on 2D6.

As the Galactic Nucleus contains about 2000 systems per hex, and the space not already covered is even more sparsely populated than the spiral arms, these are in my opinion the only "reasonable" locales, always assuming you want so much detail.

### STELLAR SYSTEMS

For each starsystem in the hex, go through the following procedure:

#### Determination of Star System Type

Throw 2D6. A throw of 3 indicates a *Remnant* star; 11 or 12, a *Variable* star. A throw of 6 or 7 indicates the "star" in question



is in fact two stars, and you should throw again for each one to see if it is *Variable* or a *Remnant*. Large multiple systems may occur by repeated sevens.

#### Determination of Spectral Type

For each star in each system, throw percentile dice:

Dice	Spectrum	RadiusFactor	T <sub>eff</sub>	Colour
01-10	B	4.1	21,750	Blue-White
11-32	A	2.0	9,200	Blue-White
33-51	F	1.3	6,990	Yellow
52-65	G	1.0	5,775	Yellow
66-96	K	0.8	4,515	Orange
97-99	M	0.4	2,893	Orange-red
00 01-25	O	5.9	40,000	Blue-White
26-50	N	0.4	2,500	Orange-Red
51-75	R	0.4	2,500	Red
76-00	S	0.4	2,500	Red

(Binary and multiple systems have much nicer colours, e.g. emerald green and purple.)

#### Variable Stars.

If a variable star is indicated, check below to see what type it is, depending on its spectrum and the umpire's whim.

**T-Tauri Variables:** These are small stars, spinning rapidly in a dense gas cloud. They may be G or K types.

**Flare Stars:** These stars periodically "flare up", greatly increasing their output of radiation. They are marked with big red splotches on star charts saying "Don't bother" or words to that effect. They are normally M type.

**Magnetic Variables:** These are normally A type, and have a varying magnetic field of great intensity, which would probably be dangerous to shipping.

**RR Lyrae Variables:** These are common in globular clusters — another reason for not having a campaign there. These are often A or F class, and for game purposes they count one spectral class higher when in a bad mood, i.e. A counts as B and F as A.

**Cepheid Variables:** These are of F or G type, and over a period of 2-20 days their output of radiation (and their radius) increases up one spectral class, then back down again (F goes to A, and G to F).

**Mira Ceti Variables:** These have a period of  $50 \times 2D6-1$  days, with great variation of radiation output. They are M or S type.

**Semi-Regular Variables:** These are of type M or N, having a period of average length  $60 \times D10$  days, during which they vary their radiation output semi-randomly.

**Novae:** If a star doesn't fit standard variable categories, either rig them or call it a nova! Then dice the time left until it explodes — a  $D10 \times 40,000$  years!

In a more serious vein, stars with a radius factor greater than 1.0 go nova fairly randomly. Each such star is diced for yearly to see if it will do so; this requires 4 rolls of 00 in succession on percentile dice followed by a roll of 99 or 00. Should it happen, all planets in the system are sterilised and the spectral type becomes O, ignoring the radius increase (the new radius could be said to be that of the expanding gas cloud from the explosion how accurate this would be is another matter).

**Supernovae:** Supernovae are more difficult to get, but worth rolling for! However, people usually have enough time to evacuate as supernovae threaten for a while first. As far as can be made out, any star of class O, B or A is eligible: to occur, roll yearly — you need 00 5 times followed by 94-00 on percent dice. The planets are all sterilised, and 1D6 of them are destroyed — work outwards from the inmost one.

#### Remnant Stars

These are very interesting objects, especially in space combat. They are the bits left after supernovae have occurred, or stars that have died in a less violent fashion.

**White Dwarfs (Plug!):** White Dwarfs are left after some supernovae, or the death by old age of stars type F,G,K,M,N,R,S. They have an A spectrum and a large magnetic field. After a while, they give up completely and become black dwarfs, which are the same thing but don't shine at all. (There is a small possibility that uninformed players will mistake them for black holes, probably causing them great concern.)

**Neutron Stars:** These can be the remains of A, F or G stars or supernovae. If they rotate, they have a magnetic field that doesn't bear thinking about.

**Black Holes:** Remains of supernovae and O,B,A,F stars. These are the best player-worrying devices in the *Traveller* universe, and well worth reading up on.

Many Remnants are found in gas clouds.

#### Densities of Objects for use in Space Combat Templates

Object Type	"K" or density
Planets of size 0-20	3D6÷10
Planets of size 21+	2D6÷10
"Normal" Stars	10D6÷100
Giant Stars (50% chance if G,K,M; 20% chance if A,F)	5D6÷100
White Dwarf	2D6×10 <sup>4</sup>
Neutron Star	3D6×10 <sup>11</sup>
Black Hole	4D6×10 <sup>14</sup>

#### Radii of Objects for use in Space Combat Templates, etc.

**Stars:** Radius Factor x 432" x 3D6/10 (If giant, now multiply by 2D10)

**Neutron Stars:** 1/48 of an inch

**Black Holes:** 1/24 of an inch (For game purposes)

**White Dwarf:** 5D6 inches.

# EXPANDING UNIVERSE

## PLANETS

### Planetary Systems

Any star of classes F,G,K or M will have attendant planets unless there is a *remnant* in the stellar system, or a *variable* star.

### Number and Type of Planets.

For each planetary system diced up, there will be 2D6-2 Terrestoid planets and 1D6-1 giant planets. Arrange these in a semi-random order, note that giant planets tend to congregate towards the outside. This order is the order of the planets going outwards from the star.

### Size and Moons

Terrestoid planets have a size of 4D6-4 inches, giant ones of 5D6 + (2-12)D6 inches. (Terrestoid planets of size 0 are asteroid belts.)

Terrestoid planets have 1D3 moons, and giants 3D6 moons. Moons have a size of 1-100 x 0.002 times their parent planet's, and if big enough can be diced up as worlds in their own right. Each gas giant moon has a 5% chance of disintegrating into a ring such as encircles Saturn.

### Distance from Primary

The distance of a planet from the sun, or a moon from its parent body, is estimated by the following formula:

$$R = 200 \times r \times B$$

Where r is the radius of the sun or parent body, R is the orbital radius, and B is a factor defined from the table below.

Planet No. (From inside outwards.)	B	Planet No. (From inside outwards.)	B
1	0.4	9	38.8
2	0.7	10	77.2
3	1.0	11	154
4	1.6	12	307.6
5	2.8	13	614.8
6	5.2	14	1229.2
7	10	15	2458
8	19.6		

### Determining the Length of the Year

The length of the body's year, in Earth years, is given by the formula:

$$\text{Year} = B \times T \times r / 432$$

Where B is from the table above, r is the radius of the parent body or star, and T is taken from the table below. "Planet No." is again the order reading outwards from the primary.

Planet No.	T	Planet No.	T	Planet No.	T
1	0.5	6	2	11	6
2	1	7	3	12	6
3	1	8	4	13	7
4	1	9	4	14	8
5	2	10	5	15	8

### Determining the Length of the Day

Giant planets have a day of 4D6 hours. For terrestoid planets, throw 2D6 and impose a DM of -n, where n is the number of planets closer to the star than the one in question. A score of 12 indicates a day of length equal to 1-10% of the year; any other score indicates a day 6D6 hours long.

### Determining the Surface Temperature

This is the nastiest bit. First the albedo factor A must be calculated. Roll 2D6, add the atmosphere and hydrographic percentage numbers, (calculated in the normal way), subtract 12, divide by 10; finally subtract the whole lot from 1.0, and quickly amputate any minus signs because they're going to cause trouble later on. (It will be noticed that giant planets have

enormous atmosphere and hydrosphere numbers. Don't worry about it as few people will land there and even fewer will lift off again.)

Now brace yourself - calculator is recommended! Look up the  $T_{\text{eff}}$  for the star you're worried about. (And if you're not worried about it by now you soon will be.) Square it. Square it again. Multiply it by the square of the star's radius (in inches). Divide by 4. Multiply the result by the factor A, and divide the lot by the square of the planet's orbital radius (in inches). Then square root the product, and square root it again. This chops it down to a reasonable size and provides the planet's surface temperature in Kelvin - subtract 273 for Centigrade.

Here is a formula expressing the process more concisely:

$$\text{Surface Temperature} = \sqrt[4]{\frac{1}{4} \left(\frac{r}{R}\right)^2 (T_{\text{eff}})^4 A} = \frac{\sqrt[4]{(T_{\text{eff}})^4 A}}{\sqrt[4]{160,000 R^2}}$$

A little practice reveals short cuts and reduces the horror of it all. Make a note of the temperature as it shows what the sea's made of and whether the planet may be habitable.

### Habitable Planets

Habitable planets must have a mass of at least  $M=0.1$ , a day of length not exceeding 96 hours, and a surface temperature of between 200 and 300 Kelvin. (Water freezes at 273 K and boils at 373 K).

### Native Life Determination

If a planet counts as "habitable", throw 2D6 to determinate the Earth equivalent of the highest life form yet developed. DM: F stars -1, K stars +1, M stars +2.

### Dice Highest Life-Form

2	DNA molecules
3	Coacervates
4	Bacteria
5	Protozoa
6	Worms
7	Fish
8	Reptiles
9	Avians
10	Mammals
11	Intelligent Species, Tech Level 0-2
12	Civilised Species, Tech Level 3 or higher.

### Determination of Orbital Velocity and its Use

The orbital velocity,  $V_0$ , is given by:

$$V_0 = 0.00012 \times R/\text{Year in inches per turn.}$$

Suppose you have some Travellers who are on an interplanetary trip. They can do this in two ways:

**Minimum Fuel Orbit:** This is a lengthy process; the time taken for transfer is equal to, on average, half the difference between the lengths of the years at the end-points of the trajectory. However, only as much fuel is expended as is required to generate a vector equal to the sum of the orbital velocities of the end-points, plus that required to take off or land (see *Escape Velocity* below). While on such an orbit count the ship as if closed-down in orbit, i.e. minimum detection range.

**Constant Acceleration Orbit:** This is shorter in time but higher in fuel cost. Assume the distance travelled is equal to one-quarter of the destination's orbit circumference, plus the difference in orbit radii. And the ship must take off, land, and match velocities with its destination. Ships on these orbits are always detectable at maximum range.

### Escape Velocity

To take off, land, leave or enter orbit, a ship must generate a vector equal to the escape velocity of the planet at the relevant altitude and direction.

To take off or land, the vector has a size of:

$$V = \sqrt{2GR}$$

Where G,R have the value derived in *Traveller* space combat.

To enter or leave orbit, use the formula below to find the vector size:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{2GR^2}{H}}$$



Where G and R are as before, and H is the distance from the ship in orbit to the *centre* of the template or body in inches.

Ships may opt to enter "forced orbits" where by constant acceleration they may traverse an orbit either at a different distance or orbital velocity than normal. Just work out a few orbits of such a craft vectorially. Watch out for atmospheric braking at an inopportune moment though!



## ALIEN LIFE

### Basic Type

The basic type of life on each planet is determined. Use the table from *Native Life Determination* and common sense as necessary, together with these tables, to determine the basic type of life.

### Basic Type/Shape of Most Animals:

1	Insectoid	4	Avian
2	Ichthyoid	5	Mammalian
3	Reptilian	6	Other (i.e. Ref's Specials)

### Symmetry of Most Animals:

1	Asymmetric	5	Rotational or order 2-6
2,3,4	Bilateral	6	Other

*Number of limbs:* 1D6-1 pairs of limbs, but refer to the symmetry and use common sense (e.g. you can't have four legs and rotational symmetry order 3).

### Main Sense of Most Animals:

1,2	Visual	5	Olfactory
3	Audio	6	Other
4	Tactile		

Note for vision that it will be most acute at the predominant colour of the star; i.e. beings from a red star's planet would see into the infra red a short way but might well be blind to blue, seeing it perhaps as blackness.

*Characteristics:* Determine type, weaponry, size etc. as in *Traveller* book 3.

### Intelligent Aliens

These are first diced for as if an ordinary animal, biasing the results slightly towards the 50 - 200 kg mass range and away from herbivorous types. Then characteristic DMs are diced for.

All characteristic DMs are generated by 2D6-7, followed by applying common sense.

Primary characteristic DMs are applied to the UPP of a character, and consist of DMs to strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, education and social standing, therefore. Secondary and tertiary DMs are applied to 2D6 rolls for secondary and tertiary characteristics; however, provided he could have diced it, a player may always specify his own secondary characteristics.

Secondary characteristics (with apologies for plagiarism to Tony Bath) are Disposition, Morals, Generosity, Loyalty, Courage, and Ambition. The way in which they are used is as follows: The higher the score, the more socially correct and "nice" is the character's behaviour in that area. Thus, should a police officer be offered a bribe, throw 2D6 in secret; if the score is less than or equal to his Morals, he has done the socially correct thing and refused the bribe. If a beggar accosts a character whose player is not present, dice - a roll equal to or under his Generosity indicates he has given alms; and so on.

Tertiary Characteristics are largely individual; they start with Appearance and Activity, but then the remaining four are "held" for use in describing organ-playing ability, shoe size, etc., as is required by the individual character.

Quaternary DMs for each species should also be diced. These are applied to the Population, Government, Law and Tech Levels of planets inhabited by that species. (An example is the blanket -2 on human populations.)

## ROBOTS

Dice up robots as if they were a member of the constructing race, except for the following points:

- Shape, Symmetry and Main Sense may be altered by the specific task envisaged for the robot.
- The robot's skin counts as mesh armour.
- Strength, Dexterity and Endurance have an additional DM: +1D6
- Intelligence has an additional DM: + Home planet tech level, -18
- Social status has an additional DM: + Home planet law level, -18
- Robots are not psionic, nor may they as player characters do anything other than make suggestions and follow orders literally, unless they are constructed at a high enough tech level for artificial intelligence.
- Robots not imbued with artificial intelligence have an ambition of 2; all other secondary characteristics are 12.

Robots have up to one expertise level (in non-combat skills only) plus one language point per tech level over 6; these are programmed in at the owner's choice. Robots may be reprogrammed as if computers (See Part 2, Issue 14). No robot which has not been reprogrammed can contemplate harming a living creature unless it has artificial intelligence in which case it may act with minimum necessary force in self-defence.

The cost of a robot is 20,000 credits per expertise level.

As will be apparent, robots normally have a negative intelligence; thus on succeeding in using a skill, they lose experience rather than gain it. Just work the normal experience rules (See Part 1, Issue 12) backwards. Note that all robots have a special skill held at level 6 in obeying orders; this is used whenever a robot is asked to do something unsavoury or illegal - to perform the act requested the robot must roll 8+, DM:+ obeying orders expertise. The point of this is that "killer" and criminal robots eventually refuse to obey orders of this type. Killer robots should also start malfunctioning (try dicing on the C&S Mental Health charts each time a level of obey orders expertise is lost).

Androids, that is to say organic as opposed to synthetic robots, count as needing a base tech level 2 levels higher than normal robots; however, they are indistinguishable from "real" beings, which they in fact become at tech 19. This is useful in light of the suggestion that robots or androids, if discovered, on most planets will be destroyed by the populus with "Luddite" fervour and their owners treated as if they were psionics - check the robot's social status against the special levels in Part 4, next issue, it will almost always be under -5.

# EXPANDING UNIVERSE

by Andy Slack

## SUGGESTED ADDITIONS TO TRAVELLER RULES PART IV

### SOCIAL STATUS

#### Income

The social status score determines the character's net income in long-term situations. Thus a player getting a job as say a clerk, or any non-player in a civilian job, would have this much money left after living expenses were deducted:

Social Status	Net Income p.a.	Social Status	Net Income p.a.
less than 0	0	9	19,883
0	1	10	59,049
1	3	11	177,047
2	9	12	531,441
3	27	13	1,594,323
4	81	14	4,782,969
5	243	15	14,348,907
6	729	16	43,046,721
7	2,187	17	129,140,160
8	6,561	18	387,420,480

This may also be used to indicate the amount offered by a patron initially — perhaps 2-12% or 20-120% of the patron's annual income, depending on the danger involved. Also it may represent the income accruing to a noble player due to his ancestral fief.

#### Special Levels of Social Status

Social Status	Situation
-5 or less	Condemned to death
-2 to -4	Slave
-1	Imprisoned
0	Wanted criminal
1	Suspected criminal
2-10	Normal
11-15	Nobles
16	Prince — next-in-line to rule a planet.
17	King — ruler of a planet
18	Emperor — ruler of more than one planet.

Ancestral estates may be portions of large worlds, or small worlds in their own right. The population level of an ancestral fief is equal to the controlling noble's social status less 9, so perhaps the player has a small world waiting for him when his eight older brothers drop dead!

#### Social Status and Crime

When infringing the law, roll over the law level on 2D6 to avoid arrest, DM: + social status -7 (you can get away with it, you just have to be rich! This gives some meaning to law levels over 12.

If arrested, throw law level or under to be convicted, DMs: subtract the prosecution's law expertise, add the defence's law

expertise. Forged papers, etc., give additional DMs at umpire's discretion.

If convicted, penalties are in the form of losses of status. One status level will be lost for minor offences; 1D6 status levels are lost for such things as theft, fraud, forgery etc; 2D6 levels are lost for mugging, burglary and assault; and 3D6 levels for murder, treason etc.

These penalties are most effective in reducing income and seldom result in jail unless something really nasty is done. (A player in jail is an unhappy player.)

Lawyers may be hired at the following costs per case:

Lawyer-1	3,000 Cr	Lawyer-4	81,000 Cr.
Lawyer-2	9,000 Cr	Lawyer-5	243,000 Cr.
Lawyer-3	27,000 Cr	Lawyer-6	729,000 Cr.

#### Incrementing Social Status Level

It is recommended that players retire characters of social status 16+, though they may still participate by being burgled, generating commissions, etc.

Adventurers may increase their family's status by accumulating Status Experience Points or SEP. When a character accumulates a number of SEP equal to his current status level, his status level is increased by one and he loses all SEP so far gained.

SEP may be gained as follows:

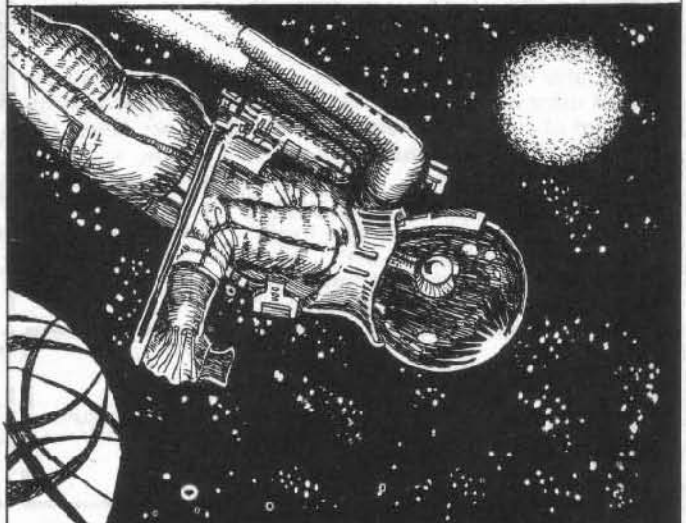
- 1 SEP per 1,000,000 credits amassed
- 2 SEP per 1,000,000 credits wasted
- 1 SEP per level of glamorous skill acquired, e.g. Pilot, Leader.
- 1 SEP per promotion.
- 1 SEP per year served as a slave or prisoner.

### PSIONIC SPECIAL TALENTS

It is rare for someone to acquire only a special talent, so it is suggested that special talents enhance the other ones. Below are given some examples of additional tricks a psionic can perform if he has the stated talent and a special talent. These extras can only be used when the talisman is to hand; the talisman also confers 1D6 extra psionic strength points, but these do not in any way affect the maximum level attainable.

#### Clairvoyance and Special Talents

Persons with this combination may use their clairvoyant abilities through time as well as space; count one second forwards or



## EXPANDING UNIVERSE

backwards as equivalent to one metre of range. In game terms, the player may ask the umpire a number of questions equal to his clairvoyance level, which the umpire must answer truthfully "yes" or "no". (See Frank Herbert's *Dune* trilogy for a well-handled account of such abilities.) Due to the mechanism of the hyperspace Jump, persons with this combination, whether or not they have their talisman are likely to feel nauseous and confused for 1-6 days after such a Jump. Roll 2D6, DM -7, + endurance. If the score is lower than or equal to the psionic's clairvoyance level, he has fallen ill.

### Telepathy and Special Talents

This combination enables the psionic to affect reaction tests. One creature or person per level can be affected, and a DM equal in size to the number of strength points expended is added or subtracted to the reaction test at the psionic's discretion. (This is from an idea in Larry Niven's *A Gift from Earth*.) Further, such combined talents may be used to penetrate telepathic Shields; when penetrating a Shield, count psionic strength and level as half normal, rounded down.

### Telekinesis and Special Talents

This combination gains the ability to affect temperature. Instead of telekinesis on an object in the normal manner, they may choose to raise or lower its temperature by one degree centigrade per telekinetic level per strength point expended. This can be used as a lethal weapon by raising the temperature of the brain by a few degrees - ten should be enough for death. The brain weighs one to two kilos.

### Teleportation and Special Talents

This combination gives the power to do two new tricks: First, to teleport another being or object instead of oneself; and second, to teleport forwards or backwards in time. Count one second as equivalent to one metre for range costs. As with normal teleportation, it is up to the player to specify possible hazards and how he will avoid them. This is the hardest talent to umpire, so it's just as well it's the rarest. (The idea comes from Poul Anderson's *There Will Be Time*, and reading that will show the best way to handle the talent).

These persons suffer from Jumps in the same way as *Clairvoyance and Special Talents*.

### Awareness and Special Talents

Such persons may enhance dexterity on the same terms as strength. Further - and I like to think this is part of the reason for anti-psionic prejudice - instead of expending a psionic strength point to enhance one of their own physical characteristics, they may "drain" points from another intelligent being's strength, dexterity or endurance in order to gain an equal number of psionic strength points. However, the range cost must still be paid so this works best at close range.

And there you have it. Since starting this series, there have been new rules sets - notably *Traveller 4: Mercenary* and *Starquest* - which duplicate or render obsolete, in a sense, parts of these suggested rules however, I have lethargically not done anything about it.

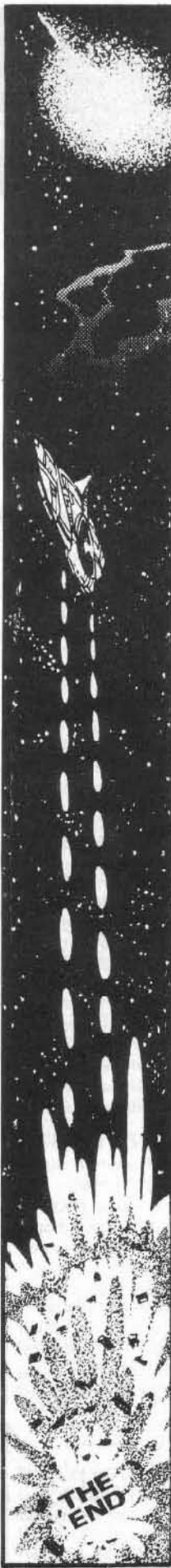
It is also inevitable that I have unwittingly plagiarised the work of other umpires and rules sets; I apologise in advance for this. A lot of material has been taken from SF books. Where this has been done I have tried to credit the author and book concerned.

Finally, there are inevitably going to be mistakes in my assumptions or working out; and I will be glad to hear from anyone spotting one, but I leave you with this thought: *If I knew how starships really worked, I'd be writing to the Patents Office, not White Dwarf.*



## Next Issue:

- \* The Sable Rose Affair - a complete Traveller mini adventure
- \* The Magic Brush - fantasy figure painting as an art
- \* Fiend Factory - monster monsters
- \* Treasure Chest - artifacts and relics



... hopefully by the time this *White Dwarf* is published the long-awaited *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Masters Guide* will be readily available. After its initial release at GenCon in August and incredible demand which sold out the first print run in a few weeks, disaster struck. The second print run was ruined by the printers who managed to collate some *Monster Manual* pages into the DM's Guide! Let's hope the *Fiend Folio* does not suffer the same fate...

... *Game Designers' Workshop* continue to expand *Traveller*. During the next six months, seven new titles are scheduled for release, although these are subject to name change or delay: *High Guard* (Book 5) sets forth complete rules for space navies; *The Spinward Marches* (Supplement 3) charts the rough-and-tumble frontier regions of the Imperium; *Citizens* (Supplement 4) is a book of information for players and referees, and also includes twelve new character types; *76 Patrons* (Supplement 5) gives seventy-six patron encounters, supplying scenarios for adventures; *Azhanti High Lightning* (Game 3) is a boxed game containing multiple deck plans, scenarios, rules and counters; *Planetfall Liberty* (Adventure 2) is a solo adventure; *Research Station Gamma* (Adventure 3) no information available. GDW also have a new science fiction game coming out entitled *Bloodtree Rebellion* which concerns guerilla war on the Planet Somber with clone regiments, colonist rebels and natives...

... *Judges Guild* continue to expand their range of playing aids with *Operation Ogre*, a D&D adventure structured around the classic Princess-as-hostage-of-Monster theme, *Broken Tree Inn* concerns the struggle between the Elves of Tall Seed Forest and encroaching humanity set in the *Runequest* universe, and *Drakne Station* is a *Traveller* scenario set aboard an alien vessel...

... at long last *Runequest* is back in print with some sections substantially rewritten, and some parts expanded. *Cults of Prax* is also available...

... some alarming news from *Miniature Figurines* is that they have withdrawn their *Dungeons & Dragons* line of figures...

... *Citadel Miniatures* have been granted the UK licence to produce official figures for FGL's *Gangster!* game. They have also been granted the UK licence to produce the official figures for *Star Trek The Motion Picture* by *Paramount Pictures Corporation*...

... *Fantasy Games Unlimited* have released additional *Chivalry & Sorcery* material. *Arden* is a complete kingdom scenario and includes a book and maps. *Saurians* is a supplemental book of dinosaurs and intelligent saurian races...

... *Task Force Games* announce four new pocket games - *Prochorovka*, *Intruder*, *Swordquest*, *Operation Pegasus* and *Valkenburg Castle*. And *Star Fleet Battles* goes boxed...

THE END



# THE SABLE ROSE

By Bob Williams

## MODULE 2: Task Force and Mission Background

The briefing is conducted by Reaid Mentith, Head of the Imperial Galactic Survey's Planetary Rescue Systems Inspectorate, Regina Subsector, and by various specialist officers in a nonsectarian underground room somewhere on Regina (0310). The PRSI, apart from being a legitimate branch of the IGS responsible for inspecting and making recommendations on measures taken by planetary governments to find and aid survivors of crash landings, is the "cover" for an operational force which takes on all manner of awkward jobs the Imperium would prefer not to advertise.

Mentith commences the briefing by describing the disappearance of the freighters, of the Imperium's suspicions and the subsequent investigations. He then presents their conclusions:

"We are now convinced beyond doubt that these crimes originate on the planet Aell. As you may know, the government there is particularly repressive -- export of weapons is forbidden as is the carrying of any weapon in public. All weapons and high-technology equipment imports are strictly controlled -- all end-victim ships arrive on Aell, and at first suspected that their destination was some sort of revolutionary organization. However, we now have proof that these items are ending up in government hands, and that they are giving covert protection to the operation; the organizer of this piracy reeling as payment any cargo not wanted by the government.

We therefore have three objectives to this mission. The first,

## MODULE 1: Introduction

Over the last two or three years, the number of space accidents has risen sharply in the Eta--Boiglene--Rouip region of the Regina subsector. The increase has been mainly among contract and charter freight vessels and tramp tractors. Many of the vessels have never been found, and the only other factors linking these losses (disregarding vessels whose misfortunes were easily explained) are that all contained high-technology goods amongst their cargoes, and that no two losses occurred in the same four-week period. All this has pointed to some form of criminal activity, and after a long and painstaking investigation the full story has been pieced together and put before the Subsector Governor, together with proposals for a solution.

Obviously, it is to stop any further piracy occurring, to operate in such a way that the government of Aell no doubt that we know of their involvement, and apply more direct methods in any further event of that whole region of the Subsector is politically unbelieve that the crews of the stolen vessels are still alive, and as part of our price for maintaining the unit we will be demanding their release.

So, we have constructed an outline of the mission; carry out. As usual, it will be your own responsibility detailed methods and your requirements as regards equipment. This outline is now being passed round; please feel free to ask questions."

## MODULE 3: Task Force Characters and Restrictions

The Task Force detailed to undertake the *Sable Rose* operation is a standard PRSI undercover suppression force. Organized as a loose version of the Marine squad, it consists of ten men (and/or women, in other teams), with a Force Leader and three teams of three, each of a Team Leader and two assistants. The force is flexibly trained and relies as much on each man's knowledge of the scope and limitations of the other members of the force as on operational doctrine. It could, for example, operate just as effectively split into two teams of eight and two men respectively. The first Team Leader is "officially" second in command, but any Team Leader could take over as Force Leader in the event of casualties.

Recruits to the force are drawn from the Army or Marines (since the "official" PRSI is essentially a ground rather than space inspectorate).

Characters are generally well-experienced and of good physique, and are often discharged on some suitable pretext prior to official retirement age. They thereupon receive four year's intensive training in commando, intelligence and specialist subjects, as well as learning their "cover" jobs.

The following character descriptions have been laid out in a standard format, including most of the information normally given in a Service Resume (see *Book 4: Mercenary*):

Name	UPP	Age	Turns in Military Service--Morale
Position in Task Force	Specialist Duties		
Service, Arm and Final Rank	Awards and Decorations		
Special Assignments (not including agent training)			

"TAS" after the Morale rating indicates a member of the *Traveler's Aid Society*. Due to the comparatively large number of skills possessed by each character, these have been tabulated at the end of the character descriptions.

## CHARACTER SKILLS TABLE

Skill	Character Number									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brewing	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2
Rifles										
Foil	2						1			
Sword				2		2		1	1	
Bayonet			1							
Guns										
Auto Weapons			1	2			2	1		
Combat Rifles			3	1			1	2		
Energy Weapons	2	1						2		
Laser Weapons					2				1	
Pistols	2	1		2					1	
Zero G Weapons	1									
Heavy Weapons										
Auto Cannon									2	
LAG									2	
RAM Gran Lohr			2		1		2		1	
VRF Gauss										
Admin			2		1		2			
Battle Dress	1						1	1		
Bribary	1	1	2	1						
Combat Engineering							1	2		
Computer	1	3					1			
Demolitions		1	1	1	1	2		1	1	1
Electronics	1	1	1				1	2	1	1
Forgery	1	1	1		2	1		1	1	1
Forward Obs	1							1		
Gunsmiling										
Interrogation	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	
Leader	1	2	1	1						
Mechanical	2	1		1	1					
Medical						1			2	
Racon	2	3	1	1	1	2		1	2	1
Recruiting	1	1								
Streetwise	2	1					1		1	
Survival								1	1	1
Tactics	2		1							
Vac Suit	1	2	1				1	2	2	
Crash Vehicle	1		2							
Truck Vehicle										
Truck Vehicle					1				1	
Zero G Combat	1	2					1	1	1	1

### Notes on Skills Table

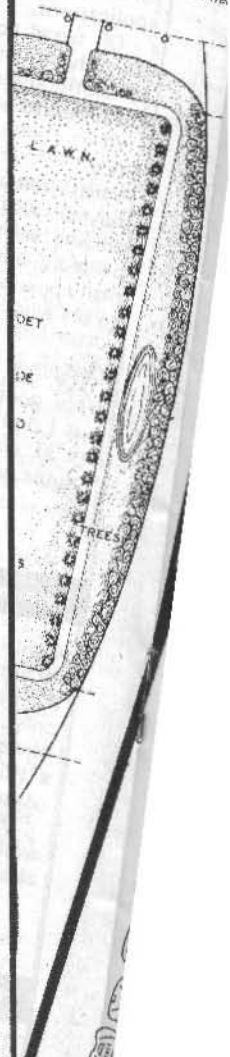
- In this scenario, Brewing skill encompasses both the usual *Hand, Club and Dagger* and *Blade* weapons.
- Players may (after studying the Character UPPs) reassign the given *Blade Weapons* skills within the dice, not exceeding the total number of skill levels given. Skills may be re-assigned to *Foil, Sword, Cutlass, Broadsword* or *Bayonet* only (Example: character 7 could change *Sword-2* to *Broadsword-1* and *Bayonet-1*).
- All skills acquired by characters in the course of their service careers and agency training have been given. This does not of course mean they will all be useful in this scenario.

### Equipment Choice and Restrictions

Players may freely choose any weapons, armour or items of equipment that they can physically carry, though careful attention should be paid to the encumbrance rules. It is important to remember that the Law Level prohibits the carrying of any weapon in public, and players will need to exhibit ingenuity in concealing them. Some items are obviously ruled out -- it is a little difficult to pass as a nonchalant civilian wearing *Battle Dress* with *Fusion Gun* attached, remember the first rule of undercover operations -- look and act as if you belong to the area in question. It may be assumed that the PRSI "backroom boys" on Aell are capable of producing high quality disguises for equipment.

One area in which players are restricted is vehicles: Available for the Task Force's use, at the PRSI warehouse, are the following vehicles: Air/rafts -- two normal air/rafts and one police patrol model in police colours; Ground cars -- two four-seaters and one two-seater, and one van.

Any or all may be used. All except the van have been "mopped up". Additionally available is Air/raft A parked outside the Longhornman's Hostel. All vehicles have been fitted with one fixed forward-firing weapon mount (holes of LAG, Auto-cannon or VRF Gauss) and one rearward-firing RAM Grenade Auto-launcher, except the van which has the rear RAM Grenade only. All weapons are suitably disguised into the bodywork, and no additional weapons may be fitted.



**MODULE 4: Alell: General Information**

ALELL/Ragna 0106 - B/AG7899 - A - None - Rich - None  
 R-2000mi G-0.066 A+0.2875 Standard K-1.325 Standard  
 Gravitic Bands: 0.25G-3250mi 0.50G-2250mi  
 Safe Jump Distance=400000mi

**General Physical Description**

Alell is a pleasant world superficially similar to the Terra Standard type except for the relatively small size and low gravity. Its landmasses are concentrated in the equatorial band and southern hemisphere in three large and numerous small islands. The population is spread throughout the land area, except for the few islands in the north, which are subject to regular tectonic movements ascribed to perturbations in orbit. There are six cities or over 1 million population; the planet as a whole has about 65% urban dwellers. Flora and fauna are mainly harmless and unlikely to worry anyone taking normal travel precautions.

**IX REF FILE: ALELL/Ragna - Flora/Fauna;**

**Visitor Data**

**IX REF FILE: ALELL/Ragna - Approach Procedures**  
 Navigational Hazards: Alell has two small moons and no other major celestial bodies. Approach Procedures should be consulted for artificial satellite orbits and restricted areas, periodic

comets, etc. Alell is the second planet out from the sun. The main navigational problem is posed by perturbations in the planet's orbit, and reference to orbit tables is essential to an economic approach.

**Customs and Excise:** All visitors must report to either of the two orbital stations prior to landing. Failure to report constitutes an unlawful placement. All weapons, items of Tech 9 or higher, and all game and crystals are illegal imports unless declared and subsequently licensed by the Alell government. The authorities will normally issue a temporary license for ships and permanent fixtures thereof.

**Transportation:** Regular weekly frequency service to Effau (0105) and Uakya (0205), together with many contract and charter vessels. Less frequent departures for Whanga (0206). No direct route exists to Knorbes (0207) or Roup (0407), but occasional tramps or charters might be found to those destinations.

**Port Facilities:** The two orbital stations are at opposition in the same orbit (equatorial). Both are standard Imperium designs (Type JL-5a) capable of docking directly to the station any vessel of 1000 tons or less. Extending booms can cater for larger vessels. In all cases standard Imperium locking and electronic connectors are required. All usual planetary transfer services are available.

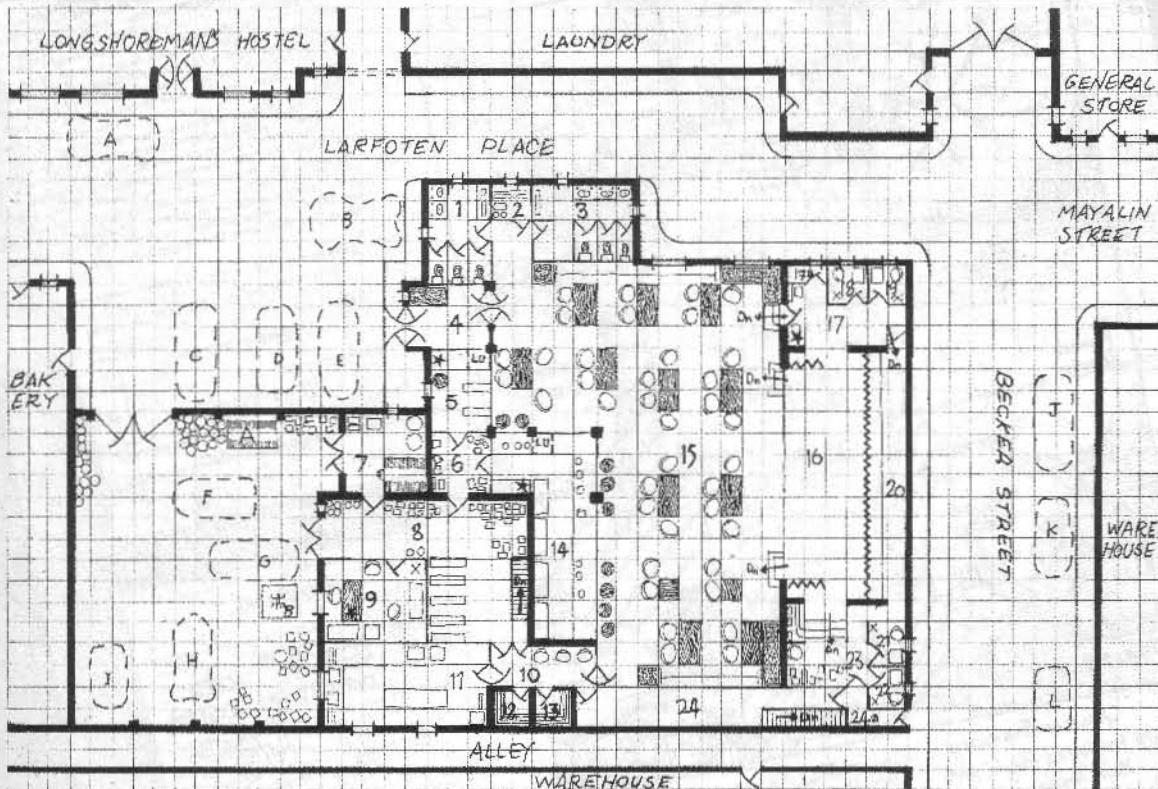
The starport is of standard type B, and is located 850mi S of the Equator on the main island, on the outskirts of the capital city Manes. Good quality maintenance and repair facilities are available for ships and equipment of Tech 10 and below. Emergency repairs only are available through government agencies for higher Tech levels.

**Politics and Culture:** Alell is amongst the common category of communistic worlds. Government is carried out by a bureaucracy dedicated to the greater good; private enterprise and personal advancement is discouraged. The average citizen is shy of strangers, if not brusque, only relaxing when not in a public place. Conversation with strangers is generally limited to short answers to a request for directions. The police forces (at which there are many different levels) are more forthcoming, but should be approached respectfully, and should be obeyed at all times at the risk of imprisonment.

**Trade/Economy:** Main Imports: Precious stones and metals, non-basic foodstuffs, military weapons and other high-technology equipment.  
 Main Exports: Most types of medium-level technology equipment and parts except weaponry, and some basic metal ores and refined products.

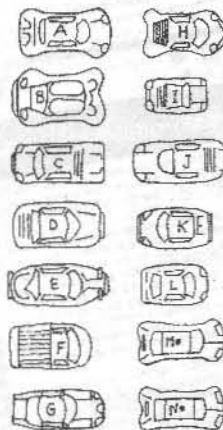
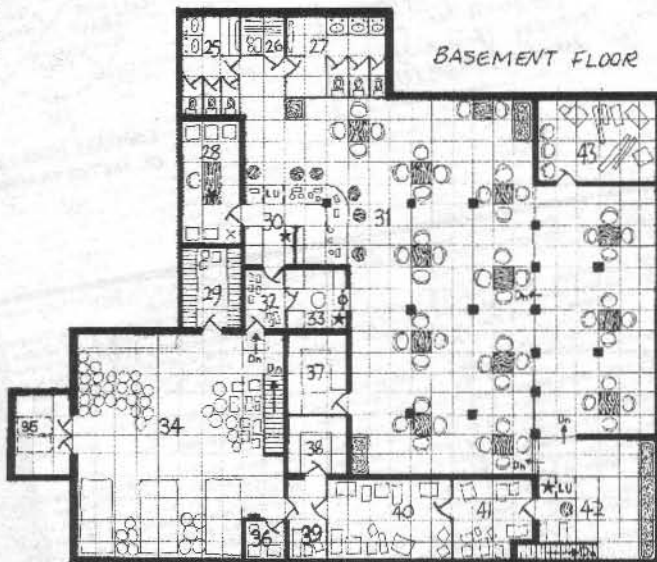
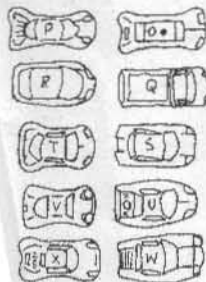
The economy is strictly government controlled; very little free enterprise trading is permitted. Off-planet importers and exporters must invariably deal directly with government officials.

**MODULE 5: Objective and Locale: Map**



Vehicles should be cut out and used as markers. Vehicles A - L should be placed on the relevant spaces on the map. Vehicles M to X are squares.

- Each grid square = 1.5m x 1.5m
- Structural Wall
- Partition Wall
- Door
- Door: Opens both ways
- Structural Column
- Plant Boxes
- Cam-Console
- Lift-Up Flap





MODULE 6: Objective and Locale: Description

The Journeymen's Quarter

The Journeymen's Quarter of Naness — capital city of Alell — serves three requirements of a city possessing a starport. Firstly, it provides the transient work force associated with any starport, and offworld visitors of all but the highest social standing, with accommodation. Secondly, it houses the primary stages of import distribution and export goods collection, conveniently close to the starport terminal facilities. Thirdly, it contains the lower end of the Naness entertainments industry, including all the off-world temptations so frowned upon by Alellian morality and yet so alluring to Alellian curiosity.

It is in other words an archetypal lowrent district, and as such does not represent the pinnacle of urban environment. For this the visitor is led carefully away to see the Great Hall of Supreme Justice, the Place of Peace Cultural Centre, the Reformed Morgansitic Cathedral, or the Water Palace, built under the old Royalists but still used by the ruling dignitaries. Warehousing, substance-level hotels and apartments, and associated establishments — corner food bars, clubs, general stores — all jostle for a place; all present a rather run-down appearance. Most buildings are over a century old (Alell is quite kind to man-made structures), but some rebuilding has interrupted the original street plan.

Offworlders receive grudging acceptance in the Quarter, and short shrift outside of it (unless of the nobility or a trading magnate). Almost anything authorized for general sale (and a few things that aren't) can be bought here. Thus the streets — though rowdier near as crowded as, for example, the Artisan's Quarter — are well-used by native Alellians generally trying to draw as little attention as possible to themselves.

Traffic Regulations

In common with most of the more advanced worlds, a three-dimensional traffic system is operated. Ground bars, and other stacked directional systems, crisscross the city. Air vehicles fly in the coastal plain, there are standard altitude bands (also used over sea), but elsewhere on the planet, inland, a ground-following altitude system is employed. Changes of direction sector, and transition from ground to air and vice-versa, must be made in a directly vertical mode — penalties for oblique transfers (and indeed traffic infringements generally) are severe. Various visual and radar signals inform other fliers of vehicles changing bands.

Vehicles may not overfly a number of locations (such as the starport field area), but there are few of these in the city itself. In some particularly intensively-used corridors, specific ascending and descending columns of airspace are designated and in these corridors it is illegal to land/takeoff or change bands outside of the column.

The standard stacked directional system is:

- 0-79m Level flight is prohibited (the tallest buildings in Naness are approx 72m high).
- 80-99m This band is reserved for emergency vehicles only — civilian level flight is prohibited.
- 100-149m Southbound sector traffic band.
- 150-199m Westbound sector traffic band.
- 200-249m Eastbound sector traffic band.
- 250-299m Northbound sector traffic band.
- 300-349m Reserved for Police patrols and emergency services — civilian level flight prohibited.

350m plus

Above this level are various military and inter-continental bands, as well as a duplicate set of directional bands for use when weather conditions require them.

Each of the four directional bands covers a 90° arc — that for the Northbound sector being 315° through 0° (true north) to 45°, for example. It is considered very bad flying manners to set a course very close (ie, within one or two degrees) to the sector divisions. If such a direction is required it is usual to follow a dogleg course, making one change of heading and band transfer.

The higher degree course has right of way within sectors (courses west of north in the Northbound sector are usually referred to in minus degrees), thus superior traffic is from the left — i.e. in accord with ground traffic priorities.

Immediate Environs

The Sable Rose club is a detached building, occupying a corner position on Becker Street and Larfoten Place, Becker Street leads toward the Artisan's Quarter, whilst to the west, Mayalin St. runs into the heart of the Bankers' Quarter and joins the Imperial Parkway (built along with the starport in the Royalist era by the Imperium, to provide a grand entry to the Water Palace). Larfoten Place runs west, deeper into the Journeymen's Quarter.

Some 120 years old, the club was originally a liveryman's workshop and emporium. It has been a club for the last 58 years, the present owner taking it over six years ago.

Adjacent to the club's yard is a Bakery. At the front is a shop for the purchase of wares — the side door is a fire exit. On the opposite side of Larfoten Place is the insalubrious Longshoremans' Hostel, occupied by starport freight loaders and a variety of unsavoury characters. Apart from the lobby, the other ground floor rooms are a dining room; to the left, a bar and a reception office and large doors leading into an indoor loading bay. Next door to the bar opens onto the club's back yard. Next door to it, the Laundry has a relatively high reputation (including Diplomatic Quarter customers amongst its clientele). It is a rather blank building with tight windows, and fire exits onto the Hostel's vehicle passage and onto Larfoten Place, and a reception office and large doors leading into an indoor loading bay. Next door to the Laundry, on Mayalin Street, is a small general store. Both the warehouse opposite the club on Becker Street, and the one south of the alley, are of newer construction and present windowless faces on these sides (they have roof-lights). The door onto the alley is a fire exit.

N.W. Sector, Naness City.

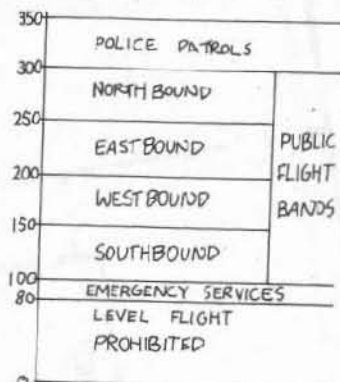
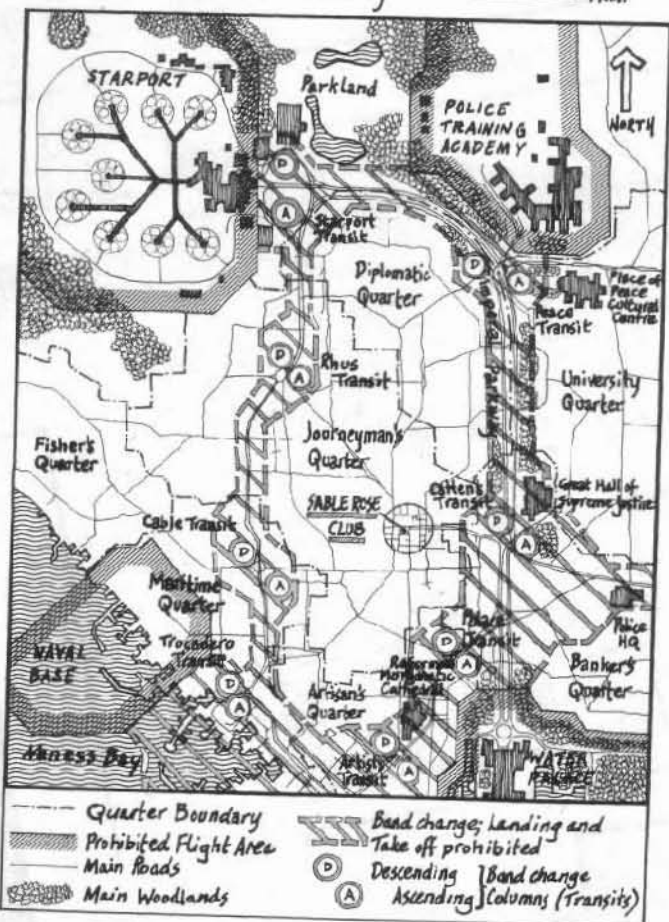
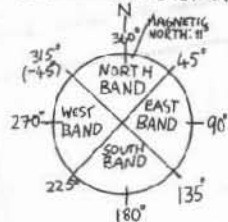


DIAGRAM OF STANDARD STACKED DIRECTIONAL SYSTEM



COMPASS HEADINGS OF SECTOR TRAFFIC BANDS

MODULE 7: Objective and Locale: Task Force Briefing

The scene is once again an underground room as described in Module 2, a short time later. By this time the Task Force players should have studied Modules 3, 4, 5 and 6. Mentith continues with the briefing:

The physical objectives of this operation are twofold — the Club owner, one Jürgen Cottrell, is also the man responsible for organizing this piracy. He is preferably to be captured; if not, eliminated. Secondly, in Cottrell's office will be documents relating to transactions between Cottrell and the Alell government: in pirated cargo, and these are to be brought back to me. You will also leave within the Club premises a letter from the Sub-sector Governor on Imperial Stationary addressed to the Alellian Minister of Overseas Affairs, setting out our terms.

The PRS have devoted considerable resources to discovering details of the Club layout and operation. Most of this information has been gained by agents posing as customers, delivery drivers and so on. Module 5 represents a summary of information gathered on the layout, no detailed room descriptions are available, but the Referee is to make available some information on the 'public' rooms, and the players should be able to make reasonable assumptions as to the other rooms' uses based on the furniture layout. The Referee will also provide some additional

information on club personnel, building protection systems, possible police intervention, communications and gambling at the club.

As a preliminary move, one or two members of the Task Force have been given cover jobs at the Starport and rooms at the Longshoremans' Hostel about a month before the actual raid attempt (Force Leader to decide whether one or two and which team member(s)). Air/rail A is their transport.

The PRS HQ on Alell is a run-down warehouse and office some 200 metres due west of the Rhus Transit. At ground level this is a rather sordid import/export shipping business. Underground it is almost silent, with high technology communications, workshops, firing ranges and rest facilities. All Task Force members (except of course those at the Longshoremans' Hostel) have adequate cover stories to get them onto the planet and to the warehouse. This is where they will equip themselves for the mission, and receive the vehicles they require.

In order to protect the PRS's undercover operations on Alell, the Task Force must take standard precautions to disguise the point of departure, and will make their getaway from the Club directly to the Starport (thus claiming the sanctity of Imperial territory) and board an Imperial Kilmir class Earth

Cruiser which is at the Starport for a 'courses visit', for the return trip to Resina.

In addition to concealing weaponry and equipment, the Task Force players must attempt to get as close as possible to the target without alerting Club personnel to their purpose.

This area of operational planning is obviously one which players should give much thought to. The following conditions for the night the scenario takes place may be relevant:

The attempt is to be made after the Club opens for the evening, after dusk. The Referee will provide weather details when the actual scenario starts.

The act at the Club, the Markku Bowright Synthesiser Trio, is playing its first ever night's performance on Alell (the Referee can provide further details of the group), and a party of foreign junior diplomats — all members of the Club's gambling sector — are taking four guests not known at the Club for an evening on the tables. Both the group and the guests could be impersonated, although the Club personnel may well be particularly suspicious of these two parties.

This information may be used or not as the Task Force players wish.



MODULE 8: Club Detail Description

General

**Club Yard/Parking Area:** This is a dirty, rubbish-strewn area faced on the W. by the blank-walled bakery, and on the N. and S. by 1.8m high brick walls with pillars. In the N. wall is a pole of 1.8m high lockable gates. Various piles of empty crates, barrels and debris are scattered about: item A is a large liquid fuel tank (inflatable), whilst B is the Callar hatch referred to in Room 35. H is a souped-up air/raft - the Club owner's personal transport, F, G and I are all Ground Cars; G is owned by the Club Manager, F is the Lounge Bar steward's small van, and I is a small two-wheeler owned by the reception clerk.

**Vehicles Outside the Premises:** Air/raft A has been regularly parked outside the Longshoreman's Hostel over the past month or so. Air/raft B and Ground Cars C, D and E are all customer's vehicles. Ground Car K belonging to the club's Stage Manager/M.C., whilst Ground Cars J and L are often parked in Becker St.

Room Descriptions: Ground Floor

- Male Toilets:** Consists of urinal against E. wall, two sinks and dryer against W. wall, and three W.C. cubicles (belonging from inside). Windows high up and translucent.
- Charcoal's Store:** Shelves containing cleaning and indoor plant maintenance equipment, with hydrostatic cleaners under. The door is normally locked; window translucent.
- Female Toilets:** Three sinks against N. wall, two dryers against W. wall, and a mirror on the E. wall N. of window. Three W.C. cubicles (belonging from inside). Windows high up and translucent.
- Foyer:** Double Plexiglas swinging doors open onto street, and main lounge. Plant container next to window. 4 and 5 are the same room, divided by a counter with a lift-up flap. Both sets of double doors are lockable.
- Reception/Clearroom:** Shelves with membership data, a dagger and odds and ends, under counter. Com-console on counter, Club Alert button under counter against W. wall. A stool, and two coat racks complete the furniture.
- Anti-Room One:** Basically a bare room with an empty-bottle bin in the SE. corner, and a couple of stacks of boxes containing bar snacks. In the NE. corner are a few discarded pieces of bar equipment (pumps, bottle holders etc).
- Boiler Room:** In the SE. corner a large oil-powered boiler reaching nearly to the ceiling, whilst in the NE. corner are two generators: one for bar pump machinery and the cold store heat exchanger, the other a standby and not normally in operation. In the NW. corner stands a bureau for fuel delivery and servicing records, together with a panel over it containing heating controls and shut-off.
- Main Store Room:** Along the N. wall are various stacks of crates and casks. Along W. wall opposite stairs are four racks of shelves with bottled drinks (not spirits). Against E. wall a set of stairs down, with a barrier to W. and N. of stairwell.

**9. Club Office:** In NE. corner behind door, is a coat rack. Against E. wall a ceiling-height filing cabinet. Against S. wall in SW. corner a drinks/music centre, and E. of this a small safe. In

W. part of room a desk with three drawers to the left, below the com-console and privacy cone controls. The Club Alert button is under the right-hand end of the desk. Behind the desk is an executive swivel-chair, the other two chairs in the room being non-descript straight backs.

**10. Anti-Room Two:** This room is empty but for three stacks of chairs similar to those in the main lounge.

**11. Kitchens:** Or rather a food preparation room, since most food is pre-cooked, than either frozen or dehydrated. Along the N. wall are utensil cubboards with worktops over, and two microwave ovens. Along the W. wall are sinks and drains, with dryers under. In the centre of the room is a large preparation table. In the SE. corner is the control console and heat-exchanger machinery for room 12.

**12. Cold Store:** A solidly built and insulated room for deep frozen food.

**13. Dry Food Store:** Shelving contains all manner of dehydrated food, spices and additives.

**14. Bar One:** Shelving along the back wall supporting all manner of intoxicants and soft drinks. On the shelf near to the door to 6 is a com-console. Under the bar just south of the southernmost structural column is the Club Alert button. On the bar at intervals are staves of pumps for draught brew. The bar is open to room 15, but may be isolated by pulling down the various shutters to the front edge of the bar top.

**15. Main Lounge:** A large open room with chairs and tables regularly arranged for viewing the stage area. Along the flanking walls are bench seats, and several stools at the bar. Some exotic indoor plants fill odd corners.

**16. Stage:** One metre above lounge floor level. Two short flights of steps lead up on either flank of the stage from the lounge. Drapes cover the stage passage (20) and the wing exits (17 & 23).

**17. Stage Wing:** Contains a lighting/curtain control console, with a Club Alert button under it, and a few odd props. At the same level as the stage, with steps down to 20 and beyond the door to 16.

**17a. Stage Wing:** Small translucent window.

**18/19/21/22 Dressing Rooms:** Contain table, mirror, chair, coat-stand and a translucent window.

**20. Stage Passage:** Bare corridor behind stage backdrop - lower than stage.

**23. Stage Wing:** Steps down from stage, with odd junk in corners and one chair.

**24. Corridor:** Bare, with steps down to basement floor. Doors from 10 and 24a normally locked.

**24a. Stage Door Vestibule:** Short, bare corridor with stage door; fire exit onto Becker St.

Basement Floor

**26. Male Toilets/26. Cleaner's Store/27. Female Toilets:** Identical to 1, 2 and 3 but without window.

**28. Office:** Along the N. wall are three safes, all identical (except for locks). In the centre of the room is a desk and executive swivel chair. In the left of the desk is a nest of four drawers, in the right under the com-console is a nest of three drawers. The Club Alert button is under the centre of the desk. Along the S. wall is a coat stand, a locked filing cabinet, and a stereo/drinks cabinet. The com-console also incorporates privacy cone controls.

**29. Wine Cellar:** Along both walls are wine racks, with the lower half ordinary shelving - on these are bottles of spirits. A few unpecked cartons of Ricupar whisky stand at the N. end on the floor. The door is normally locked.

**30. Bar Two:** Shelving on both sides of the partition and back wall. Com-console next to the partition, and Club Alert button under bar to W. side of structural column. Otherwise similar to 14, except that video 'one-armed bandits' face each of the bar stools.

**31. Gambling Room:** 12 card tables each with 4 seats are spaced about the room, the three at the E. and being one step higher. On the N. wall is a card table with two seats.

**32. Anti-Room Three:** Similar in layout and content to 6.

**33. Teller's Room:** A glass window with a swivel tray occupies the E. end of the room. There is a com-console on the counter, with a small cash float of Cr.50 and a coin on a shelf under it, along with a Club Alert button. In the NW. corner is a set of open shelves, containing trays of gambling chips. In the SW. corner is a safe (of simple type) with a cash float of approx. Cr.1000. For larger deposits or payouts access to the safes in 28 is required.

**34. Main Cellar:** On the S. wall, three trolleys (one above the other) draught casks. On the N. wall shelves of soft drink. Elsewhere are numbers of empty and full barrels and boxes. The draught switch panel is mounted on the wall to 36. The stairs from 4 come out in this room.

**35. Cellar Hatch:** An empty room except for a large bran sack below the hatch (no drip barrels onto). The double hatch opens upwards and locks from the inside (both it and the double access door are normally locked).

**36. Pump Room:** Machinery for operating the draught brew system occupies this room.

**37/38. Store Rooms:** Both these rooms are empty except for shelving around the walls.

**39/40/41. Store Rooms:** These three interconnecting rooms contain boxes of all sorts of items, being odd lots from captured ships. The door between 39 and 40, and that between 41 and 42, is normally locked.

**42. Basement Reception:** Situated at the bottom of the stairs from 24, this area has a reception counter with com-console, and a Club Alert button under it. There are two coat racks. This room and the stairs are separated by a partition.

**43. Store Room:** Contains three stacks of chairs similar to those in 31, and various building fittings and junk. The door is normally locked.

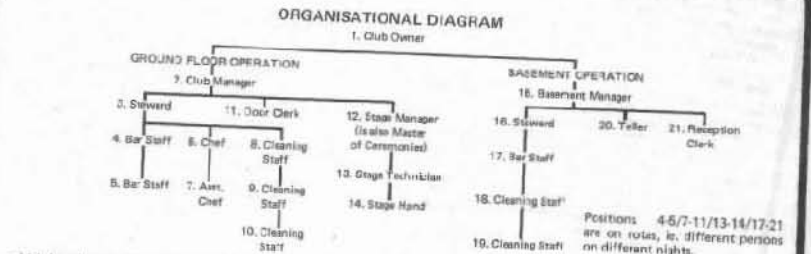
MODULE 9: Club Operational Background

The club's day starts during mid-morning, when the cleaning staff arrive to erase the ravages of the previous night. At this time also, the Club Manager (2) and Steward (3) are present to deal with paperwork and deliveries, and around noon the Basement Manager (15) and Steward (16) arrive to carry out similar tasks. By the early afternoon all these persons have left, but occasionally the Club Owner may turn up to do his own book-keeping, and from near onwards one of the bar staff (not on duty that evening is present at a counter/guard, until the duty staff start to arrive in the early evening. The two Managers (2 and 15), Ground Floor Steward (3) and stage staff (12-14) are usually first to turn up, and the main Door Clerk (11) and Basement staff (10-21) the latest. By mid-evening all the staff on the diagram (except the cleaning staff) are present. Occasionally, the Club Owner is absent on other business.

**Building Protection System:** The building is protected by both conventional mechanical locks on doors and windows (lock pick set and Mechanical skill apply to defeating locks), and an electronic detector net. Master switch to the net is in the Club Office (9) on the com-console.

**Club Alert System:** In strategic locations (see room descriptions, Module 8), a type of 'panic button' is available in the event of a disturbance. Pressing results in a light flashing on all com-panels other than the one in the location, and the system is also linked via the master com-console (i.e. this console must be operative to transmit the alert) to the local police station. The police would treat this as a routine disturbance call and dispatch a patrol as available. This would arrive outside the club in 4-9 combat rounds. It requires a verbal emergency call to Police HQ, either from a club com-console or police patrol vehicles, to trigger special police action, which arrives in 3-3 combat rounds and consists of two patrol vehicles with eight police. Proof on non-routine disturbance (use of firearms would be sufficient) is required in the call.

**Com-Console:** The club contains eight console locations (see room descriptions) of which three (those in 5, 9 and 28) are capable of direct outside contact. Other locations must call one of these for an outside line. Console 20 is the master console, and if this is inoperative - switched off or wrecked - then the entire system will not function. Each location may call any other internal location - the receiving location has a key light which identifies which console is calling, and this light is also the warning light flasher for the Club Alert (see above), pinpointing



which location requires aid. There is also a warning light which comes on if a portable communicator is operated within the club. Outside lines include the usual telephone facilities, the city computer library, and the Starport Info/booking computer. Customer may use the two reception consoles (5 and 42) for outside calls, paying for their use (C.1 per combat round).

**The Gambling Room:** Although gambling is not illegal on Alsil, it is strictly regulated and consists mainly of various types of state lottery. However, within the Journeyman's Quarter are a number of establishments catering to the offworlders and the more adventurous Alellians. The government is not averse to this activity (indeed, they levy a hefty betting tax) provided that certain rules are obeyed concerning preventing the majority of native Alellians indulging in this form of activity. Each member of the gambling section of the club is required to memorise the entry conditions. The procedure is to call the club from a public com-box a few minutes before reaching the club premises, giving the name and occupation of any members in the party, and the name and occupation of any guests. The time lag enables the Basement Reception Clerk (21) to check any facts not known to him (i.e. membership status, guest's identity). On arrival at the club, the stage door (24a) has a bell push, voice box and vid-eye. The button is pressed, the Clerk asks for names and membership numbers (meanwhile checking visually). If satisfied, the party waits for the Clerk to

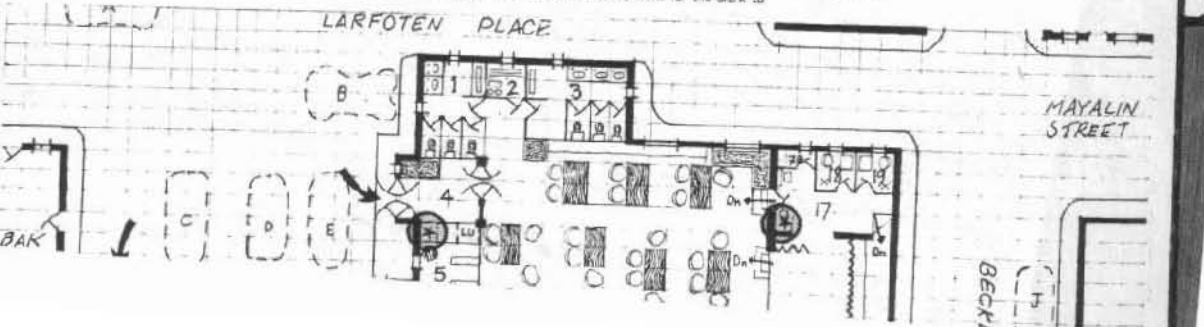
come and open the door. In the case of particularly valued clients, the Basement Manager may come up. If the person is for the stage section, the Clerk simply transfers the call to the Stage console (17).

**The Night of the Scenario**  
This section highlights specific conditions on the night the Scenario takes place.

The Scenario commences mid-evening, after dusk. The club has opened - nine customers have so far entered the lounge (15). All staff are present. The weather is overcast but dry, with the hint of an offshore breeze perhaps bringing in a sea fog later.

Expected shortly (via the stage door) is tonight's act - a synthesiser trio (keyboards) - MARK KU BEOWIGHT; percussionist - HERVIG GIANDELL; mixer/computer panel - ALAN JAMISON; road manager - ARKESH MARGANE; road hand - ANGUS McADDEN. The trio is from Feri (D405) and have never performed on Alsil before. They are not known to the management - the booking was handled by an agent, and are due for a week's booking. They should arrive in a ground car and van (for the equipment).

Also due a little later for a night on the gambling tables is a group of foreign diplomats (3 members and 4 guests), in addition to the normal influx of clientele both for the main club and the gambling room.



**MODULE 10: Club Personnel - Characters and Restrictions**

This module lists characteristics of each of the staff. Characters in rote staff positions are those on duty on the specific scenario night, and the character number corresponds to position on the table in Module 9. The descriptions are set out in the following table:

NAME	UPP	AGE	COMBAT SKILLS	OTHER SKILLS	ARMOUR ALLOWED
1. JURGEN COTTERELL Club Owner		8/A987	38	Gun-2 Blade-2 Brawling-1 Leader-1 Admin-1 Computer-1 Electronic-4 Streetwise-1 Pilot-1 Grav Vehicle-2	Cloth/Medec
2. ROBERTO VALETTE Club Manager		C64687	34	Gun-1 Blade-2 Brawling-2 Computer-1 Electronic-2 Mechanic-1 Medic-1 JoT-2 Wheeled Vehicle-1	Mesh
3. BERNARD SFORZA Ground Floor Steward		349/69	38	Blade-1 Steward-1 Wheeled Vehicle-1 Forger-1 Engineering-1	Jack
4. CALEB CESSINGER Ground Floor Bartender		49C705	28	Gun-1 Zero-G Combat-1 Vacc-2 Medic-1 Navigation-1	None
5. IRA SWIFT Ground Floor bartender		534659	30	Gun-1 Blade-1 Mechanic-1 Fwd Obs-1 Gunnery-1	None
6. LEON BEULEP Chef		A99589	42	Blade-1 Steward-2 Navigation-1 Medic-1 Wheeled Vehicle-1	Jack
7. MIGUEL O'DONNELL Assistant Chef		398269	30	Gun-1 Zero-G Combat-1 Vacc-2 Steward-1 Grav Vehicle-1	Jack
11. EMILIO DE CASERT Main Door Clerk		886734	34	Gun-2 Brawling-2 JoT-2 Electronic-1 Mechanic-1 Medic-1 Bribe-1	Mesh
12. RAPHAEL MORENG Stage Manager/MC		547867	45	Streetwise-1 Electronic-2 Steward-3 Wheeled Vehicle-2 JoT-2 Electronic-1 Mechanic-1 Medic-1 Bribe-1	None
13. AUGUSTE WAGNER Stage Technician		446545	34	Gun-1 Grav Vehicle-1 Electronic-2 Forger-1	None
14. FERNANDO DIDET Stage Hand		776775	26	Bribe-1 JoT-1 Blade-1 Brawling-1	None
15. DONALD WEDELL Basement Manager		659676	42	Brawling-1 Gun-1 Gambling-3 Fwd Obs-1 Admin-1 Forger-2	Jack
16. PHILLIP MOOKERII Basement Steward		84787A	46	Brawling-1 Gun-1 Admin-1 Gambling-1 Grav Vehicle-1 Computer-1	Mesh
17. EDDY SAROJET Basement Bartender		967074	34	Blade-1 Zero-G Combat-1 Vacc-1 JoT-1 Mechanic-2	None
20. CARL MAMOS Teller		R77C96	34	Gun-1 Gambling-1 Steward-2 Computer-1 Mechanic-1 Wheeled Veh-1	Mesh
21. RICHARD PESTARQUE Basement Clerk		AB5652	30	Gun-2 Brawling-2 Steward-1 Bribe-1 Navigation-1 Streetwise-1 Grav Vehicle-1	Mesh

**RESTRICTIONS - Combat Skills:**  
Although skills have not been assigned to specific weapon types, players may only choose within the framework given below:  
**Brawling:** In this scenario, Brawling skill is assumed to cover the use of Dagger and Blade in addition to Hands and Clubs. All characters may carry one of either dagger or blade on their person, except characters 6 and 7 who may not carry any, though of course the Kitchen contains many improvised blade weapons.  
**Blades:** Characters with Blade skill may only choose Foil or Sword (which are separate skills). If they do not wish to carry either of these weapons, they may convert all or part of their Blade skill to Brawling skill. Only one of either Foil or Sword may be carried, and only characters with Blade skill may carry these weapons.  
**Guns:** Characters are restricted to Pistol skill covering Body Pistol, Auto Pistol and Revolver, and Zero-G Weapons skill from which initially they may only choose the Stub Pistol (though if a member of the raiding force dropped an Accelerator Rifle, the skill level would apply to its use). Only characters with Zero-G Combat skill may choose Zero-G Weapons skill. All characters these may carry two, one of which must be a Body Pistol. Silencer is the only accessory permitted.  
All skills possessed have been given - not all will be of use in the scenario. Hand Calculator and Wristwatch are the only permitted equipment from *Soak 3*.

**Starting Locations**  
Club Personnel start the scenario in the following locations:

Character	Room	Character	Room	Character	Room
1	28	7	11	15	31
2	5	11	11	16	30
3	14	12	5	17	30
4	14	13	17	20	30
5	14	13	17	21	33
6	11	14	17	21	42

**MODULE 11: Referee's Notes**

REFEREE ONLY

**Preliminaries**  
The Referee should feel free to change any details in this scenario (especially if any of the players read *White Dwarf*!), as long as any changes are consistent with both the remainder of the scenario and any larger campaign the Referee may be running.  
It is suggested that the scenario is photo-copied (for personal use only, please) and separated into *Modules*. Players should be given the information *Modules* to which they are entitled.

**General Course of Play**  
Whichever version is being played (see *Introduction*), it is suggested that the players write down moves and hand to the Referee, who does the actual movement or his own map (see below, *Module 5* notes), reporting back to the players the success or otherwise of any desired action, and any unusual circumstances. Use of the *Snapshot* 'Action Points' system will increase realism. It is recommended that Club personnel hand in moves three rounds in advance, until the action starts. Remember that all hall could have broken loose in one part of the club without others being aware of it - all characters should act in a rational manner based on information available to them at the time. The Referee should also provide a reasonable rate of non-player character customer arrivals (and departures) to both sections of the Club - a majority percentage arriving on foot, also traffic on the streets and so on.

**The Modules**  
**MODULE 1:** The Referee may hand this to players or read it out as part of the respective player briefings (*Modules 2 & 9*).

**MODULE 2:** This may be handed to the Task Force players, but it would set the scene better if the Referee arranged an actual 'briefing'.

**MODULES 3 and 10:** Characters generated for your own campaign may be substituted, but significantly higher or lower breadths and level of skills held may unbalance the scenario. To me, the inclusion of Dagger and Blade in with Brawling skill better simulates in-fighting. However, if the Referee prefers the standard rule, players may re-assign Brawling and Blades skills (not exceeding the given total number of skill levels) amongst Brawling, Dagger, Blade and other permitted Blade weapons.

**MODULES 4, 5, 6 - General:** These represent basic information always available to players - to those of the Task Force by dint of intensive memorising and to Club personnel by long familiarity.

**MODULE 4:** Planetary data format (first line) is in *Kinuir* and is a standard *Traveler* format, i.e. Name/Sector-Location-Startport/Characteristics-Tech Levels-Bases-World Type(s)-Gas Giant presence.

All information in this module is in standard Computer Libraries. References to other files give the key words to retrieve. For the Flora/Fauna file, the Referee could make up an Urban terrain encounter table (think of the types of animal found in towns on Earth). The relevant tables in *Traveler Supplement 2 - Animal Encounters* - are pp.8-11, though encounters can of course be dispensed with. Similarly the Approach Procedure file (in which the Referee gives navigational details) will not be required unless the Referee expands the scenario beyond its

present planet-bound limits. Much of the information in *Module 4* is of this category, but since this is the first *Traveler* scenario to appear in *White Dwarf*, it is desirable to indicate the extent of planetary information required to give a planet some background and character.

**MODULE 5:** The map features are explained in *Modules 6, 8 and 9*. Partition walls and most internal doors take hits as Mesh (i.e. a successful throw passes through), with 1D of damage 'lost', office doors and external doors less 2D damage and as Batté Divas, structural walls, the cold storeroom door and all safes less 3D damage and as Batté Dress4, and all windows (or toughened plexiglass) less 1D-1 damage and as Jack. Normal vehicles take hits as partition walls, but all PRGI and police vehicles, and the Club owner's *Ally*, take hits as external doors. The Referee could generate a 'critical hit' throw for vehicles.  
It is suggested that the best way of running the scenario is for the Referee to have one copy of the map and each group of players to have another. The players have only the information they currently possess displayed on their map. Maps may be mounted either (a) on softboard or similar using coloured map pins to represent characters etc., or (b) on hardboard using pins or blobs of Blu-tack or with a clear plastic overlay and grease pencil markings.

**MODULE 6:** This module consists of information not normally available in standard library memories, though the city plan and traffic logs, would be on local tapes. Some detail on traffic law has been given since it may be important to play. Vehicle movement is less specific - since 100km/hr represents a speed of approx. 280 squares per combat round, and a realistic urban speed restriction of 40km/hr is 110sq/turn, these are academic - acceleration in under 15secs is commonplace in 1980, so movement on the Club plan is fleeting. Generally rule that it takes 1er to exit the playing area but one shot at extreme range if the target is still in sight may be possible in the next cr, in addition to any shots made while the vehicle was in the playing area. It should be possible to break down driving/flying tasks in terms of Action Points for more realism.

**MODULE 7:** The Referee should furnish Task Force players with the relevant items called for in this module from *Module 9*. Descriptions sufficient to recognise characters 1,2,3,8,12,15 and 19 are available to players - rote staff are not, but their jobs are usually self-evident.  
The electronic detection net can be spotted by characters with Electronic-1 or more. Characters with Electronic-2 get a DM +1 when attempting to by-pass it. For gambling see also the notes to *Module 5* below. Note that the Task Force players do not get the actual weather conditions until the scenario starts. From *Module 6* the Referee should give reasonably complete descriptions for the public rooms (i.e. 1-5/11-16/24-24 25-27/31-31/33/42).

**MODULE 8:** The following additional information, and the Club personnel that know it, applies to the offices (8 & 22) - all these items are normally locked.

**a) Club Office:** a) Filing cabinet - Membership records of the ground floor section of the Club, and delivery, booking and general records. At the bottom are cartons of blank stationery.  
b) Desk drawers - Top: Miscellaneous stationery and a petty cashbook containing about Cr.120. Middle: Various outstanding bills and a petty cash ledger, and a loaded Auto-pistol. Bottom: Various handbills, general correspondence and machinery operating manuals, and two spare Auto-pistol clips.  
c) Safe - Cash and pay ledgers, a couple of items of jewellery found in the Club (worth about Cr.150 each), and cash in bills to the value of Cr.1700. There is nothing in this office connected with ship piracy.

**28. Office:** a) Filing cabinet - Membership records of the Gambling section, bar and general records. At the bottom are cartons of stationery, unopened packs of gambling chips and playing cards.

b) Left-hand desk drawers - Top: Under a loaded Auto-pistol is a ledger of current members, two Auto-pistol spare clips, an emergency face mask and a canister of knock out gas. Upper Middle: Stationery, petty cashbook containing about Cr.250, and a petty cash ledger. Lower Middle: General correspondence. Bottom: Machinery manuals and a box of medical dressings.

c) Right-hand desk drawers - Top: Owner's personal correspondence (nothing incriminating). Middle: Empty but for a small slab of Refrax explosive wired to the drawer runners - guaranteed to blow your hand off if the drawer is opened (3D damage). Characters with Combat Engineering or RAM Grenade Launcher skills may notice the faint but distinctive smell of Refrax if the desk is closely examined. Bottom: Contains a humidifier with 47 cigars, and a small dagger.

d) Western safe - contains agreements and orders all sufficiently damning the owner's complicity in piracy; also a folder containing un-cashed drafts on government funds. This safe is rigged to a Refrax charge (as for above) if opened incorrectly.

e) Middle safe - contains upwards of Cr.32000 in large bills and a ledger detailing members owing money.

f) Eastern safe - Cash and pay ledgers and about Cr.2600 in cash.

Club Character	Knows Contents of:
1	9-all; 28-all.
2	9-all.
3	9-a,b.
12	9-a,b.
15	28-a,b,e,f.
16	28-a,b.
18	28-a.
20	28-a.

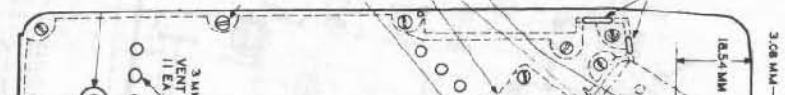
Characters not mentioned know none of the items.

The Referee should additionally assign locations to a scattering of torches, tool sets, first aid boxes and fire extinguishers. Club personnel will know these locations.

**MODULE 9:** A normal police patrol consists of two officers with snub pistols. The special squad is two identical sections of four officers, three of whom are armed with both snub and auto-pistols, the fourth carrying auto-pistol and RAM Grenade Launcher.

Gambling is almost exclusively in forms of poker, with income derived by levying a tax of Cr.40 for each hour the table is occupied. Additionally, members may tax on the 'house' by gambling against the *Basement Manager* (15). The Referee is to determine any changes in the weather (i.e. a sea fog).

**MODULE 10:** See notes for *Module 3* above.





# CRIMINALS



## An alternative livelihood for Travellers by Trevor Graver

In *Traveller* the armed forces of the galaxies are covered in great detail, but what about the people who escape the draft and turn to crime for a living? This article aims to bridge the gap and expand part of the 'Others' section of the *Traveller* rules.

To become a criminal, you must escape the draft into the armed forces by rolling 6 or less on 2D6; DM's: 1 Education 5 or less; 2 Social 5 or less.

Failing this roll means that the authorities have traced the individual and drafted them into a service. (NB: it is still possible to get drafted into the 'Others', but the character cannot use these tables and must use the book 1 tables, and he must serve out his time.)

If enlisted into the criminal world, roll 1D6 to determine the type of activity:

- 1: Pirate
- 2: Thief
- 3: Thug
- 4: Assassin
- 5: Con Man
- 6: Player's Choice

When criminal type is known consult the list below to find the basic skills for the appropriate criminal type (CT). Learning these takes 1 year.

- Pirate*: Gun Cbt-1; Streetwise-1
- Thief*: Recon-1; Streetwise-1
- Thug*: Brawling-1; Streetwise-1
- Assassin*: Disguise-1; J-O-T-1
- Con Man*: Liason-1; Forgery-1

After basic skills are noted, the character must serve all terms of crime in the same service, unless he goes to prison in which

case when he comes out he may Cross-Train in another CT. This means that he may change CT and use another CT table to roll criminal activities on.

Each term has 4 yearly types of criminal activity, basic training is the 1st year in the 1st term. For resolution of the other years roll 2D6 for each year on Table 1 below:

Table 1: CRIMINAL ACTIVITY TABLES

Die Roll	Pirate	Thief	Thug	Assassin	Con-Man
2	Going Straight	Going Straight	Going Straight	Going Straight	Going Straight
3	Battles	Fugitive	Battles	Fugitive	Crimes
4	Crimes	Lying Low	Battles	Lying Low	Fugitive
5	Lying Low	Lying Low	Crimes	Battles	Lying Low
6	Crimes	Crimes	Lying Low	Crimes	Crimes
7	Crimes	Crimes	Crimes	Battles	Crimes
8	Crimes	Crimes	Lying Low	Lying Low	Crimes
9	Lying Low	Crimes	Battles	Crimes	Lying Low
10	Lying Low	Lying Low	Crimes	Lying Low	Crimes
11	Fugitive	Battles	Fugitive	Lying Low	Battles
12	Battles	Fugitive	Fugitive	Fugitive	Fugitive

### CRIMINAL ACTIVITY SUBTABLES

Numbers in Parentheses mean Reversed Results e.g. Lose Rep etc.

PIRATE					
	Battle	Crimes	Fugitive	Lying Low	Going Straight
Survival	6+	5+	6+	4+	3+
Record	6+	9+	10+	11+	(9+)
REP	8+	8+	None	11+	(8+)
Skills	5+	6+	10+	None	10+
DM's for Survival: +1 INT 8+; +1 Streetwise 3+					

THIEF					
	Battle	Crimes	Fugitive	Lying Low	Going Straight
Survival	7+	5+	5+	4+	2+
Record	9+	9+	10+	11+	(8+)
REP	9+	8+	None	12+	(9+)
Skills	7+	5+	12+	None	10+
DM's for Survival: +1 if CT Skill 3+; +1 if INT 9+					

THUG					
	Battle	Crimes	Fugitive	Lying Low	Going Straight
Survival	6+	5+	4+	4+	3+
Record	8+	8+	9+	10+	(9+)
REP	10+	10+	None	12+	(10)
Skills	5+	6+	9+	8+	10+
DM's for Survival: +2 if Streetwise 3+					

ASSASSIN					
	Battle	Crimes	Fugitive	Lying Low	Going Straight
Survival	4+	6+	4+	5+	2
Record	8+	9+	8+	10+	(11+)
REP	10+	10+	None	12+	None
Skills	5+	4+	11+	10+	12+
DM's for Survival: +1 INT 10+; +1 if CT Skill 3+					

CON-MAN					
	Battle	Crimes	Fugitive	Lying Low	Going Straight
Survival	6+	4+	6+	4+	3
Record	9+	9+	9+	12+	None
REP	10+	8+	None	None	None
Skills	3+	5+	11+	None	10+

*Crimes*: Crimes are those appropriate to CT.

*Going Straight*: Trying to give up the life of crime. The character immediately rolls 2D6 again: 10+ he will go straight and lead a normal life, getting a job etc. He will spend all of his remaining years in a good job. This means that he rolls on the Criminal Activity Subtables only until he leaves the service. Less than 10 and he goes straight for that year only and then rolls on Table 1 for the subsequent years as normal.

*Battles*: The character is involved in fights, gunbattles, car chases, sometimes even space battles with customs/rival gangs/police/etc.



**Fugitive:** The character is on the run and may sometimes have to escape by leaving the planet.

**Lying Low:** The character has been subject to scrutiny by the authorities and has to keep a low profile to shake off 'the heat'.

Now to determine the results of each activity for each year, roll 2D6 on the appropriate Criminal Activity Subtables for each of the following:

**Survival:** Any criminal activity has some danger of injury or arrest. If the dice roll (including DMs) exceeds the number needed, the criminal has escaped arrest. A number 1 less than or equal to the number needed means that the character has been arrested and will be sent to prison on a 2D6 roll of 9+; DMs +1 per previous arrest, or conviction. (1st arrest automatically gives 1 EP, (see below). Less than that and he has been killed.

**Record:** Any criminal activity will leave some sort of evidence, finger-prints retina-prints, hair etc. If the number needed is rolled, then the authorities have 1 evidence point against the character, (EP's) a number higher than needed gives EP's equal to the amount the dice roll exceeded the number. E.g. The number needed is 8+, if the dice roll is 12, the character has 4 EP's on his record.

**Rep:** Certain activities give the criminal a reputation, and will move him deeper into the web of corruption. A high rep means that the criminal will be accepted by other criminals easier. It may even help him gain skills.

**Skills:** If the number needed is rolled the criminal has gained a skill. Skills are rolled for on the appropriate CT Table or the Criminal Life Table (See Table 2) but the player must state which before the dice are rolled. Criminals who go to prison may gain skills, roll 2D6 per 3 years in prison: 8+ and a skill has been gained. This is rolled on the Prison Skill Table. Ex-criminals roll on the Ex-criminal Table.

**Table 2: SKILLS**

Criminal Life	Pirate	Thief	Thug
1 +1 Stren	1 Forgery	1 Locksmith	1 Recruiting
2 Gambling	2 Ships Tactics	2 Recon	2 Brawling
3 Brawling	3 Ships Boat	3 Streetwise	3 Recon
4 Streetwise	4 Gun Combat	4 Bribery	4 Gun Cbt
5 Blade Cbt	5 Engineer	5 Vehicle	5 Streetwise
6 Liason	6 Bribery	6 Gambling	6 Interrogation
7 +1 Endur	7 Streetwise	7 Demolition	7 -1 Social
8 +1 Dext	8 Gunner	8 Gun Cbt	8 Gun Combat
9 Vehicle	9 Engineer	9 Interrogation	9 Brawling
10 J-O-T	10 Blade	10 Mechanics	10 Unarmed Cbt
11 Gun Cbt	11 Vacc Suit	1 Electronics	11 Vehicle
12 Lockpick	12 Pilot	12 Streetwise	12 Blade

Assassin Skills	Con-Man	Prison	Ex-Criminal
1 Disguise	1 Computer	1 +1 Stren	1 Vehicle
2 Demol	2 Forgery	2 +1 Stren	2 Mechanics
3 Gun Cbt	3 Disguise	3 +1 Endur	3 -1 Social
4 Forgery	4 Electronics	4 +1 Endur	4 Vehicles
5 Vehicle	5 Liason	5 +1 Dext	5 Steward
6 +1 Dex	6 Gun Cbt	6 -1 Social	6 Hunting
7 J-O-T	7 Bribery	7 -1 Social	7 Admin
8 Electronics	8 Gambling	8 Steward	8 Commo
9 Unarmed Cbt	9 Streetwise	9 Streetwise	9 Medical
10 Recon	10 Forgery	10 Brawling	10 Gravatics
11 Tactics	11 Commo	11 Brawling	11 Pilot
12 J-O-T	12 Computer	12 Cross-Training	12 Computer

**Prison Terms**

If a criminal is sentenced to prison, add up the EP's on his criminal record and see how long he is sentenced for:

- 1 EP: The character may turn stool pigeon, roll 10+, if so he is given surgery and set free. If any years remain in his term he uses the lie low chart, and any arrest result means that he has a contract out on him. Death also means that he has a contract out on him, but it has been successfully carried out!
- 2 EPs: 1 year in prison.
- 3-5 EPs: 3 years in prison.
- 6-9 EPs: 6 years in prison.
- 10-15 EPs: 10 years and rehabilitation. (Lose 1 skill level in non-combat criminal skills, E.g. Streetwise, Forgery, Bribery etc.
- 16+ EPs: Vapourisation . . . . . DEATH!!!

**Re-enlistment**

Throw 5+; DMs +1 per Rep level (Rep-6 gets +6) -1 per year 'straight'.

**Mustering Out**

Use the normal Money Benefit Table as bk 1, but substitute Table 3 below for material benefits.

**Table 3: MUSTERING OUT**

- 1 Low Passage
- 2 +1 Intel
- 3 +1 Educ
- 4 Tools
- 5 Vehicle
- 6 High Passage
- 7 Vehicle
- 8 Surgery

DM's: 1+ REP 3+; +2 REP 6+

**Tools:** A set of burglar's tools, electronux (electrified knuckleduster for a heavy), a forgery kit, or an assassin's weapon (a gun he has expertise in, complete with carrying case, sights folding stocks etc.) appropriate to CT.

**Surgery:** The criminal has surgery (normally costing 30,000cr) from a 'discrete' surgeon, which changes his appearance.

**Wheels:** An old term meaning getaway vehicle, the criminal receives any vehicle listed in the vehicle skill section of *Mercenary* (Not *High Guard*).

**CRIMINAL RANKS TABLE**

- Rep 1: Suspected Criminal
- Rep 2: Criminal
- Rep 3: Known Criminal
- Rep 4: Galactic Enemy 50\*
- Rep 5: Galactic Enemy 30
- Rep 6: Galactic Enemy 20
- Rep 7: Galactic Enemy 10
- Rep 8: Galactic Enemy 5
- Rep 9: Galactic Rat (Steel) 2
- Rep 10: King Rat (Stainless Steel) 1

\*GEN: Galactic Enemy Number, this number is the number of '0's that follow the criminal rank E.g. GEN 5 = 100000, that is, any number between the GEN and the next lowest number.

**Skills Gained Through Rank:** Rp 3: Streetwise; Rp 5: Forgery; Rp 9: Computer

**Bounty**

To find how much a criminal is worth, subtract his GEN from 51 and multiply this by his criminal record times 1000 Cr.

**New Skills**

**Disguise:** This skill gives the ability to change one's appearance, for a certain amount of time, to a certain extent. Basic Chance: throw 8+ (DM's: +1 per level of expertise; -1 per 2 hours of having the disguise on without touching up the disguise - make the basic throw again +DM's). DM's for extent of the disguise depend on the situation and are up to the Referee. E.g. If a male wookiee wants to pass himself off as a female belly dancer from earth, he loses 3pts of INT.

Failure to make a disguise roll means that suspicion may arise if the situation dictates. E.g. In a bank raid the criminal has knocked out the manager and attempts to disguise himself as the bank manager. Roll 1st to see if any notice is taken of the character, roll on the reaction table, a negative response or worse indicates that someone may realise the manager is not acting normally, DM's to the reaction roll +1 if Recon Skill 2 or more (because the character may have studied the bank manager before the raid). Then roll to see if the disguise works with DM's for how long the person took putting the disguise on etc.

**U A Combat:** This skill gives a +1 to all damage done with hands or feet in hand to hand combat: per skill level.

**Lockpick:** This skill aids in picking any type of lock when using the lockpick kit. DM's: -1 per skill level (see bk 3 page 15).



### Scout Service in Traveller by Andy Slack

"How do you tell a youngster raised on the 3V serials that you're still alive only because you ran away with less provocation than the other five guys — and you're rich because you've got their shares as well?"

Shel Meldol, ITSS (Retd.)

#### BACKGROUND

The Scout Service of the Imperium has many tasks; probably the most widely known is its survey function. *Traveller Book 1* provides a character generation system for general adventurer characters; this article presents an expanded procedure for more experienced Scouts of the Survey Arm.

The Scout Service Survey Arm performs astronomical and planetological surveys of unexplored subsectors. If Lost Colonies or alien life-forms are discovered in the course of these surveys, the Service makes recommendations as to the advisability of contact, exploitation, and trade. Suitable planets are recommended for colonisation, in which case the Service provides liaison personnel to advise and protect new colonists. Due to their intimate knowledge of certain systems and superior sensor equipment, Scout personnel are often seconded to the Navy as pathfinders, guides, or interpreters; particularly if aliens or ecology-disrupting modes of assault are to be involved.

Retired Scouts are much in demand by the smaller governments and larger corporations of the Galaxy for their own exploration/exploitation projects. Such projects tend to be less fastidious than the Imperium about possible effects on local ecologies and populations.

#### NOTE ON SKILLS

To conserve space, definitions of the skills acquired have not been included; therefore, persons using this article will need:

- 1) *Traveller, Book 1*
- 2) *Mercenary, Traveller Book 4*
- 3) *High Guard, Traveller Book 5*
- 4) *Citizens of the Imperium, Supplement 4*

If *Mercenary* and *High Guard* are not used in your campaign, this article will probably give Scout characters too great an advantage over other classes.

#### Weapon Combat

This skill may be taken as *Blade Combat*, *Gun Combat*, or *Brawling* at the player's discretion.

#### ENLISTMENT

A throw of 7+ on 2d6 is required to enlist in the Scout Service. A DM of +1 is allowed for Intelligence 6+, and a DM of +2 is allowed for Strength 8+. These DMs are cumulative.

#### ACQUIRING SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Upon enlistment, a character embarks on a term of service lasting four years. This is divided into four one-year assignments. Characters determine their assignment each year, then resolve all actions pertaining to it. Upon completing the fourth assignment, the character has concluded one four year term, and may attempt to re-enlist (a throw of 3+ on 2d6 is required) or elect to muster out.

#### Specialities

When first enlisting, a character determines in what capacity he will serve the Scouts by rolling 1d6 and consulting the *Speciality Selection* table below. DMs: +2 if Intelligence 10+, -2 if Intelligence 5-. A further DM of +2 is allowed at the character's option if his Education is 11+.

The six Specialities of the Survey Arm are *Security*, *Support*, *Flight*, *Geology*, *Ecology*, and *Contact*.

#### SPECIALITY SELECTION

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 0 | Security |
| 1 | Security |
| 2 | Support  |
| 3 | Support  |
| 4 | Flight   |
| 5 | Geology  |
| 6 | Ecology  |
| 7 | Contact  |

*Security Specialists* are charged with protecting the personnel of the other five groups from hostile life-forms and other hazards; *Support Specialists* ensure the continued functioning of the many and varied items of high-technology equipment used by the Service; *Flight Specialists*

have the responsibility of delivering the other groups to their destination intact. The first three groups are therefore concerned with enabling the personnel of *Geology*, *Ecology* and *Contact* to perform their tasks free from distraction; these tasks are respectively mineral resources surveys, surveys of current and potential flora and fauna, and liaison with local cultures.

*Flight Specialists* are also concerned with Remote Sensing of systems and the construction of astrogation charts.

Once a Speciality has been selected, a character may only change it by cross-training in the Speciality he wishes to transfer to, then re-enlisting in that speciality at the beginning of a new four year term.

#### Basic and Advanced Training

This occupies the first assignment of the first term. The character rolls for two skills on his Speciality Skills Table.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment is resolved separately. This is a three-stage process: first, the character determines if he has been placed in command of a Scout team. Roll 2d6; if the result is less than or equal to the character's current Grade, he has been placed in a command position. Second, the character rolls 2d6 on the *Specific Assignments* table to determine his assignment for that year; and lastly, the assignment is resolved. Four rolls (each on 2d6) on the appropriate *Assignment Resolution* table are required:

1. *Survival*: To survive an assignment, the character must roll the indicated number or higher on 2d6. Since duty in the Scouts is particularly hazardous, if exactly the number stated is thrown, the character has received some crippling injury in the line of duty. One of his physical characteristics is reduced by one point (roll 1d6: 1,2 = Strength, 3,4 = Dexterity, 5,6 = Endurance) and his next assignment is automatically to a Base Hospital, where he spends the year recovering. However, since the Service does not believe in wasting manpower, roll 4+ on 1d6 to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: *Admin*, *Computer*, *Instruction*.

Optionally, characters failing to make their survival roll are allowed a saving throw against death. If a character rolls his Endurance or less on 2d6, he is considered not to have been killed, but instead to be so severely maimed that he is granted an honourable discharge on medical grounds. He musters out immediately, without completing any remaining assignments of that term; he does not dice for Bonuses, Promotion, or Skills for that assignment, and Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, and Intelligence are reduced by one point each.

2. *Bonuses*: Characters may receive Bonuses for ingenuity. If the indicated number or higher is rolled, a *Science Bonus* is awarded. The character is allowed a DM of +1 on the next roll for promotion. If the number rolled is at least three higher than the indicated number, a *Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Science* is received. This allows a DM of +2 on the next promotion roll. If the number rolled is at least six higher than the number stated, a *First Contact Bonus* is received. The winner of a *First Contact Bonus* immediately receives +1 Social Standing, is allowed a DM of +3 on the next promotion roll, and may choose his next assignment.

A character who has consistently been awarded at least one Bonus per term of Service receives a DM of +1 when rolling for benefits upon mustering out.

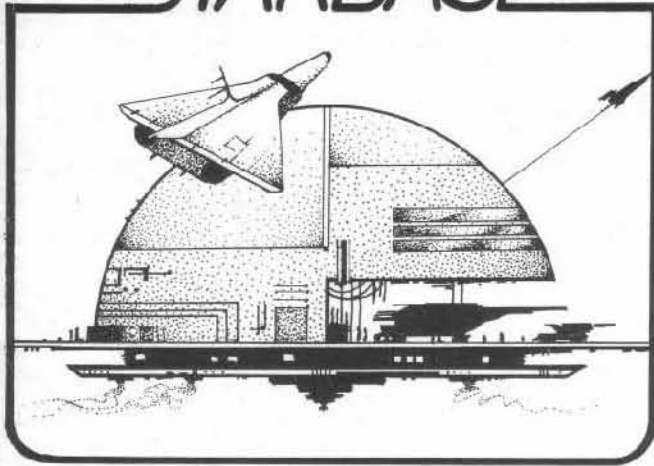
3. *Promotion*: There are no actual ranks in the Scout Service; a fluid structure assigns individuals on a basis of ability. However, an individual's Pay Grade increases with experience and responsibility. The Pay Grades used in this article are exactly parallel to the Enlisted ranks in *Mercenary* and *High Guard*;







# STARBASE



by Bob McWilliams

Welcome to the first of a regular column devoted to the Traveller role-playing science fiction game system. The intention behind this column is to provide Traveller players and referees with a similar service to that given D&D aficionados in the Treasure Chest feature of this magazine. No specific format is envisaged; anything to do with Traveller is welcomed. The Editor will still consider feature length articles, of course; but anything else is fair game for this column, so get writing!

The column kicks off with some of my own thoughts on the difficulty of combining rules and imagination to create playable situations.

## TRAVELLER CAMPAIGNS...

### SETTING UP

First, you need an idea. There are many sources — SF novels, magazines, films and TV shows, plus your own imagination, though often an idea I think is original turns out to be from a story I read years ago. Be prepared for a lengthy search, and be ruthless about throwing out ideas that don't make the grade. Keep notes, even of ideas that don't work — they can stop you from making the same mistake again, or they might work out at a later date. Stay on the side of simplicity; a simple idea can be embroidered as much as you like, but a complex one is difficult to handle and there may only be one solution which the players unerringly discover in ten minutes. Disguise the origins of your idea; you can almost guarantee that one of the players has read the same book.

Start out with a simple encounter if you haven't played before; a party of player-characters against brigands, law officers or animals would be suitable. Then go on to another similar encounter, adding a little more detail and complexity at each occasion; before you know it a campaign is in progress. Make sure that you as the referee can sustain the adventure at the level you have chosen both in terms of preparation and control over players' actions — another reason for keeping things simple until referee and players gain confidence. None of this will be wasted; you will be committing to memory some of the 'nuts and bolts' of the rules, which will stand you in good stead later.

I cannot stress enough the importance of thorough preparation for a playing session — the referee needs to have all the background information, carefully divided into what the players know at the start, what the players may find out, and what the players should not know. The referee should anticipate likely responses to situations. Allow plenty of time for preparation; have a clear idea of the length of time available, and tailor the adventure to suit. You may be able to continue later if you underestimate the time needed, but, if you overrun, avoid skipping over important parts of the game as playing, rather than finishing, is the essence of the game.

### PURPOSE

The main ingredients of a good situation (not usually all at once) are:

- 1: personal danger
- 2: monetary gain
- 3: improvement of personal skills or characteristics
- 4: job prospects
- 5: social advancement
- 6: expunging some force of evil (or good)
- 7: satisfying curiosity through exploration/investigation

These ingredients are as they are due to the nature of the 'reward' in Traveller. Due to the influence of other role-playing games, it has come to be accepted that characters should be rewarded by accruing experience points and rising in 'levels'; this is not to be found in Traveller. It is in keeping with the logic of the game system, and more truly 'role-playing', that it is the player rather than his characters who is rewarded by the increasing facility with which he negotiates the rules of the game and the situations thrown at him by the referee; he becomes more skilled at coping with the universe as, one hopes, all of us do in the real world. I feel that players enjoy participating, rather than 'winning', much more when freed of an artificial system of measuring their ability.

Despite all that I have just said, player-characters have to eat, so one of the most important factors to be considered is whether the possible rewards match the dangers, difficulties and expense involved. Players can expect a reduced reward if they fail to solve problems, but having worked hard to find their only recompense doesn't even pay for the ammunition used may lead to thoughts of grievous bodily harm on the person of the referee. Only in campaign play should 'lean' periods be considered. Make sure also that player-characters are suited to the situation, particularly with regard to skills required. There is no need to go overboard about this — no player can expect that every skill he possess will prove useful each time he plays. Players can however expect a fighting chance. This applies overall; facing players with impossible situations will only leave everyone frustrated. There is no necessity for a solution to be easy, but it must be possible.

### BACKGROUND

It is unlikely that you will be the master of every skill required in Traveller. A background in science fiction and fact is required to play and referee the game well. The referee needs to keep the game universe as consistent and realistic as possible, and this often entails areas of science with which you are unfamiliar. Two general references I use in this respect — apart from the usual things like a good dictionary and encyclopaedia — are Asimov's *Guide to Science* (2 vols, Pelican) and *Chambers Dictionary of Science and Technology* (2 vols, Chambers). For dealing with the social side of planetary affairs a good historical grounding is invaluable.

### SUMMARY

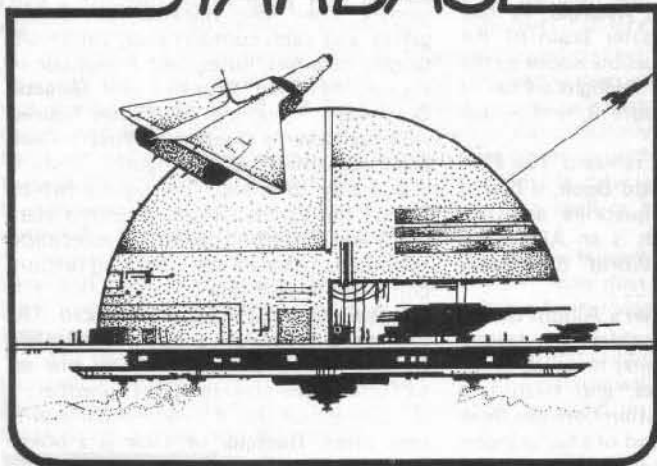
To sum up then, the essentials when considering whether an idea will make a good adventure are:

- 1: Will the adventure stand up as worthwhile; is there enough interest in the situation? Is the idea sufficiently, or apparently, dissimilar to previous recent adventures?
- 2: Can the referee cope with the background preparation required and the subject matter involved, and the possible directions players may take?
- 3: Does the situation fit into the time frame envisaged, and is there a possibility of a further playing session if it overruns?
- 4: Are players' likely rewards commensurate with the risks involved?
- 5: Are player-characters' skills at least reasonably matched to the tasks they might have to undertake?

I hope this is of some interest to budding Traveller referees and, will give some appreciation of all the work that goes into producing an adventure. I am aware that I have not dealt with the details of the process, which is a subject that I shall treat in a future issue. For now, good travelling.



# STARBASE



A regular *Traveller* feature by Bob McWilliams



In this issue, I should like to define (by giving an example) the mini-situation, which will occasionally feature in *Starbase*. The idea is to provide a short basic framework for a *Traveller* playing session. A particular rationale is selected, but the situation should be flexible so that it may be restructured to suit the referee's campaign. Include notes on any special features or non-standard rules, but keep it brief. Dig up those favourite moments from your *Traveller* campaign and see your name in print!

## THE LIFT

*Any world of size 5+, atmosphere 4-9, hyd 4-8, TL 7+*  
Listlessly, Wheeler sipped automatically from the tall glass. Around him, the few patrons of the Kaldahar Autoserve conversed in muted voices, or picked indifferently at the food before them. Trust Kelly to pick a dump like this for a contact! The outer door hissed aside, allowing snow flurries and the deep sonic boom of a far-off electric storm to penetrate the canned Muzak typical of Autoserves everywhere, and with them a short, well-built man in a soiled grav jockey's one-piece.

Without even the most rudimentary attempt at a cover, the man came directly to Wheeler's table and sat with easy grace. "Name's Louth, Wheeler — you know, Louth Cybernetics? Kelly put the word in for you. A block down for expenses, ten blocks on delivery. Interested?"

Despite his lousy method, at least he had Wheeler's attention. "How far, what's the drop, and who's chasin' it, Louth?"

The man managed a smile — "Run's from here to Yumach, own transport. I believe you know your way around these parts?"

Wheeler looked disappointed. "Well enough to know not to try out on the Glazers in this weather. The Hausser you see outside'll make Parun, no further. I'd need a 'rigger set minimum to even think of tacklin' them passes. Louth, your block ain't gonna buy that sort of layout. Wait fifty, sixty days for the snow to crust solid, tha's another story."

The smile lingered, "Okay Wheeler, I'll throw in the 'riggers —fitted at Parun. No sense in rousing curiosity in the locals."

## TERRAIN TABLE

Distances are movement rates per hour. Foot travel assumes full winter clothing. The number in brackets is the throws (on two dice) per two hours for an event. Refer to Events Table if throw

	FOOT	SKIS	SNOWMASTER	SM with RIGGERS	ACV	ATV	GROUND CAR
Class 1	3km (9+)	6km (6+)	18km (6+)	15km (6+)	20km (8+)	10km (7+)	10km (9+)
Class 2	2km (8+)	5km (7+)	10km (7+)	12km (7+)	15km (9+)	5km (9+)	not allowed
Class 3	1km (9+)	3km (8+)	5km (9+)	8km (8+)	not allowed	not allowed	not allowed

"You still ain't said what needs moving and exactly who's curious, Louth."

He hesitated fractionally — "Well, the delivery is one small case, about five kilos. An entirely new type of sponge matrix — that's the main component of a robot's computer brain — about half the weight per unit program capacity of present designs. Bits of matrix packed in padding, that have to go to the Sub-sector capital for patenting. With that patent, the stuff's priceless. The opposition are of course certain business rivals, but they shouldn't bother you. Apart from the Parun excise boys — I know you can deal with them — I figure if even you are uncertain about getting through to Yumach now, so will they. They'll guess I'll wait for the snow crust, as you said, so it's go now before the weather breaks. And I'm coming with you. To super-vised delivery."

"Well, it's your neck, but it looks like you got a deal."

Glossary Note: *Block* — Slang term for 1,000 credits.

Referees Notes: The basic objective of this situation is for Wheeler to get himself, Louth and his cargo to Yumach starport in his Hausser Snowmaster (a description of which follows these notes).

*Terrain:* (see accompanying map). The entire region is deep in the grip of winter, with snow covering all areas. The effects of gradients, roughness and varying snow conditions have been combined to produce three classes of difficulty in movement and event occurrence. Expressways and roads are always Class 1 terrain regardless of surrounding conditions (but, see weather), but tracks are presumed buried and are for reference only. The *Terrain Table* gives movement rates per hour and the chances of an event (normally throw every other hour). *Endurance* is the relevant characteristic in determining the number of hours before a compulsory rest stop.

## EVENTS TABLE

Throw one die on relevant table. General types of event are given; referee to determine detailed effect.

Foot/Skis	Vehicle
1 Exhaustion: immediate rest	1 Serious Breakdown
2 Lose Way	2 Direction equipment malfunction
3 Animal Encounter	3 Minor Breakdown
4 Equipment Lost	4 Minor Breakdown
5 Maelstrom	5 Maelstrom
6 Crevasse: 3km detour	6 Crevasse: 5km detour

*Weather:* Four types of weather in ascending order of severity are given. The weather starts overcast, and thereafter is thrown for every hour. Storms have the additional effect of turning roads and expressways into the surrounding terrain type until they can be cleared by snowplough. Maelstrom (see Events Tables) is a special form of storm so severe that no movement is possible.

## WEATHER TABLE

Throw one die per hour.

Present Weather	New Weather			
	Clear	Overcast	Poor	Storm
Overcast	1	2-3	4-5	6
Poor	—	1-2	3-4	5-6
Storm	1	2	3-4	5-6
<i>Movement Effect:</i>	normal	normal	¾ speed	½ speed

failed. DMs: *Foot/Skis:* Endurance 8+, +1; Endurance 10+, +2. *Vehicle:* Relevant vehicle skill -2, +1; skill -3, +2 and so on; Endurance 9+, +1.



**Characters:** Wheeler is a typical odd-job independent type who could be from any career background; skills should include at least Tracked Vehicle-3, Admin-1 and Bribery-1. Louth is a retired Merchant Officer who has started up in the computer business on his own. At least Computer-3 and Electronics-1 should be in his acquired skills.

On a single government world, an Excise section is maintained at Parun to monitor and levy regional taxes on trade goods. On a balkanized world, they perform the other usual functions of customs officers. At Parun, Louth's rivals should pick up some news of him, with a better chance the later he is. These rivals, represented by typical strong-arm types, may elect to chase after Wheeler in whatever transport is to hand or wait until they make the other side of the Glazers — Louth could fail to get that far anyway. Remember that no attacks are possible within the starport, which is classed as Imperial territory.

**Further Situations:** These notes and tables, and the map, provide basic winter weather rules and a suitable location for other types of winter situation.



HAUSSER SNOW MASTER

**Snow Master Tech Level: 7 Cost Cr 30,000 Weight: 5 tonnes**  
**Speed:** 25km/h in mud and marsh, 15 km/h in water, 35 km/h on snow. **Payload:** 1 tonne, or ½ tonne with a 1½ tonne payload trailer in tow. Refuelling and general specifications are as for the *All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV)*, of which it is a variety. Available with either a six-cylinder petrol engine for low tech worlds, or a rechargeable fuel cell for high tech worlds and ship's vehicle use. Cylindrical screw pontoons filled with expanded plastic foam enhance floatation of the amphibious hull, and propulsion in water and over snow is achieved by spiral blades on the pontoons. On snow, up to fifteen ski troops in full winter combat kit may be towed in place of a trailer.

Various optional extras (all Tech Level 7) are available:

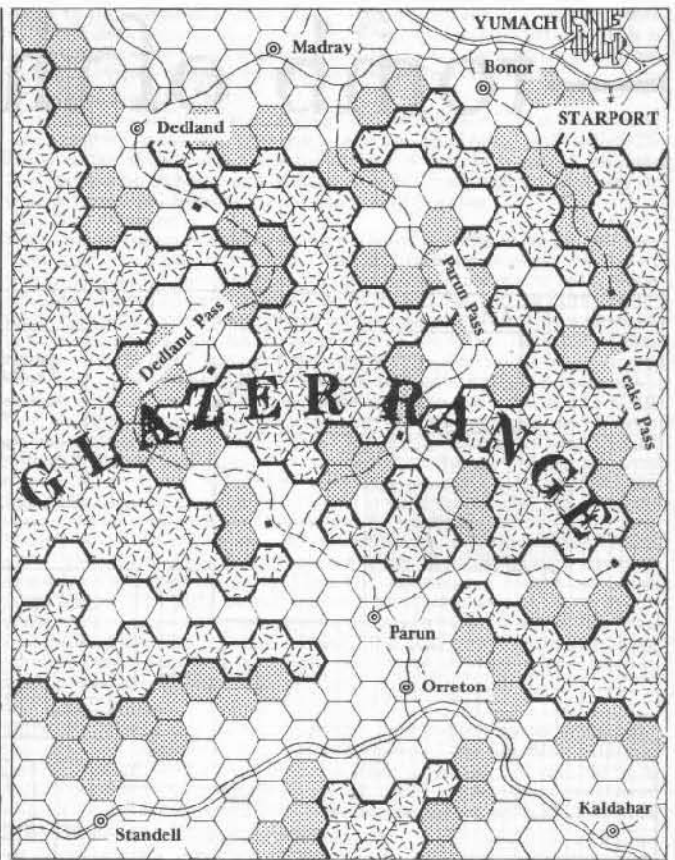
**Ski Outriggers.** Cr 3,000. Hydraulically damped outrigger set for particularly difficult snow or ice terrain.

**1½ tonne Trailer.** Cr 5,000. Covered amphibious trailer with bolt-on skis. If attached, reduces payload of main vehicle from 1 tonne to ½ tonne. Laden weight 2 tonnes.

**Track Conversion.** Cr 10,000. Set of tracks, bogies, mountings and power adaptors to convert to standard all terrain vehicle configuration. Takes about two hours (half this with suitable workshop facilities) to convert to or from pontoons. Class as a small ATV for movement purposes when tracks fitted.

Various other accessories are available, such as snow plough, snow blower, dozer blade, hydraulic loader arm and so on. It is up to the referee to determine costs of these if players require them.

Karl Hausser Fahrseugwerke GmbH, of Feri/Regina (0405-3384879-B) are the best-known producer of snow masters, having a high reputation for quality and long life. Due to this reputation, Hausser Snow Masters cost Cr 35,000, but gain a DM of -1 on breakdown throws, thus breaking down less frequently than other types.



## KEY

- Expressway
- Road
- - - Track
- ⊙ Town
- Climber's Hut
- Impassable Terrain
- Class 3 Terrain
- Class 2 Terrain
- Class 1 Terrain

Scale 1 hex = 20 km.

## D&D MINI-MODULE COMPETITION

In issue 20 we announced details of our first *Fiend Factory Competition*. The response has been incredible, and we have had a hard time sorting through pages and pages of fly tribal statistics (winning entry to be published next issue). Being gluttons for punishment we are now announcing a *D&D Mini-Module Competition*. It should be presented in the usual *White Dwarf* format (see *Halls of Tizun Thane — White Dwarf 18*), and should have around 40 rooms/encounter areas. Preferably a central theme should run through the mini-module, e.g. an indigenous tribe, specific task, etc. The best entry will receive a prize of *The Fiend Folio* on its publication, kindly donated by *Games Workshop Ltd*. Entries should be sent to The Editor, *White Dwarf*, 1 Dalling Road, London W6 to arrive no later than 30th November 1980.

... STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS ...

## GAMES DAY '80

...Sid Sackson, world famous games inventor (Acquire, Sleuth, etc.) will be flying over to Games Day to promote Spear's new game, *Focus*.... Brent Nosworthy, head of Operational Studies Group, USA, will attend Games Day....Games Workshop games: first delivery hopefully expected by Games Day. All games £6.95 each.... Shaun Fuller, figure artist and author of WD 'Magic Brush' article to give painting demo at Games Day.





Edited by Bob McWilliams

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted material for Starbase; in this issue is the first of these to see publication, together with a few comments. Please keep your contributions coming!

# Port Facilities

by S.L.A. McIntyre

## Type and Availability

Class A starport:	Orbital Station (1-2) Automatic. Tugs: (1-6) 99% chance. Tractor Tugs (1-2) 80% chance. Tenders (3-18) 85% chance. Repair tugs (1-2) 90% chance. Shuttles: (3-18) Automatic.
Class B starport:	Orbital Station (1) 90% chance. Tugs (1-3) 95% chance. Tractor tugs (1) 70% chance. Tenders (2-12) 75% chance. Repair Tugs (1-2) 80% chance. Shuttles (2-12) 95% chance.
Class C starport:	Tugs (1-3) 85% chance. Tractor Tugs (1) 50% chance. Tenders (1-6) 55% chance. Repair Tugs (1) 60% chance. Shuttles (1-6) 50% chance.
Class D starport:	Tug (1) 50% chance. Tender (1-3) 25% chance. Repair Tug (1) 30% chance. Shuttles (1-3) 25% chance.
Class E starport:	Shuttles (1) 10% chance.
Class X starport:	Nothing.

## Descriptions

**Orbital Station:** A space station in orbit around the planet, with facilities for refuelling, recreation and repair. There may also be dormitory space or the station might be an orbiting hotel, possibly run by the Traveller's Aid Society. Shuttles operate regularly from the station to the ground starport. The size and docking capacity of the station must be determined by the referee.

**Tug:** A 100 ton non-starship with generally type C M-drive and power plant. It has a pilot and an engineer as crew. A tug's function is to attach itself to ships to provide motive power. Several tugs may 'add themselves onto' the ship's power to move a ship faster or in difficult situations. Basically one tug may attach per hundred tons, but all acceleration is not cut down by the ship's dampers: i.e. it applies to the crew, as in *White Dwarf 14*. Tugs cost twice the amount of fuel they consume in operating. On rare occasions tugs may manoeuvre ships inside the atmosphere. This is difficult and dangerous so the service fees are very high (and few tug pilots will do it).

**Tractor Tugs:** These are tugs fitted with tractor beams, to manoeuvre ships from a long way off. They are found at TL 14-15 and for each TL below 14 the chance decreases by 10%. Referee's may abandon them if they do not use tractor beams or set the TL of introduction higher. Their chief use is as brakes for ships travelling fast, which have lost the use of their manoeuvre drives. Tractor beams are described in *White Dwarf 14*. At TL 16-18 all tugs become tractor tugs.

**Tenders:** 100 ton non-starships with drives B. They serve as tugs in emergencies but their chief role is as fire-fighting ships, shuttles, intra-system couriers and other general jobs. They may be chartered to attend to any one particular ship if the ship is in port for a long time. They may often be privately owned and run. The costs are equal to the fuel used plus Cr. 500 per hour or long term charters at Cr. 1,000 per day.

**Repair Tugs.** 100 ton non-starships with drives B. They may serve as tugs, but carry a crew of four. One will be the pilot but the others each have various expertises such as engineering, electronics, mechanical, gravitics, computer or commo, for repairs in orbit. Each crew member has expertise of two or more. They will cost the usual repair bill, plus 20% of the repair cost. **Shuttles:** Described in Starships. The shuttles at type E starports will be privately owned and may well charge high fees by virtue of their monopolies.

## Naval Bases

Occurrence is as *Traveller*, Book 3, but the facilities at the base are determined as follows. Naval bases are either first strength (normal determination as for starport) or second strength (determine as for starport one class lower). Scout bases are always equipped as a starport one class lower. The Scouts will offer their facilities to the public at a price, the Navy only in emergencies and then at a price. The type of warships at the base must be determined by the referee.

## Comments:

Just one or two points to make on a reasonable selection of port facilities.

C, D, and E starports with a higher than average Tech Level should have a good chance of an associated orbital station — this may in itself be the reason for few planetary facilities. However, the starport type should be the limiting factor on fuel and repair capabilities. The referee might also like to allocate a few special facilities to orbital stations, or even create additional stations, on a subsector-wide basis. Such things as hospitals, university departments, space academies and conference/exhibition centres spring to mind.

Shuttles may be modular (as the NASA Shuttle) and capable of being refitted for numerous other tasks.

As regards ownership, this may be related to the government type or any political description the referee has concocted — vessels may be state-owned, company-owned or even a co-operative as alternatives to private ownership.

# ROBE AND BLASTER

Upgrading Aristocracy in Traveller - by Rick D. Stuart



## TABLES

Table I: Social Status

Social Status	Title	No of d6 Rolled on Table II
11	Knight	1
12	Baron	2
13	Marquis	3
14	Count	4
15	Duke	5
16	Archduke	6
17	Viceroy	7
18	Viscount	8
19	Prince	9
20	Emperor	10

Table II: Benefits & Privileges

Dice Roll	Result
1	Pension
2-4	Merchant House Holdings
5-7	Space Lane Carrier Holdings
8-9	Court Influence (1d6)
10-11	Ancestral Lands
12	Immediate Inheritance
13-15	Right of Free Passage
16	Cash Grant
17-18	Estates
19-20	Right of Escort
21-24	Right to Bear Arms
25	Cash Grant (Doubled Value)
26-30	Asst. Governorship
31-34	Governorship
35-38	Court Influence (2d6)
39-42	Viceroyship
43-46	Quadrant Leadership
47-52	Right of Decree
53-54	Nobility Creation
55-56	Right of Pardon
57-60	Right of Taxation

All results gained on table above are cumulative. Players of high rank roll for each level of nobility up to and including the present level. E.g. A baron would roll once as a knight and once as a baron for the benefits.

One of the interesting features of GDW's *Traveller* game system is the idea of an interstellar aristocracy as represented by character Social Status ratings. Regrettably, this is also one area which the designers have failed to elaborate upon, leaving players with titles and no privileges to back them up, and likewise no real incentive to upgrade their status through various activities, dealings, etc. The following variant is offered in hopes of redressing this deficit and adding some depth to the *Traveller* nobility.

One immediate difference between standard *Traveller* nobility and those allowed by this variant is the addition of several new titles beyond Duke and Duchess. Moreover, nobles have privileges and rights conferred upon them specific to their station, with an accumulation of benefits as they rise in status. (See tables).

Another interesting feature of this new nobility is the right of *patronage*. Patronage can be dispensed in one of two manners.

Firstly, any noble having acquired a specific privilege or benefit as given below more than once has the option of "bestowing" that specific privilege on another character. The recipient can be non-noble in nature but must have a current Social Status of at least 8 or better, and such a bequest must be ratified by a die roll of 7 or better on 2d6.

Secondly, nobles use their patronage to sponsor non-noble characters into the aristocracy by the following method.

A die roll of 9 or better on 2d6 is needed with the following modifiers:

DM: + Sponsors current bribery skill level (if any).

A *Negative DM* reflecting the recipient's current social level as expressed as a difference in the following manner:  $10 - \text{Recip. Soc. Status} = \text{Neg. DM}$ .

Patronage in this last option cannot be allowed to be abused or misused however. To that end any noble failing to have his

client's nobility status ratified must forfeit one specific privilege already gained at his option. In this manner some constraint on the use of patronage is made. Note that this procedure applies to individuals originally non-noble being raised to Social Status 11 only, and may not be used to upgrade nobles from one level to another!

In this manner nobles are now more of a three-dimensional character than previously held. In conclusion note also that these tables below can be utilized with the standard nobility generation system found in *Citizens of the Imperium* quite easily, giving characters so generated additional capacities/capabilities as befits their rank.

#### Definition of Nobility Benefits

**Pension:** Same as standard additional service pension. Roll 1d6 X 1,000 Cr./pt.

**Merchant House Holdings:** Stock/bond portfolios yielding annual value of 1d6 X 1,000 Cr. dividends. May be sold at market value.

**Space Lane Carrier Holdings:** As per merchant holdings, except player rolls 2d6 X 10,000 Cr.

**Court Influence:** Used as DM on Reaction Rolls as allowed by referee. May also be used as DM in dispensing patronage.

**Ancestral Lands:** Planetary holdings held by player in perpetuity. Roll 3d6 X 10,000 Cr. for value. Lands yield 10–60% total value (1d6) annually in revenues and cost 10–60% of value for maintenance once every four years.

**Immediate Inheritance:** As per ancestral lands but player additionally rolls 3d6 X 10,000 Cr. for immediate available cash.

**Right of Free Passage:** Free transportation – High Passage on any common carrier even to the exclusion of other passengers.

**Cash Grant:** Imperial largess for meritorious services rendered. Roll 1d6 X 100,000 Cr.

**Estates:** Accumulation of personal property(ies). Roll as per ancestral lands with value of 2d6 X 10,000 Cr. costing 10–60% of value for maintenance annually.

**Right of Escort:** Right of personal bodyguard (Max. no. 1d6) armed in contravention of local Law levels, excluding energy weapons.

**Right to Bear Arms:** Right to personal sidearms in contravention of local law levels, excluding energy weapons at referee's option.

**Asst Government:** Assistant to planetary governor, duties and responsibilities at referee's discretion. Roll 4d6 X 1,000 Cr. for annual salary. Appointment must be renewed every 2 years. (Roll 10 or better on 2d6 with DMs for Bribery skill or Court Influence.)

**Governorship:** Administrator of a given planetary system. Use *Book 2* to determine number and type of worlds available. Responsibilities determined at referee's discretion. Player receives annual revenues at the following rate: 10,000 Cr. for Class A starport; 8,000 Cr. Class B; 6,000 Cr. Class C; 4,000 Cr. Class D. Position renewed as per procedure for *Asst. Governorship*.

**Viceroyship:** Administrator of several (2d6) planetary systems. Rules through planetary *governors*. Pay as twice governor's, determined by total number/type in viceroy's sector. Need not be renewed.

**Quadrant Leadership:** Administrator of several (1d6) viceroyships. Pay scale as above, triple standard rate for governorship. Additionally on die roll of 8 or better on 2d6 will also maintain complete control of all military forces within jurisdiction. Need not be renewed.

**Right of Decree:** Power to enact into law Imperial legislation, conferred by Imperial Senate.

**Nobility Creation:** Right of conferring noble rank (any level) without necessity of ratification by Senate upon any individual, of any prior rank.

**Right of Pardon:** Right to grant full and complete pardon for any and all crimes committed.

**Right of Taxation:** Right of imposition of planetary tax rates and exemptions. Control of Imperial revenue sources.



# Magic Items



## CRYSTAL FRUIT

by Georgia S. Moore and Roger E. Moore

*Crystal Fruit* are extremely rare, almost one-of-a-kind magical items created long ago. Each one is a beautifully worked piece of crystal in the shape of a piece of fruit, such as an apple, orange, lemon, lime, or such. Each piece will 'radiate' magic if an attempt is made to *detect* this. Careful inspection of a piece of *Crystal Fruit* will reveal that it can be unscrewed or unlatched in the middle. Opening the fruit reveals that the inside is hollow, and if held level each half of the fruit will slowly fill with a liquid of the same flavour as the fruit type. Each half of the crystal contains enough fruit juice for one person, and will not refill unless the two halves are screwed or latched together again and left so for at least a full day. Consuming the fruit juice will *dispel exhaustion* in the drinker, as the fourth level Illusionist spell, for 36 turns. The effects include the restoration of 50% of all lost hit points during this time, though the extra hit points will be lost afterwards. The drinker will also be able to move at double speed every turn for one round as if *hasted*. The fruit juice is always of perfect and enjoyable taste. *Crystal Fruit* range in size from the 1" diameter *Grape Crystal* to the 4" diameter *Orange Crystal*; larger and smaller fruits are possible as well. The supply of juice in a *Crystal Fruit* is infinite.

## THE ASSASSIN'S QUILL

by Kevin Readman

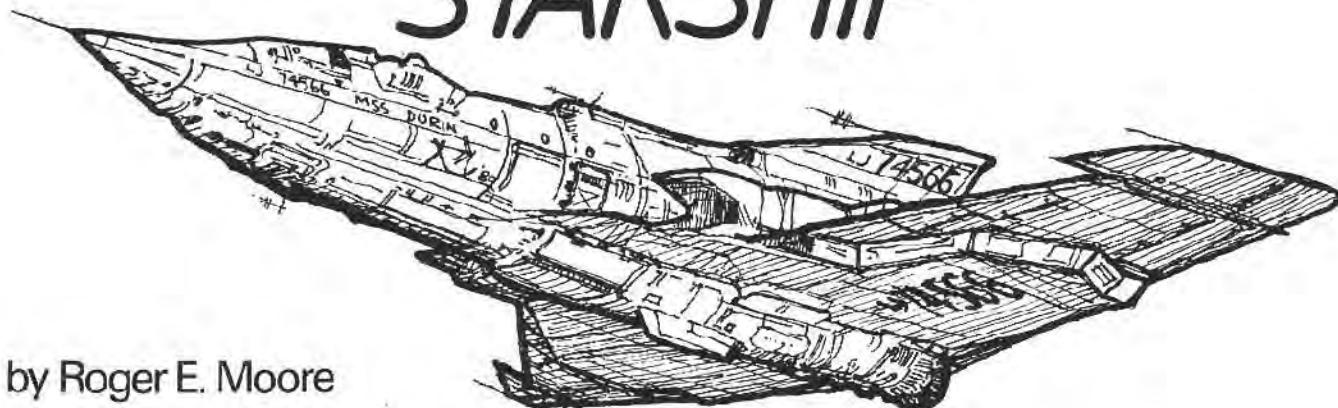
One of the most secretive of assassin weapons, and a coveted symbol of power, is the *Assassin's Quill*. It was developed exclusively for the use of assassins by a zealous religious sect in that order, who pride themselves on cunning devices that kill swiftly. If a non-assassin picks up or touches it, he must roll his saving throw as if he had been hit. The *Assassin's Quill* is a small compact magical weapon, the size and shape of brass knuckles.

Four +2 crossbow quarrel tips protrude from a richly decorated rectangular face. These quarrel tips have been treated with a very potent poison which will cause death in 1–4 melee rounds, unless the opponent saves at a –2 vs. poison.

The *Assassin's Quill* can be used either as a close combat fist weapon or a missile weapon. As a missile weapon, one of the four +2 quarrel tips, upon command from the assassin, will magically fire in the direction it is pointed (treat as if it is a light crossbow). Each quill does 1d4 damage when it is shot, plus any effect of the poison. When the *Assassin's Quill* is used in close combat it does 1 point of damage per crossbolt tip on the weapon, and the opponent must make his saving throw vs. poison. Once a quill is shot, it is rendered useless; it loses its magical and poisonous properties forever.



# KHAZAD-CLASS SEEKER STARSHIP



by Roger E. Moore

*Starbase is a regular department, edited by Bob McWilliams, featuring reader's ideas for Traveller.*

There are numerous variations of the 100 ton asteroid-mining craft known as the seeker; almost as many, commented one source, as there are asteroids. One of the more popular forms is the *Khazad* class seeker, which uses a modified type 100 hull. These ships have excellent manoeuvrability in atmosphere and may take off using standard aircraft runways of under 1,000 metres in length. *Khazad* class seekers are 34.5 metres from wingtip, 43.5 metres long, and have a fuselage diameter of about 7.5 metres.

A look at a floor plan of the *Khazad* class reveals that space normally available for an air/raft dock and for extra living quarters has been sacrificed to increase the size of the cargo bay, now encompassing 15 tons. A large 4.5 x 6 metre set of doors on the floor of the cargo bay can open to admit materials and specimens gathered during a prospecting mission. A special safety device will prevent opening the bay doors if the bay is still pressurized or if the iris valve to the crew area is not secure. The doors may be opened from the cargo bay or from the bridge. Two staterooms are included aboard the seeker; though it is sold with the recommendation that only two crewmen should travel aboard the ship to ensure maximum privacy and efficiency, in practice the ship is used by four people, frequently married couples who have pooled resources to purchase the ship.

The *Khazad* class seeker comes with a mining laser, which functions as a pulse laser -1 in combat situations. The laser is used to drill core samples, cut out cross-sections of material, shape an asteroidal surface for attachment of mining equipment, and so on. A single turret holds the mining laser and one ton of the ship's mass is taken up by the fire control equipment.

Jump drive-A manoeuvre drive-A, and power plant-A are installed aboard the ship, as well as a Model/1 computer. This type of ship uses an identification prefix of LJ (Light Seeker), followed by a five digit series of numerals. The *Khazad* class was named for a fictional race of dwarves from a fantasy novel of pre-Imperium dating; individual ships are named for dwarven characters from that novel (*Gimli, Durin, Thorin, Dain*, etc.), for dwarven characters from Norse mythology (*Fjaln, Andvari, Nissie*, etc.) or for dwarf-like creatures from other mythological sources (*Wichtlein, Bluecap, Kobold, Gnome, Knocker*, etc.). The cost of this class of ships is 26.37 million credits.

**Comments:**

This vessel is from *Traveller Supplement 4*, p15, allowed to Belters as a mustering-out benefit. This is a type of starship adventurers may well end up owning, since it is at the bottom end of the price market.

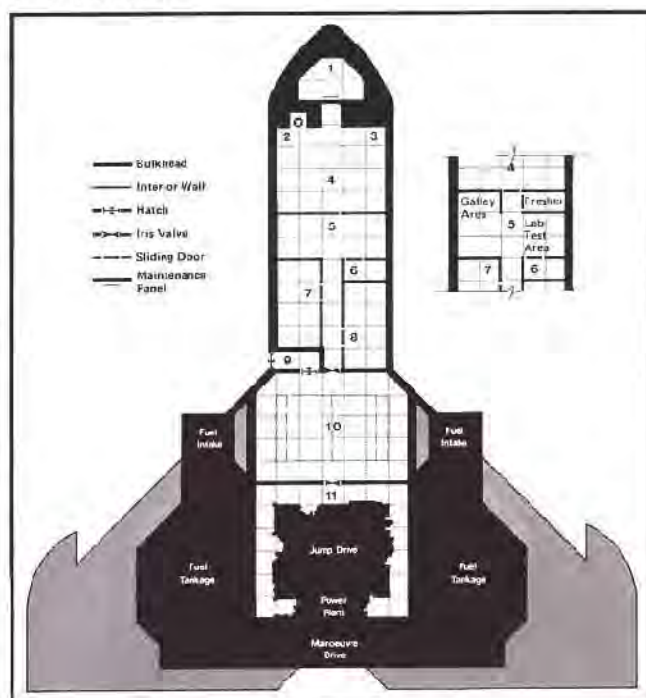
Roger has produced a generally sound plan and description, but one modification which I would make (and is shown in a scrap view next to the main plan) is to reduce the bridge size, which is rather large for a two-person vessel. This allows room for a galley and fresher. One end of the common area would have a computer console and mineral analyzers to determine ore sample quality.

The Universal Ship Profile for this class is:

JL-1122211-000000-10000-0

**DECK PLAN KEY**

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 - Avionics         | 7 - Stateroom One              |
| 2 - Computer         | 8 - Stateroom Two              |
| 3 - Fire Control     | 9 - Airlock                    |
| 4 - Bridge           | 10 - Cargo Bay and Cargo Doors |
| 5 - Crew Common Area | 11 - Drive Room                |
| 6 - Ship's Locker    |                                |







IN Yard 17 Security Pass

DATE OF ISSUE 001-1105
NAME MARC W MILLER
OCCUPATION TRAVELLER
SIGNATURE Marc W. Miller

## MARC MILLER

**WD:** How long have you been interested in FRPs?

**MM:** I have been in role-playing since 1968 or so, primarily participating in, and designing, political simulations, the kind that do nominating conventions, or the workings of the legislative process. As an undergraduate, I was in several, and in 1972 and '73 I was designing them for class-room use.

I encountered *D&D* soon after it came out, and although I initially disliked it (preferring *The Battle of the Coral Sea* and *The Russo-Japanese War* at the time). I soon ended up refereeing an extensive campaign that included just about the entire *GDW* staff. After several weeks, it got put on the back burner because it was taking up too much of the working day.

Since then, I have been interested in various FRPs off and on, depending on time and on the attractiveness of the actual campaign.

By the way, I sometimes get uncomfortable about the term FRP. I understand that most of the games in role-playing are fantasy — thus fantasy role-playing. But all of us at *GDW* have tried to make *Traveller* realistic, rather than fantastic. I realize that we can't change the terminology of the hobby, but I do consider that FRP also includes realistic and historical role-playing as well as fantasy.

**WD:** What are your other interests apart from gaming?

**MM:** At the risk of sounding like a wide-ranging crazy, I'll try to be honest and cover them all. I like science fiction, and read SF paper-backs all the time, as well as see every SF movie that comes to town. Actually, I go to see every movie that comes to town, not just the science fiction.

I like guns, and have an extensive collection of Savage automatic pistols: I like submarines, although I have no collection of them, not even one. I like writing, and some day I'll get some fiction out of my typewriter and there will be *Traveller* stories on the bookshelf. Well enough of non-games stuff... back to business.

**WD:** What are your views on the subject of FRPs — do you see them as distinctly different in role or appeal to, say, tabletop miniatures battles or boardgames?

**MM:** I see the hobby as tripartite, with overlap. People are into one facet of the hobby primarily, be it board games, or miniatures, or role-playing. Overlap is the individual's attempt to expand on that primary area of interest. Thus, the role-player moves into miniatures in order to enhance his individual characters, or into boardgaming to resolve the various large-scale battles that his campaigns have created. Similarly, the board-gamer may move into role-playing in order to see more of the particular background of a Science Fiction (or other) board game that he has been caught up in.

Everyone has his (or her) own area of interest; the basic divisions of the hobby, are just different ways of appealing to that interest.

**WD:** What is the history of Games Designers' Workshop, and how long have you been involved in the company?

**MM:** There are actually a lot of different ways

to tell the history of *GDW*, depending on the person telling the history and his mood, and even on the audience. Let me try one on you.

In 1972, Frank Chadwick, Rich Banner, myself, and several others were all games club members at Illinois State University, and we all (to varying degrees) spent our time in the University Union playing games, mostly *SPI* and *AH* titles. I seem to remember such games as *Richthofen's War*, *Borodino*, and *Red Star White Star*. The games club procured a grant to produce hex sheets, and we ended up with about a thousand, on which we could draw our own maps. The most notable was a variant of *Borodino* which we called *Guerre*, and another similar game called *Swamp*. We spent hours playing the game, revising the rules, and just enjoying ourselves.

After a few months of this, Rich and Frank talked the University into establishing SIMRAD (Simulations Research Analysis and Design), which was supposed to produce simulations to specification for class-room use. We did, and all of us learned a lot, designing games for minimum wages. Although titles meant little, I was head designer, which meant that I had a finger in most of the pies we designed. The University, however, had a short-sighted view that all good academics had degrees and documentation for their ideas, which we obviously did not, and cut our funding.

The top people from SIMRAD became *GDW*, kicking it off with *Drang Nach Osten*, giving the gaming public a division-level Russian Front game at least six months before *SPI* did. I think that had a lot to do with our success; doing a big game that was exactly what a lot of people wanted, and then following it up with more of the big game (*Unentschieden*), plus several games that were not in the same vein — *Triplanetary*, *Chaco*, and *Eagles*.

Since then, we have just been turning out games that we designers wanted to do.

**WD:** What are the company's future plans?

**MM:** In a sentence, to keep turning out good games. Sometimes it is difficult to plan exactly what we are going to do, and we have always reserved to ourselves the right to abandon any project to postpone it if we don't think it will work out. Sometimes it seems that we are leading an unplanned corporate life, but it lets us put out things we want to do, and are proud of. Our future plans are to keep on doing just that.

**WD:** What was the original inspiration for *Traveller*?

**MM:** Long before *Imperium* was published in 1977, we had a wide-ranging board game called *Imperium* and had been playing with it for several years. It was more-or-less intended as another game to follow *Triplanetary*, but we held off and worked more fully on historical games instead. Nevertheless, this *Imperium* was an enjoyable game that we played from time to time. In it, we had the first essence of role-playing. On each side, the player was the president or dictator or emperor or whatever that led that group of planets. To add spice to the game, each of these players had a son or daughter. That character could enter the army or navy or civil service or scouts or whatever, and grew up in real time as the game progressed. In addition, he or she improved, gained rank, and had benefits for the forces of the side. For example, a son in the navy might grow from ensign to admiral, all the while adding die mods in battle to help his ships win. The key to this extensive rule was to give the leader a sense of perspective, because if the son or daughter was killed, there was no replacement. It came to be a balance between risking your son for gain, or protecting him for potential later use.

I think a lot of *Traveller* grew out of that rule.

Of course, later developments in role-playing made their mark on the game. *D&D* influenced it greatly, as did *En Garde!* (by Frank Chadwick here at *GDW*).

**WD:** Some people are bound to see *Traveller* as "D&D in Space". Would you care to comment

on the differences between the two systems — and the reasons for them?

**MM:** I suppose that if *Traveller* had come first, then *D&D* would be called *Traveller* with Magic. There will obviously be comparisons with *D&D* because that game is fast becoming a generic term for role-playing.

There are several differences, and I think important ones, between the two systems.

First of all, *Traveller* is science fiction, while *D&D* is fantasy. That means (to me at least) that *Traveller* doesn't have magic, or magic monsters, or spells. It does mean that *Traveller* tries to base its contents on science and on the reasonable expectations that we have for science in the coming years.

Second, *Traveller* is modern, while *D&D* is set in ancient or medieval eras. As a result, *Traveller* must include the wide range of modern (and future) weapons, vehicles and devices that are not available to the middle ages.

Third, and perhaps most important, *Traveller* is intended to be wide ranging. Adventures can take place anywhere, in space, on a world, in a starship, at sea, anywhere. This freedom to go anywhere and do anything (as a basic part of the game) is really important because it opens endless horizons to the players.

**WD:** Do you find any inspiration in SF films, novels, etc.? If so, which ones particularly influence you?

**MM:** You name it, and if it didn't inspire me, it influenced me.

Off the top of my head, I can mention most of the science fiction series novels, including Poul Anderson's *Dominic Flandry* series, E.C. Tubb's *Dumarest* series, and Jack Vance's *Demna Prince* series. Movies and television particularly affected me. Actually, *Star Wars* came out after the manuscript for *Traveller* was finished but I was pleased to see that I could probably do that scenario in *Traveller* if I wanted.

I can also pick out little things that I think I know where they came from. The inertial tracker came from Robert Heinlein's *Podkayne of Mars*; the artificial psionic shield helmet came from Poul Anderson's *Flandry of Terra*; the pinnacles came from Niven and Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye*. And those are just things, not game concepts.

Actually, I have always seen *Traveller* as a way for science fiction readers to duplicate any particular piece of science fiction, and to allow them to go off in corridors that the story never touched.

**WD:** What games do you most enjoy playing yourself?

**MM:** *Traveller* comes first, of course. I spend hours every day on *Traveller*, and if I didn't enjoy it, I could easily go crazy. I play *Traveller* at least once a week, twice a week when I can find both time and players.

I do little else in the way of role-playing, but I enjoy board games, ones that I have designed and ones that others have produced.

I think *Chaco* (my own design, and now out of print) is a fast, fun game which has always been aimed at exactly the casual level of play that I prefer. *Year of the Rat* (by John Prados) is another favourite; the frustration index of that game makes it a wonderful simulation of Vietnam.

For deeper, more absorbing play, I like *Narvik* (by Rich Banner and Frank Chadwick); the game really requires a lot of staff-type work in planning and maintaining the invasion of Norway and can be very rewarding if proper attention is paid to the game.

Finally, I like several science fiction games. These include *Imperium* (my own design again), *Stellar Conquest* (by Howard Thompson of *Metagaming*), *The Awful Green Things* (by Tom Whamm of *TSR*), and *Dune* (by *Future Pastimes* and *AH*). By the way, I took second place in the *Awful Green Things* tournament at Gencon last year, and was robbed of first place by one of *GDW*'s developers who will remain nameless for spite.

Kind of a long list, isn't it?

**WD:** Are you involved in any other projects, or



will you continue to expand the Traveller Universe at the current prolific rate?

**MM:** Are you giving me a choice? Can't I do both?

Actually, I am currently concentrating on Traveller projects, but I have several non-Traveller, non-Science-Fiction things in the works. Most prominent on my schedule is 1943! a small-sized fast and playable game of the Italian Campaign of WW II. It promises to be much like my previous 1942!, which dealt with the Japanese in Malaya and Java. I would also like to do a game on Marathon, 490 BC, but that particular game seems to be progressing much slower.

**WD:** Were you surprised at Traveller's popularity, given that most people seem to prefer adventuring in medieval settings?

**MM:** I was pleased at Traveller's popularity, but not actually surprised. I have been a Science Fiction person from way back, and I always personally felt I would rather role-play in space than in a fantasy setting.

Further, I think that the statement that most people would rather adventure in a medieval setting is misleading, because they do so when the game calls for it. Even TSR has seen fit to put out science fiction role-playing games, because even they see that many people like the wide open spaces of the stars and a modern era for an adventuring setting.

**WD:** A notable feature of the game is the apparent lack of levels and experience points. What was the reasoning behind this?

**MM:** Traveller is trying to be realistic, and the whole experience thing was one of the first areas to go when Traveller was being put together. D&D, and many imitations of D&D, use experience as a way of keeping score, for which it serves quite well. But experience points are not realistic, and even the fantasy role-play designers keep editorializing about keeping experience points in check.

In the first year and a half of Traveller, this point was one of the most frequently asked by Traveller players. Since then, it has died down quite a bit, as players realize that there are other things they can look for and find in their adventures in Traveller.

Let me make more of the point on realism in Traveller and this experience thing. Most people in their real lives don't improve much as they live out their lives. They may make marginal improvements, picking up a skill here or there, but probably on an annual basis, if not less frequently. The really important things are the greater understanding of how life in general works. In Traveller, that translates to experience with the game and shows itself as the player improves his or her quality of play.

**WD:** Another unique feature of the game is that beginning adventurers are middle-aged, and have already spent many years adventuring before play begins — sometimes dying before then. Why is that?

**MM:** The idea started with a reaction to the constant character generation for most fantasy role-playing games — that each character begins essentially the same, with no background or advantage, and each then advances in the game through the various levels. My thought was to provide some quick and easy adventuring for the character BEFORE the game began; with that batch of experience, skills, and money, the character then sets out on adventures within the game. Because we were paying attention to realism, this new system was forced to include aging, and to include decisions that the character himself did not make, like forced retirement, or potential death.

The system also evolved a little because it was so useful for creating non-player characters — what I recommend is that players who are generating characters just for fun should then save them for later use as non-player characters in encounters.

The fact that some of these characters may die during the generation process is intended as a disincentive for indiscriminate character generation.

Finally, this character generation system gives a much broader spectrum of characters for the game. The adventuring bands are no longer groups of 18 year old boys, but have wide ranges in age and areas of expertise. The players can more fully interact, and complement each other's skills. It makes for more co-operation within the game itself.

**WD:** How many people do you estimate currently play Traveller — and what kind of people are they?

**MM:** I would put the number of people that play Traveller, counting referees and players, at nearly 100,000. That's based on the number of games sold, plus the extremely fast sales for both supplements and adventures. That figure may be low, but I think it is fairly accurate.

What kind of people are they? They like science fiction, although their tastes are wide ranging; and they like to enjoy themselves. They enjoy the freedom that role-playing games in general give them, and that the science fiction of Traveller specifically gives them.

From what I see, there is a lot of spill-over between fantasy and science fiction role-playing. Being in one does not keep them from being in the other.

**WD:** Many gamers complain that Traveller is too complex for beginners, particularly beginning umpires and referees, who are often put off by the amount of work required before play can commence. At the other end of the scale are people who say the rules system is too simplistic, not detailed enough. What are your views on this?

**MM:** I think if you look at most role-playing games (or board games, or miniatures rules), you will see an informal learning process taking place. I remember that the first game I ever saw (D-Day, from Avalon Hill, back in 1962) was a game I dearly wanted to play, but never could, because the rules were unintelligible to both me and my friend. Ten years later, I was introduced to France, 1940 through a games club, and learned the rules in a one-on-one setting from someone who already knew how to play. I think a lot of that's happening in games today — the clubs or the informal groups teach the players enough to get them into a game; thereafter, it's all learned by actually reading the rules.

I like to think that Traveller is easier to learn than most games, but I certainly don't dispute that any player would learn a lot from a club or an informal group situation.

By the way, I think that with the publication of the short Double Adventures (Shadows/Annie Nova, and Mission on Mithral/Bright Face), it is possible for a referee and group of players to literally adventure the same day that the booklet is bought. The preparation required is simply a knowledge of the Traveller rules and a quick read-through of the adventure by the referee.

As for the people who feel that Traveller is too simplistic, I can only reply that we are constantly at work doing new things for Traveller — new background, new scenarios, and new rules. And the game is open-ended anyway: anyone can add new rules for greater complexity if they want. In fact, the Journal regularly publishes a selection of what is submitted.

**WD:** Will every section of Traveller eventually be expanded along the lines of Mercenary and High Guard?

**MM:** I don't really think so, at least not in the sense that you mean.

There may be a Grand Survey, which would deal with the scouts. There probably won't be a merchant book, and there certainly won't be an 'other' book. But then again, there is Supplement 4 — Citizens of the Imperium, which can be taken as a wider character generation approach to others.

You have to keep in mind that the Traveller rules are rules governing an entire universe — they obviously cannot approach completeness on all aspects of that universe. So instead, the basic three books cover a little of everything, at least enough to get the players adventuring.

When the referee decides to delve into mercenary operation, the Mercenary book is there for him to use.

Mercenary and High Guard were responses to demand from the playing public. Aside from a scout service book, I see the greatest demand to be for rules governing aliens and robots. I think those would be the areas we would address next.

**WD:** Why did you choose to represent space as two-dimensional? Is this a matter of mapping convenience, or does it reflect the nature of the drive system of Traveller starships — for example, Cordwainer Smith's "planoforming" or the use of co-ordinate spacetime, which would be better represented by a 2D map?

**MM:** I am not ashamed to say that the two-dimensionality of the Traveller starships is entirely a matter of convenience. Most of Traveller takes place not between the stars. Given the relatively low emphasis on those areas, I saw no need to entirely reproduce them in three dimensions.

I have always held that most Traveller referees could easily establish a 3D mappingsystem for their own campaigns if they really wanted to. I know several who have. But the net benefit from such a system is very low when compared with the ease of rendition and use of the 2D system which we are using.

**WD:** Why does Traveller use only six-sided dice throughout? And in particular, why are characteristics diced up on 2d6 rather than the more 'realistic' 3d6?

**MM:** When the original manuscript for Traveller was being playtested, the very basic foundation for random number generation was (as in most role-playing games) based on dice. I had to make some decisions on what dice to use and how to use them.

My first decision was to limit Traveller to six-sided dice. I knew that other games called for a wide range of polyhedral dice, sometimes even specifying non-dice such as 1d17, and then explaining how to achieve the specific results using various dice or random number generators.

I instead elected to restrict Traveller to six-sided dice. Six-sided dice are ubiquitous; they are easily obtained, and most people are familiar with them. Conversely, polyhedral dice are not generally available (except at hobby shops, now, some years later), and the average person is not familiar with them.

Moreover, the relationship of two dice to each other is a widely known one. One die, when rolled, gives an even probability of a result from 1 to 6; two dice give a range from 1 to 12 with a weighted probability toward 7. It was this familiar relationship that I wanted to exploit.

One rather essential part of the Traveller character is the UPP — its six characteristics, listed in order, are best and most easily read if each characteristic is a single digit. The range from 1 to 10 seemed too restricted. However, if I used two dice to produce a range from 2 to 12, and then used hexadecimal notation (0 to 9, then A to F for 10 to 15) to express the characteristic, I had a range from 0 to 15, with room for improvement, as well as disastrous downgrading for each characteristic.

In addition, I use the dice throws as basic throws for a variety of actions. If strength can be taken as an expression of personal strength and an ability to perform a task that requires such strength, then the characteristic (for example, 7) is the throw (or less) to accomplish the specific task. After allowing DMs for applicable circumstances, skills, environment, and anything else that is important, I have a throw for success or failure. More importantly, I have related it directly to the character involved. Most importantly, the player manipulating that character has this basic information in front of him at all times. If three dice had been used to create characteristics, the bell curve of such results would make this method rather ineffective.

Finally, I would be less than honest if I did not say that I was aware that D&D used three dice and that I was trying to diverge from and improve upon the methods I saw in that game. I think I achieved what I set out to do. ■



One major problem in *Traveller* campaigns is the question of 'background' — or rather the lack of it. This article proposes some ideas on how the problem can be solved.

First 'background' must be defined. As used here, 'background' is a solid, believable and consistent campaign world: if a campaign has this background, then characters become 'real' people rather than statistics. When background is present, there are times when the players literally see through their characters' eyes, and identify with them to a degree impossible in lesser games.

It is this which distinguishes a good referee from a bad one. A good games master will create a good background, and as a result games in that campaign will be good regardless of which rules and scenarios he is using.

A campaign without a detailed backdrop causes problems: The games master who can't think of a scenario, the player with a new character saying "What shall I do with him? What's the point of the game?"

Let's look at other games and see why *Traveller* is particularly prone to these problems.

Like myself, most *Traveller* players started off in *D&D*. This game has few problems of background. The DM has no trouble setting up a Mediaeval backdrop for his campaign, because thanks to hundreds of fairy tales, films, comics and books absorbed almost from birth, you needn't spend hours describing a village in detail, or how a crossbow works, or what a horse looks like: you simply say 'You enter a village,' 'They have crossbows,' or 'You see a horse in front of you.' And everyone present knows what you mean, instantly.

There is likewise no trouble in developing a personality for a character, complete with objectives. Looking at die rolls for characteristics, you can see at once what the character will be best at. Once a character class is chosen, a rough sketch of the character is already present, a paladin will be generous and kind to small children and animals, a monk may imitate Grasshopper or Shang Chi, and so on.

# BACKDROP

Most fantasy role-playing games are similar: *D&D*, *C&S*, *T&T*, *TFT*, and so on ad infinitum draw on a background of wizards and warriors ingrained below the conscious level in most of us. There are a few of another kind: These games do not draw on an immediately familiar background, but instead describe a novel one. *RuneQuest* is the prime example of this; after reading the description of Glorantha, looking over the map, and learning our cult's aims in life, we quickly feel at home. Yet these games are 'cheating'; Glorantha may be strange, but a crossbow is still a crossbow, a horse is still a horse, and trolls still behave like the trolls of fairytale despite different statistics.

A *Traveller* referee cannot draw on historical prototypes for his milieu. Thus statistics rarely become clothed in flesh; referees give up because the game lacks something, players discuss *D&D* trips in little huddles while he dices up encounters, and everyone goes back to the dungeon.

*GDW* produce an excellent background in *The Spinward Marches*, the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* and other sources. However, this article is for those referees who don't want to buy these supplemental materials. Here then, for what they're worth, are some tricks that can be used to get around this problem of background. Nor are they limited to *Traveller*; some of these ideas will be useful in other games and have probably been thought of before by a lot of other DMs...

## Rolling Your Own

Don't be afraid to plagiarise. If you see a good idea anywhere, grab it and weld it on. After a while your campaign doesn't look much like anyone else's, but that's part of the fun of role-playing games. By adding and deleting rules, scenarios and so on, you eventually wind up with a game that has been tailored to your own group's preferences. A lot of people refuse to use anything that isn't 'official'; don't be one of them.

Don't try to roll up a million planets right away; this makes it difficult to generate any detail. Even if the players have a starship to begin with, start with a couple of planets and work them out in depth. If the players want to move on, and you want them to stay, either admit that you haven't worked out anywhere else — most players will understand — or invent some reason why their characters can't leave. ('I'm sorry, guys, but the nearest stockist for that spare you need is fifty parsecs away. You'll have to wait for the mail.')

Start with the statistics, and ask yourself: Why did these come to be? With a little practice, and some dice rolls to inject variety, you'll be generating immensely devious and interesting backgrounds in no time at all. Don't reroll 'nonsensical' results until you're sure you can't explain them.

Have an overall struggle into which the players can fit. This gives them some kind of overall goal which will carry them through several early adventures, until they find purposes for their characters. (It's rare for someone to play more than a few sessions without coming up with some long-term aim for himself — this can be anything up to and including ruling the galaxy. Often this will mean they abandon your carefully-plotted goals; let them.)

If a struggle is present, the players can side with one party or the other, or play both ends against the middle. Where possible, work out several layers of plot, then interesting rumours and encounters can surface. Some useful struggles that could be set up are:

## 1: Mission: Impossible

This is typified by the *Sable Rose Affair* in *White Dwarf 17*. Here we have a group of players who have been recruited by a highly secret organisation to perform tasks which cannot be openly countenanced; of course, while all possible aid will be given, the players must work out their own methods; and should they be caught or killed, the Imperial Senate will disavow all knowledge.

Tasks here are numerous and will keep most characters usefully employed. Possible operations set up by the referee, acting as the group's Case Officer, include surveillance, kidnapping, blackmail, arson, murder, paramilitary commando raids, piracy... the list could go on for pages. Bear in mind, too, that there will usually be several government agencies of this kind on both sides of the border, which will be competing for appropriations and thus unfriendly towards each other. (My own Covert Survey Bureau spends more time trying to discredit Naval Counter-Intelligence than it does breaking up Zhodani spy-rings...)

## 2: Punishment Battalion

This plot requires a war, and is suited to militaristic or 'hack-and-slay' players. Players represent the vilest psychopaths their stellar empire has produced, who have been banded together for convenience and sent off on those suicidal missions which are so prevalent in futuristic warfare. This leads to fairly straightforward bloodbaths and some enjoyable table-topping.

## 3: Where No Man Has Gone Before

Here the group has been given the task of exploring a new subsector — this one is obviously good for solitaire play. In a suitable exploration ship,

the crew proceed from world to world, mapping the subsector as they go. Depending on whether they are sponsored by a government or a merchant company, their opponents may be hostile aliens, native life-forms or explorers from other organisations. Their objectives may be to negotiate trading deals, diplomatic treaties, or simply establish a naval or scout base.

## 4: Shogun

This does not take place on the frontier of your empire, but near the capital worlds. It is postulated that the emperor is involved in some kind of power struggle, where the nobles and other powerful beings of the empire have split into factions, each vying for control of the throne. This scenario lends itself readily to assassinations and underhand skulduggery, not so well to straightforward slaughter. The players will be hired by one faction or another, and from there events will proceed much as in case 1, Mission: Impossible, with the difference that the enemies are internal rather than outside the empire.

## 5: Star Wars

In which the heroic (or villainous) players strive to overthrow (or preserve) the corrupt and tyrannical empire. Or the hideous barbarians attempt to sack the ancient galactic civilisation. It's up to you.

Other set-ups will suggest themselves; this list is by no means exhaustive. It is perfectly feasible for a campaign to have several of these plots running at once; once a campaign has been going for a while, such crutches will no longer be needed as players develop their own goals, but will still be useful background material, providing opportunities to the group.

## Methods

There are several methods of generating backgrounds besides working it all out from scratch. These vary in usefulness, and are presented here without comment.

The referee can generate a character for himself and run solo trips for this character, noting down all encounters for use in later games. By means of asking the dice questions and noting the answers, a background quickly appears.

Let some of the non-players encountered by the group be 'personality' non-players; that is, NPCs who have been worked out in considerable detail, like a 'real' player-character. These people will have their own goals and plots which may (or may not) involve the players. How to do this, will be covered later in the description of patrons.

Write up the trips and adventures of your band as stories and circulate them. This forces you to concentrate on describing a character's surroundings and equipment; and once these descriptions have been circulated, people all 'know' what a phase-interlocked grungy rifle (or whatever) looks like. This is important for the 'feel' of the game. If someone in the group has artistic talent, drawings are even better.

Let the players work out some of the background for you. They, too, can design a planet, an alien, a ship; sometimes this develops into whole

subsectors run by another gamer in which you can adventure.

You will find that after a brief period — usually a few months — the campaign becomes 'self-sustaining': the characters already present, and the world descriptions, begin to generate scenarios and background information by themselves. Often thereafter, you will find that you are observing your universe as it unfolds rather than consciously creating it.

#### Players' Complaints

The first one to arise will be: 'What character class shall I be?' In other words, which career/service should the character enter? The best method for a new player is to ask him which fictional hero he'd like to imitate and insert him into an appropriate service. Alternatively, pre-dice a character for him; *Traveller* characters, particularly in the expanded generation mode, take a long time to dice up, during which some players may wander off and join another game. At the other extreme, there are those who don't actually play, but enjoy dicing up characters. Encourage these people to leave you the results, and you have a ready-made supply of NPCs... (something I've not actually tried yet is making new players start as Barbarians (from *Supplement 4*), so that being bewildered at the background is in character).

The next problem will be choosing a long-term goal for the character once he's been diced up. Many players will expect the life's purpose of their character to be spoon-fed to them. This is where your carefully prepared background and struggle will come in. Until he knows what kind of universe he's in, how can a player plan anything? Don't expect much for the first few sessions, because everyone involved has to learn their way around your universe. For really bad cases of confusion, use the method suggested for patron generation below.

Soon (particularly if hard-core *D&D* players) your group will ask the embarrassing question: how do I improve my skills? (Translation: Where are the experience points?) This occurs less frequently with experienced players, who tend to go in more for developing a character and global

domination than accumulating experience points and going up levels. In all such awkward moments, never tell a player it is impossible to do something. Just make it very, very difficult. For example, most people in my group (including myself, to be fair) wanted experience points. So a system was devised, which ended complaints despite the fact that since its form stabilised only two people have gone up a level in any skill by experience. It's far faster to use a friendly instructor — and since *Book 4's* Instruction skill, the experience problem has died down.

Next we come to the hack-and-slayers. *Traveller* is not really for them. The first decent hit anyone scores on you in *Traveller* will render you unconscious at the very least. So even with restrained players, it's advisable for them to run a couple of characters each (two seems to be optimum — people can't usually develop more than two characters at once). In *Traveller*, fighting is something to be avoided if at all possible, as in real life. This seems to sit better with older or more experienced players.

Another complaint comes from people who have set their hearts on some particular item, usually powered armour or a phaser. Don't be afraid to put your foot down and say they can't have it, if it will upset your campaign. It is better, however, to let them have a reasonable facsimile — with a reasonable drawback. For example, see Joe Haldeman's *Forever War* for all the things that can go wrong with powered armour.

#### Referee's Problems

The main and recurring problem for a referee is setting up commissions. When all else fails, let the dice decide!

First, you must generate a patron. (This technique is also useful for working out personality NPCs, and the characters of inexperienced players.)

Dice up a suitable character. Examine his UPP, skills, and record. How does he look? His terms of service will give you his age. Does he look muscular (high strength)? Tough (high endurance)? Graceful (high dexterity)? Is he a good conversationalist (high intelligence and education)? What social class does he come from? Do his skills (Leader, Carousing, Streetwise) make him especially easy to get on with? And so on, UPP, skills, service. These tell you more about a character than you'd think. When a difficult choice appears, consult the dice for an answer.

Similarly, what kind of person is he? Is he smart (intelligence and education again)? Can you trust him? (Probably not, if he's got Forgery-3.)

The merchant in *Book 1*, provided as an example of character generation, is the sort of thing you will get here. Service history is a valuable aid in working out a character. Has he got wounds of some kind, for instance — yes, if he barely made his survival roll a time or two.

You now know what kind of person the patron is; what would a man like that do with his life? What is his long term goal, and how close is he to achieving it? Once you know these things, since you know what the players' characters are like, you will know why he wants to hire *them* instead of anyone else. Usually there are few commissions which a spec-

ific, detailed patron actually would hire a given band for. They're fairly apparent.

If not, seek further information. Ask the dice: Is this commission concerned with some kind of person? (If so, dice up a random person or patron; generate a character to fit; flesh him out in the same way as the patron, and ask yourself: How would these two relate to each other, and why are the adventurers involved?) Or, is the job concerned with some kind of cargo? (Dice a random cargo on the trade and speculation table, and try to figure out why the patron is interested.)

This becomes easier as the campaign goes on, and the background which you've generated is invaluable. Eventually some characters will become powerful enough to hire other bands to do their dirty work for them — by which time they should have been retired from play, but will occasionally participate as military commanders, trading magnates, etc. In this case, they will already have a clear aim which the band can further, or they wouldn't have made it that far.

Another kind of 'commission' is the rumour; rumours can be simply rumours of a patron as generated above, or snippets of your background surfacing for the first time. If a scenario is already in progress, it will be fairly easy to think of a rumour which can help/thwart/confuse the party (delete where inapplicable). If the rumour is the starting point, then a piece of your local Library Data might be enough to spur the band into action. For example, on page 28 of *The Spinward Marches*, we note the planet Zila as a 'renowned wine producer, while its neighbour Psyadi is ruled by a religious dictatorship which prohibits alcohol. Someone with a Jump-2 drive and few scruples could surely make quite a killing there, smuggling booze.

(A similar method to the patron/rumour generation process can be used to develop your background. You might dice up several nobles from *Supplement 4*, and declare them to be the last few emperors. Compare their service records. One might have died in service — did his successor assassinate him? Or, if he retired, was he forced to abdicate? If so, how?)

The most intriguing method of generating rumours can be used with great effect when you are refereeing several independent groups in the same campaign universe. One group can then uncover rumours of the other's activities. They may be recruited by the Imperium to stop those activities if the other group has been obnoxious enough. If the first group is rich enough, the second may decide to rob them. There are endless possibilities. This does give some problems when the groups meet; either you can call them together and watch them battling with a ferocity never achieved against NPCs, or you can 'split' your time-lines; you then have two parallel universes, in which each group in turn is used as a non-player gang while the other is run by the players concerned. In this case, with a little extra record keeping, after the fallout has settled each side can blissfully go on believing it has won — after all, if the groups met each other regularly the whole set-up would have been impossible.

There is a third, bastard kind of commission: The linked list of patrons. Here there is some vast treasure/intriguing rumour/ancient lost city, or some similar interesting thing which has been well-documented in your background as a legend, for example. The group runs into a patron who is tracking down the source of the legend. He hasn't much to go on, but he himself has a rumour which states that such-and-such a person knows some important key fact about the whole affair. When this person is unweathed at last, he too has a rumour, leading to a third patron — and so on for as long as your ingenuity holds out. Several of *GDW's* adventures run this way, with the group fulfilling minor commissions along the way, all the time gathering more evidence to lead them to the Big One.

Of course, there are times when all these fail, or you haven't had time to work out a scenario. In this case, there are a few standard fall-back options.

**Trading.** Someone will have a stash in most groups; if they have, they probably need money. Most groups in this position will cheerfully wander around trading and beating off the odd pirate. Frequently a commission will appear as if from nowhere, for example if they found the Zila/Psyadi setup described above. This requires at least one subsector mapped out, though not in great detail; just the stats will do. Things like animal encounters can be diced up as they happen.

**The shadows of the past.** When a group has been going for some time, at least one of them will have made a powerful enemy. He could decide it was worth tracking the group down to settle accounts.

**The arena.** If a group is really hard-up, there is always the arena in which Dumarest frequently finds himself. Here, with varying degrees of legality, travellers down on their luck fight each other with assorted weapons to first blood or to the death. There is an arena at most starports of A, B, or C class where the jaded appetites of the nobility are slaked with the blood of others; the winner gets a percentage of the bets made, and can expect to realise enough money for a High Passage after a few weeks or months — if he survives.

# OF STARRIS

By  
Andy  
Slack



Starbase is a regular department featuring reader's ideas for Traveller. Two topics this issue, on different additions to Traveller . . . I would also like to take this opportunity to mention Leviathan, Traveller Adventure 4, the first to be designed and produced in the UK. I hope you will enjoy it.

The most common science fiction personal weapon missing from the descriptions in *Traveller Books 1* and *4* is the light sabre, laser sword, force blade or whatever. Despite misgivings as to its practicality (and is this item really better than other traditional and cheap weapons?), I feel it is too popular to ignore. I therefore present the two versions used in my own campaigns.

**Laser Sword/Foil**

These weapons when inactive consist of a short handgrip, the interior of which contains the force projectors, attached by a cable to a power pack worn on the user's back. The grip is usually hung from a waist belt. Recessed controls are located in theommel of the grip. When activated, a limiter attached to the grip by a filament extends, with the field behind. This operation takes two seconds or so. A second, inertial field is also activated, which can be varied to alter the total blade weight and the weapon's centre of gravity to match the user's personal preferences. If the weapon is not so adjusted, a DM of -1 is imposed on all rolls to hit. One combat round, during which the user is treated as evading, is required to adjust the controls for this purpose. Once the controls are set, the weapon has the same characteristics each time it is used.

**Strength Requirements**

	Req.Str	DM	Adv.Str	DM Weak	Blow/Swing	DM
Laser Sword	6	-1	10	+1		-2
Laser Foil	5	-1	9	+1		-1

**Range Matrix**

	Close	Short	Wound Inflicted
Laser Sword	-1	+1	2d6+4
Laser Foil	0	+1	2d6+1

**Armour Matrix**

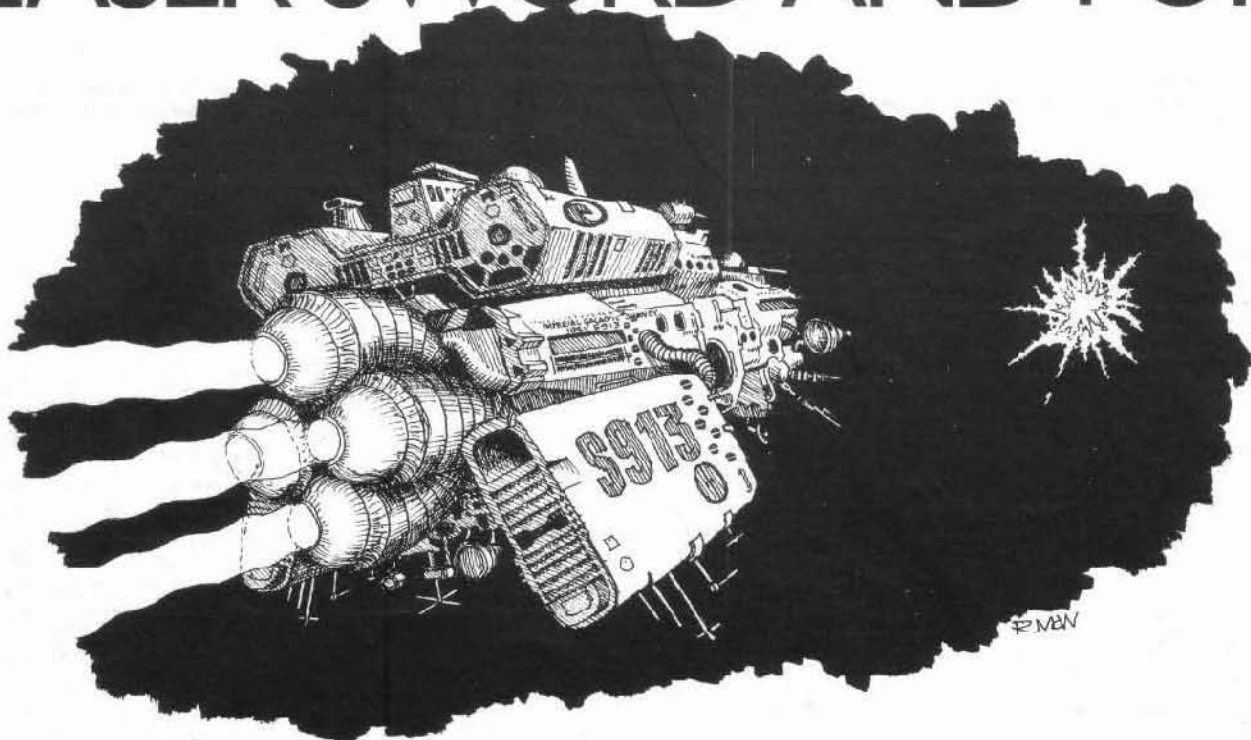
	Nothing	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat	Battle
Laser Sword	+4	+4	+2	+2	+1	+3	-2
Laser Foil	+3	+3	+1	+1	0	+2	-3

**Weapon Weights and Prices**

	Base <sup>1</sup> Pack		Length <sup>3</sup> mm	Base Price Cr	Ammo <sup>4</sup> Price Cr TL
	Wt,gr	Wt,gr			
Laser Sword	500	2500	50	800/100	3000 1000/50 12
Laser Foil	350	2000	50	750/100	2500 1000/50 12

- Notes: 1. Weight may be altered + 50 gr. by field effect — see description.  
 2. Number of combat rounds of use.  
 3. With/without laser blade extended.  
 4. Cost of power pack/recharging cost.

# LASER SWORD AND FOIL



**PER ARDUA . . . AD ASTRA**

Spacecraft designs for *Traveller* have been occupying much of my time recently. As a spin-off from this, I realised that the question of Jump space has not been explained in *Traveller*. This is probably deliberate, as Jump drive is a prop without which the whole rationale of adventures in different star-systems becomes impossible. The more complex such a device is made, the less believable it becomes. But there is one area which can be looked into without suspension of belief — Jump drive mishaps.

In *Traveller Book 2*, apart from total drive failure (what happens then — do you 'fall' back into normal space?), the only

other possible disaster that may take place is the misjump. Commendable, *GDW* refrain from allowing such things as randomising the constituent molecules of ship and contents, which may be realistic, but would end the game rather abruptly.

However, consider a complex piece of machinery such as the present-day motor-car. All sorts of things can go wrong besides a complete lack of forward motion (drive failure) and the collapse of the steering geometry (misjump). So let's have a more varied selection of Jump drive problems. I have some of my own, but I should like to receive other ideas before devoting a *Starbase* column to them. ■



While it is possible to adventure in any environment using *Traveller* rules, my preference has always been space actions. Thus, it was not long before the rules on vacc suits were expanded. The three types of vacc suit and the associated rules given below are the result.

#### CIV STD

Civilian Standard vacc suits are typified by 20th century Terran models such as the Apollo EVA suit. TL: 7; Cr 10,000.

They carry the following: Medium range communicator, electric torch, emergency repair kit, anti-glare visor, numerous belt loops and pockets for tools and samples, wristwatch, provision for safety lines, distress flare and homing beacon, sensors to determine external atmosphere type if any, and magnetic compass.

By Imperial law, a spacecraft must carry vacc suits to outfit all crew and high or middle passengers. These may be in the ship's locker, or where they are frequently needed.

A Merchant, Pirate, or Belter character may elect to forego one of his rolls for mustering out benefits, receiving instead a CIV STD vacc suit.

#### MIL STD

Military Standard vacc suits resemble a skintight leotard of elastic, porous material. Thus clad, a person's own skin acts as his pressure suit, his sweat glands as the temperature control system. TL: 9; Cr 20,000.

Equipment is as for the CIV STD, with the following exceptions: No emergency repair kit carried; magnetic compass replaced by inertial locator; and the following additional items are fitted: Telephone jack and cord for communication in radio silence, facilities for plugging into shipboard air/power supplies to conserve those in the backpack, systems capable of monitoring the wearer's vital signs from a backpack readout or over a radio/computer link, heavy-duty overshoes, geiger counter, and hand calculator.

A Navy, Marine, or Scout character may elect to forego one roll for mustering out benefits, and receive in lieu a MIL STD vacc suit.

#### Emergency Vacc Suits

These are little more than a man-shaped plastic bag. TL: 8+; Cr 1,000.

Emergency vacc suits carry no equipment other than that required to keep the wearer alive for a short period. They are found scattered throughout all kinds of starship in strategic locations, where they may be grabbed in an emergency by persons with no time for stronger measures.

#### General

Both CIV STD and MIL STD vacc suits have backpacks and helmets, which are interchangeable in emergencies. These contain facilities for the supply of air, heating/cooling as necessary, and limited amounts of water and emergency rations. Emergency vacc suits have only an air supply. CIV STD or MIL STD vacc suits can support their occupants for 16 hours 40 minutes, and for up to one week provided replacement air tanks are available. Emergency vacc suits can support their occupants for 2 hours and replacement air tanks are not feasible.

Standard EVA kits are available for CIV STD and MIL STD suits, consisting of a rocket pack capable of up to 3" of acceleration, and re-entry shield enabling a safe re-entry at speeds up to 2". Such kits are available at TL 8+, costing Cr 5,000. Ships come equipped with three such kits per thousand tons of displacement; minimum three kits on a starship and one on a non-starship.

#### Fitting and Donning

CIV STD suits may be purchased off-the-peg at any class A or B starport. Their size is determined by a 2d6 throw, and is prominently stencilled on them. A character may wear such a suit if any one of his physical characteristics (strength, dexterity or en-

durance) is the same as the suit's size.

MIL STD suits must be tailor-made for the wearer, a process requiring 6-8 weeks at a class A starport, during which the character must be available for weekly fittings. A character must have the same physical characteristics and gender as the owner to don such a suit.

Emergency vacc suits can be worn by anyone. Characters may only wear vacc suits designed for their species.

To don a vacc suit requires two minutes for a CIV STD; ten minutes for a MIL STD; 15 seconds for an emergency suit. Once donned, a MIL STD suit can be worn minus the helmet and backpack for several days without penalty, during which time the helmet and backpack can be donned in 30 seconds. If caught by surprise by explosive decompression, a character must make a roll of 9+ to don a suit before he falls unconscious. DMs are: -5 if no vacc suit skill; + vacc suit skill; + dexterity. An unconscious character may be stuffed into an emergency suit by a comrade, using the same throw.

#### Use

CIV STD vacc suits are bulky and have clumsy gauntlets. If *Azhanti High Lightning* or *Snapshot* are used, they suffer the movement penalties laid down for vacc suits. Further, no dexterity bonuses may be claimed by a character in such a suit, and all skills requiring fine manipulation suffer a DM of -2 on success rolls. Emergency vacc suits impose a DM of -5 on such skills, and likewise negate dexterity bonuses, but do not suffer movement penalties. MIL STD suits impose a skill DM of -1, but no movement penalties or negation of dexterity bonuses.

Use the Book 1 procedure for avoiding mishaps when in a vacc suit. Punctures in CIV STD or emergency suits cause loss of pressure; CIV STD vacc suits may be temporarily repaired using the emergency repair kit by the victim or a comrade, throw as for donning a suit when surprised as above. A character exposed to vacuum loses consciousness after about two minutes, and cannot be saved from death after about five minutes. (The referee may care to make these times equal to endurance in combat rounds and thrice endurance in combat rounds respectively, where a combat round is 15 seconds.) The wearer of a MIL STD vacc suit takes 1d6 damage if it is punctured (DM: - vacc suit skill). On a roll of 11+ on 2d6, the puncture is a faceplate shatter, leading to death in any kind of suit unless the victim can be repressurised within five minutes inside an ATV, ship, building etc. Punctured vacc suits must be replaced.

Extended wear of vacc suits causes extreme discomfort and fatigue. For each complete 12 hour period that a suit has been worn, impose a -1 DM on the use of all skills by the wearer.

#### Combat

In general, the notes from the *Use* section apply, but combat presents certain special problems.

CIV STD suits give armour protection equivalent to cloth; emergency and MIL STD suits give no armour protection, but modified versions of most armour can be fitted over MIL STD units. (CES and Battle Dress are not allowed.) Such modified armour is available at TL 10+ and costs are the same as for normal armour.

An individual hit while in vacuum takes double damage; in the *Azhanti High Lightning* system, wounds are increased by one level. Thereafter, the puncture rules above apply. Also, roll 2d6: 11+ indicates a faceplate shatter, followed by a head hit and instant death.

#### Skills

Any character from the Navy, Marines, Scouts, Merchants, Pirates, Belters, Nobles or Scientists is considered to have a minimum skill of Vacc Suit-0 for game purposes due to his training. Vacc Suit-0 may be taught in the same way as general weapon familiarisation in *Mercenary*, if the instructor has at least Vacc Suit-1 himself. Vacc Suit-0 is sufficient for most everyday activities, but not strenuous ones or combat. ■

# The Self-Made Traveller

## Optional Skill Acquisition for Travellers

by Trevor Graver

In this article, I propose a system whereby players may choose skills, rather than acquiring them by random die rolls. The system revolves around the idea of skill points; these are earned as the character progresses through his or her service career.

Skill points are earned according to the character generation system in use. Table 1 is used for basic *Traveller*, *Supplement 4*, and other careers using the Book 1 system; Table 2 is used for expanded character generation systems such as *Mercenary*, *High Guard*, *Criminals (White Dwarf 19)*, *Star Patrol (White Dwarf 20)*, *Merchants & Merchandise*, etc. In these expanded systems, there are certain limits on the first skills acquired; these are as stated in the appropriate system, eg the first skill acquired by a *Mercenary* character must be a Gun Combat skill.

**Table 1. Basic Characters**

Per four-year term	15 skill points
For a commission	10 skill points
Per promotion	15 skill points

**Table 2. Expanded Characters**

Basic training	20 skill points
Per promotion (E ranks)	3 skill points
Per promotion (O ranks)	10 skill points
Per successful Skill roll	10 skill points
Per one-year assignment	3 skill points

Characters are run through their service careers normally, except that skills are not determined. Add up the skill points acquired by the character from the tables above; when enough skill points are accumulated, a skill can be purchased from Table 3, Skill Groups and Costs; alternatively a characteristic can be increased, see Table 4. Note that a character may only choose a skill if it is one which he could acquire in the normal way, ie it must be

available in his career to someone of his education. Skills and characteristic increases are purchased at the end of each four-year term, and any residual skill points after this purchase are dropped, the character starting over from scratch in accumulating them.

**Table 3. Skill Groups and Costs**

Type A Skills (Cost 10 skill points per level)		
Air/Raft	FA Gunner	Steward
Air Craft	Forward Observer	Vehicle
ATV	Gunnery	Water Craft
Carousing	Interrogation	Hunting
Combat Eng	Lockpick	Vacc Suit Maint
Commo	Recon	Security
Demolition	Survival	Low Berth Maint

Type B Skills (Cost 10 skill points per level up to level 3, 15 per level thereafter)		
Admin	Mechanical	Zero G Cbt
Battle Dress	Medical	Jump Drive
Disguise	Prospecting	Legal
Electronics	Recruiting	Navigation
Engrng	Ships Boat	Weapon Skills
Gravities	Ship Tactics	Trade & Speculation
Leader	Vacc Suit	

Type C Skills (Cost 10 points to level 1, 15 per level thereafter)		
Computer	Pilot	Bribery
Forgery	Unarmed Cbt	Gambling
Instruction	Streetwise	

Type D Skills (Cost 15 skill points to level 1, 20 per level thereafter)		
Jack-of-Trades	Liaison	Life Support

**Table 4. Characteristic Increases**

(Figures in the table are skill points required to raise the characteristic shown by +1 if the desired value is in the range shown.)

Characteristic	Desired Value			
	7-8	5-9	9-A	B+
Strength	12	10	12	15
Dexterity	11	10	13	16
Endurance	12	10	15	15
Intelligence	13	10	13	20
Education	10	10	12	15
Social Standing	10	12	15	20

### SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Special assignments are listed below, together with the number of skill points gained by attendance. Skill points thus gained may only be spent on skills available at the appropriate school; if a character knows at least half the available skills, and has at least one at a skill level of 3+, he may acquire Instruction skill.

### Mercenary

Cross Training	10 skill points
Specialist School	10 (15 if Intel and Educ both 9+)
Commando School	2d6 x 4 skill points
Protected Forces	2d6 x 3
Recruiting	Automatic Recruiting—1; 50% chance of Admin—1
OCS	30
Intelligence School	2d6 x 3
Command College	2d6 x 2
Staff College	2d6 x 2
Attache/Aide	None (but see description)

### High Guard

(Unless otherwise stated, results are as in *Mercenary* table above)

Gunnery School	2d6 x 3
Engrng School	2d6 x 3
Command College	2d6 x 3
Staff College	2d6 x 3

### Merchants & Merchandise

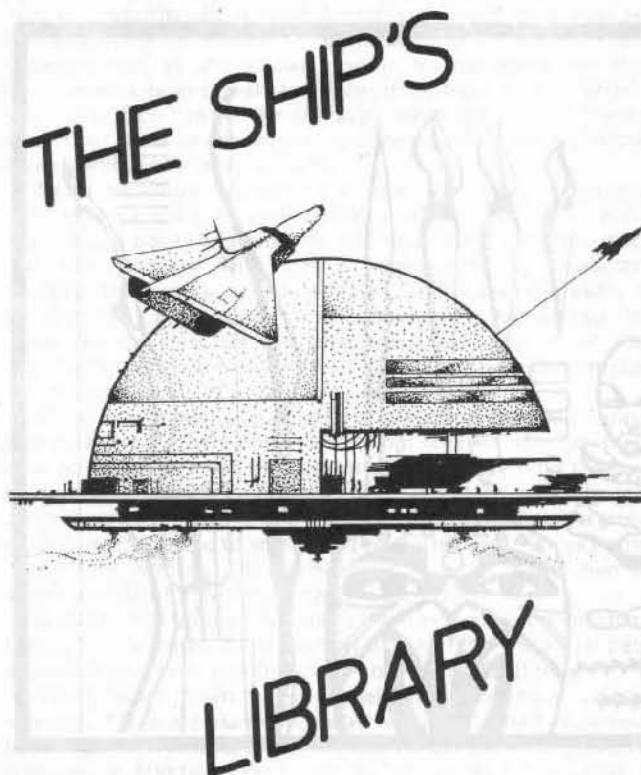
Physical Development	2d6 x 3
Cross Training	See description
Specialist School	2d6 x 2
Ship Security	2d6 x 4
Survival School	Survival—1 plus 2d6 x 3
Merch Serv Academy	10 plus points for promotion
Trade Expansion	2d6 (x 4 with interest)
Intelligence School	2d6 x 3
Command College	2d6 x 3
Staff College	2d6 x 3
Div Tech School	2d6 x 2
Merch Serv Liaison	Liaison—1 plus 10 points

### Star Patrol

Recruiting	See description
Cross-Training	See description
Covert Survey School	2d6 x 5
Colony School	2d6 x 3
Synergy School	Jack-of-Trades—1
Contact School	2d6 x 3



Starbase is a regular department featuring readers' ideas for Traveller. This issue, a look at various peripheral subjects...



This being the first anniversary of *Starbase*, it would seem an opportune moment to take a look at a few *Traveller* related subjects not normally covered in this column by answering a few of the most frequent questions asked of me — and also to thank those readers who have submitted contributions to *Starbase* or who have commented favourably on it.

Both *GDW* and *Games Workshop* are continuing to devote considerable resources to *Traveller*. Having seen *GDW*'s advance schedule of *Traveller* material, you are in for some interesting times over the next year or so. As for *Games Workshop*, with any luck the *IISS Ship Files (Vol. 1)* will be in the shops soon after you read this — I hope you have as much fun using the six vessels described therein as I did designing them. Several other *Traveller* projects are in the design and planning stages, which will be announced as they come to fruition. When you take into account the work of other publishers — *Judges Guild*, *Paranoia Press*, *Group One*, and so on, the position is healthy indeed.

Apart from the question of how to set up a *Traveller* adventure or campaign (which subject has been covered in *White Dwarf 19*, *Starbase*, and last issue by Andy Slack in *Backdrop of Stars*), one of the most frequent queries is on the best science fiction novels from a *Traveller* viewpoint. Below I have given a very short list of novels or short story collections, chosen not on literary merit but on interesting adventure situations, background detail or ingenious characters and places. I stress that it is a personal choice — other people will have other favourites; also some of them may be out of print or difficult to get (only a US printing, for example). In this case try one of the specialist science fiction bookshops that advertise in *White Dwarf*:

- Robert Asprin (*The Bug Wars* — for bug-eyed monsters);
- Ben Bova (*Colony* — for satellite colonies);
- C. J. Cherryh (*Brothers of Earth*, *Hunter of Worlds*, *Serpent's Reach* — for possible Aslan background/situations);
- Frank Herbert (*Dune Trilogy*, *The Dosadi Experiment*, *The Jesus Incident* — for good plots and background, though difficult to translate into adventures);

- Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (*The Mote in God's Eye* — one of the better 'man meets alien' stories);
- Frederick Pohl (*Gateway* and *Jem* — good solid SF);
- Jerry Pournelle (*Future History* — mercenary-type situations);
- Brian Stapleford (*The Hooded Swan* series and the *Daedalus* series — for adventure situations).

Almost anything by:

- Poul Anderson (especially the *Van Rijn/Polesotechnic League* stories and the *Flandry* series);
- Gordon Dickson (*Dorsai Trilogy* and others);
- Joe Haldeman (especially *The Forever War*);
- Harry Harrison (*Deathworld Trilogy*, *Stainless Steel Rat* series and others);
- Jack Vance (*Demon Princes* series, *Alastor* series and many others).

Finally to preserve a balanced viewpoint:

- Douglas Adams (*The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*);
- Most books by Ron Goulart.

Once beyond the idea-forming stage, another phase of the referee's job that I get many queries on is in producing a detailed scene — often blithely glossed over in supplements and articles with the words 'the referee should make a map of the area/plan of the buildings to a suitable level of detail'. My advice is to use every short-cut you can find. I am fortunate in that at work there is a technical library dealing mainly with architecture and engineering, but many of the periodicals should be available in public libraries. In the UK, the *Architect's Journal (AJ)* and *Architectural Review (AR)* usually contain several building plans of everything from housing to schools and offices. Searching through back issues might turn up just the building you are looking for. Atlases and more detailed maps (in the UK, the Ordnance Survey — I've had everyone from vikings to Imperial marines fight over the one-inch *Tourist Map of the Lake District!*) for area plans, of course.

Use lateral thinking — a lot of *D&D* and other games' play aids can be used for *Traveller*, if only for the plans. As an example, *The Halls of Tizun Thane* (see *The Best of White Dwarf*, *Scenarios*) could have all the monsters and stuff cleared out and used as the residence of a petty noble that the players may have been asked to burgle, assassinate or whatever. Indeed, many of the room descriptions may need little or no change. I have even drawn a plan of the office that I work in to use in a *Traveller* incident — as long as the players are unfamiliar with it, it doesn't matter what source you use — a tracing of a town centre map with the names of the roads changed becomes down town Mos Eisley or whatever; an Ordnance Survey map of the Scottish Highlands similarly treated becomes guerilla country on Efate/Regina — the possibilities are endless.

Lastly, I should like to remind readers that general correspondence on *Traveller* matters is always welcome, as well as contributions to *Starbase*. Only by making known your comments and opinions can we know how good or bad our treatment of *Traveller* is. And remember, we have a direct X-Boat link to Normal, Illinois — any relevant comments are passed on to *GDW* to let them know too. ■



## TRAVELLER SCENARIO COMPETITION RESULT



This competition produced a fine crop of entries which were mostly of an impressively high standard. This made the judges' job rather difficult, but their final choice was:

- 1st: *Amber to Red* by Neil Cheyne;
- 2nd: *Weed War* by S. L. A. McIntyre;
- 3rd: *Pavabid* by Simon Earley.

Our congratulations to Neil Cheyne who will receive the prize of an autographed copy of *Leviathan*, kindly donated by *Games Workshop Ltd*. *Amber to Red* will be featured in the next issue.



# AMBER TO RED

This is the winning entry in the White Dwarf Traveller scenario competition. Referees should have Traveller Books 1-4; players may assume the roles of the mission team only, or, if sufficient number are present, may be split into two groups and control

by Neil Cheyne

the mission team and the defending forces. The mission team should be familiar with the contents of modules 1-5, 7, and 8; the defenders, if players, should be familiar with modules 1, and 4-8.

## 1. PRESS RELEASE 200-1106

A spokesman for Tukera Lines today announced the signing of a contract with the government of Wypoc/Lanth (0401). This contract calls for the transport of 40,000 inhabitants of Wypoc to Djinni/Lanth (0501). Many craft will be chartered, and Tukera are now accepting applications for employment.

A spokesman for the Scout Service confirmed this transfer of population to a Red Zone, and added that the operation would be supervised by elements of the IISS and two *Kinunir* class battle cruisers of the Imperial Navy. He made it clear that only those of the planet Wypoc are allowed to land on Djinni, and only ships employed by Tukera Lines could enter the Red Zone.

### Wypoc: General Information

Wypoc/Lanth (0401) E9C4547 C AG

This planet has a basic spaceport, extended on a temporary basis to allow for the expected transport fleet. It has no orbital facilities. Planet diameter is 9,000 miles, the atmosphere is insidious in most areas of the planet, and is 40% water covered, with a population of 100,000. The government of Angora, the principal nation, is a representative democracy which forbids the possessions of firearms. The planet is orbited by a satellite, Poco (E200000). Wypoc has tech level 12.

Wypoc has suffered a long chemical war, which has resulted in the almost total destruction of the population. Once a thriving

starfaring community it is now dying; drifting clouds of powerful insidious chemicals threaten to overcome the last communities of Wypoc. The largest of these is in Angora, with a population of 40,000 and the only remaining starport. It is Angora that has made the deal with Tukera Lines to evacuate its population. The inhabitants of Wypoc have little to offer as trade; however, Angora sold the satellite Poco, although it has no more right to than the other communities, which are isolated by the clouds, have no port facilities, are in no position to argue the sale, and must await rescue at a later date by Imperial forces.

**Approach and Landing Regulations:** There is extensive war debris in orbit around the planet. Much of this is dangerous and unplotted, making travel off the approved approach routes risky. Landing other than by the approved descent will mean passing through the chemical clouds, possibly with fatal results. The entire procedure is made more hazardous with the overloading of the ground-based navigation systems, brought about by the transfer of the planet population.

**Other Communities:** Of four such, Hygar is the main one, with a population of some 30,000, and a reasonable amount of surviving high tech equipment. The other settlements of about 10,000 are situated in areas protected mainly by nature (rather than energy barriers) from the insidious areas.

## 2. MISSION BACKGROUND

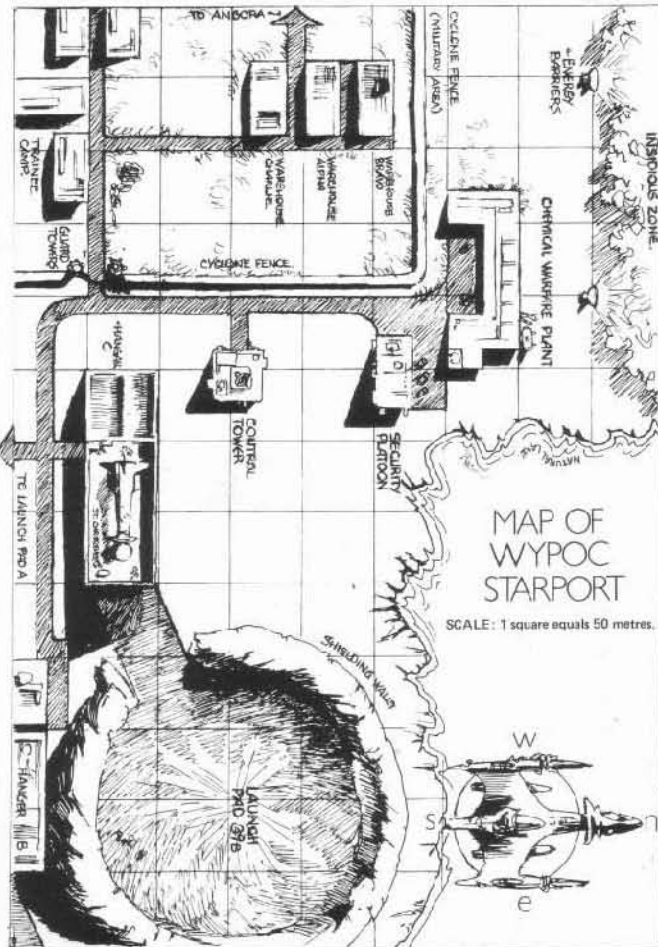
The transfer of personnel from Angora, Wypoc to Djinni has begun, several independent craft have been employed by Tukera Lines to lift men and material to larger ships in orbit beyond the debris. Two 100 ton scout ships patrol this convoy, beyond a *Kinunir* class cruiser stands watch, its marine complement below on the planet surface maintaining civil order.

**269-1106:** The 200 ton free trader *Hustler* lands on the planet at temporary space port facilities and offloads electronic engineers with their equipment, sent to augment the navigation system. Unnoticed 10 of these engineers slip quietly away, and disappear into the suburbs of Angora. Gathered together in a basement of an undisclosed commercial concern, they meet their patron, Johann Auchzt of the Hygar secret service who outlines their mission as follows:

"You have been hired for a dangerous mission requiring the use of all your skill. The prize is well worth the risk, gentlemen; those of you who survive will be part owners in the ship *St Christopher*. The mission is in three parts; first, storming the *St Christopher* which is at the northern extremity of the space port, due to be loaded in 24 hours time. The defences and layout of the space port and ship are shown on the maps. Second, to travel in a low orbit, avoiding the two scout ships in any manner required and passing through the debris belt using the 90 ton survey laboratory attached to the *St Christopher* to select a safe course to Hygar, where passengers and cargo will be awaiting pickup at a secret base recently built to accommodate the ship. Third, the ship should proceed to Djinni evading the *Kinunir* class cruiser in any manner required. On arrival at Djinni the laboratory should be put into orbit, and the lifeboat and ship's boat used to deliver the people of Hygar to the planet surface. The *St Christopher* then belongs to the crew."

## 3. THE MISSION TEAM

The characters have undergone a familiarisation course on the XLS 490 Laboratory ship, *St Christopher* class. The patron, who will accompany the party, will work the laboratory computer during flight. With the exception of the pilot and the engineer the



rest of the team are commandoes and have been trained as such. Players may reassign gun and blade combat skills before play starts to any other weapons in any combination, so long as the total number of skills in each category is the same. The mission team may employ any equipment that they can carry up to tech level 13, this does *not* include battle dress. The team has an air raft with turret auto cannon. Also available is an ATV crash tender for the starport. These vehicles are with the team at Alpha Warehouse 12 hours from loading time, 18 hours from takeoff time. It is almost dusk, and the evening is characteristically warm and still. There is a certain urgency about the city as the populace prepares to leave.

Name Job	UPP Rank	Age/Terms	Character Skills
Johann Auchzt Patron	886A99 Major	42-00	Electronics-3, Computer-4, Streetwise-3
Johr Magi Mission Team Leader	89AA98 1st Lt	30-03	Leader-1, Grav Veh-1, Cbt Rifle-1, Recon-1, Medic-1, Survival-1, Commo-1
Lon Kidder Assault Section Leader	7799A7 2nd Lt	26-02	Grav Veh-1, Instruction-1, Cbt Rifle-2, Streetwise-1, Intermgation-1
Ghentz Hobard Assault Section Member	888C76 Lance Sgt	30-03	Mechanical-4, Electronics-1, Blade-1, Demolition-1, Medic-1
Tear Krogel Assault Section Member	765987 Commando	26-02	Electronics-1, Computer-1, Pistol-1, Brawling-1, Survival-1
Fats Reefer Assault Section Leader	899664 Commando	26-02	Blade-3, Cbt Rifle-1
Lee Quinton Support Section Leader	BA6677 Sgt	26-02	Gunnery-2, Cbt Rifle-1, Autocannon-1
Noah Plugger Support Section Member	885956 Lance Col	30-03	Gunnery-1, Cbt Rifle-1, Autocannon-1, Recon-1
Baden Fane Pilot	B59897 Lt Cmdr (Navy)	34-04	Pilot-2, Navigation-1, Computer-1, Vacc Suit-1
Yang Fin-se Engineer	7868A8 Lt (Navy)	26-02	Engrng-2, Navigation-1, Mechanical-1

#### 4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE STARPORT

The port is located in the north of Angora, on the edge of the insidious zone, and the *St Christopher* is at a loading bay at the edge of the port. A hangar adjacent to the loading bay contains equipment and supplies due to be put on board, minor repair facilities, and emergency firefighting units.

At night there are four security men at the hangar armed with assault rifles, and wearing cloth armour. The Navigational Assistance Unit is unlikely to have more than five or six men on duty at night, with sidearms only. The security platoon at the chemical warfare plant has thirty men and three ATV's equipped with night detection gear. Their equipment is cloth and reflex armour, with a mixed armament of laser rifles, ACRs and SMGs. If the alarm is raised, squads of Imperial marines should be expected to arrive from port road A. The transit camp is occupied by citizens due to leave the planet the next day, there are currently about 200 people in this camp. The warehouses north of the transit camp are used to store equipment due to be loaded aboard the starships within the next few days. Warehouse Alpha is the property of Johann Auchzt and all equipment can safely be kept here for up to 18 hours. The transit road has 4 men on duty in each of two bunkers, one at either side of the road. The electronically guarded gate can be opened from the south bunker.

**Boarding:** Access to the *St Christopher* can be gained by the air lock via the external ladder, this is not locked but is guarded. There is a loading elevator beneath the laboratory; this is locked and would need to be forced. The inspection hatch at the lower engineering deck is open and an external ladder attached. The inspection hatch at the lower engineering deck is open and an external ladder attached. Two or three of the twelve man crew can be seen working here through the night, others can be seen about the airlock at dusk (18 hours before the ship is due to leave). The remainder are asleep on board. The cargo and boat doors cannot be forced.

**Lift off:** The patron and the pilot are familiar with the layout

of the ship's controls and have the necessary nav tape to travel to Hygar. The ship is fuelled and able to take off from dusk onwards. As the final checks are still underway there is a small chance that the ship will not be fully operational. Twenty minutes would be required from first control of the ship until takeoff time, unless damage is caused.

#### 5. XLS 490 ST CHRISTOPHER

Designed as an exploration ship the *St Christopher* has a mass of 490 tons when the detachable space laboratory is attached, and 400 tons without this. The laboratory is capable of maintaining orbit for several months, and was designed for orbital survey work. Its specialist detection equipment is also ideal for detailed scanning of ships in space.

**Tonnage:** 490/400  
**Acceleration:** 2G/2G  
**Crew:** 10 crew, 2 marines, up to 6 researchers  
**Jump:** 2/2  
**Powerplant:** 2  
**Gravitics:** Inertial compensators and 1G floor field  
**Armament:** 1 triple laser turret, 1 single missile turret  
**Electronics:** Computer model 3, (model 1B in laboratory)  
**Fuel Capacity:** 160 tons  
**Ship's Boats:** 1 ship's boat, 1 life boat

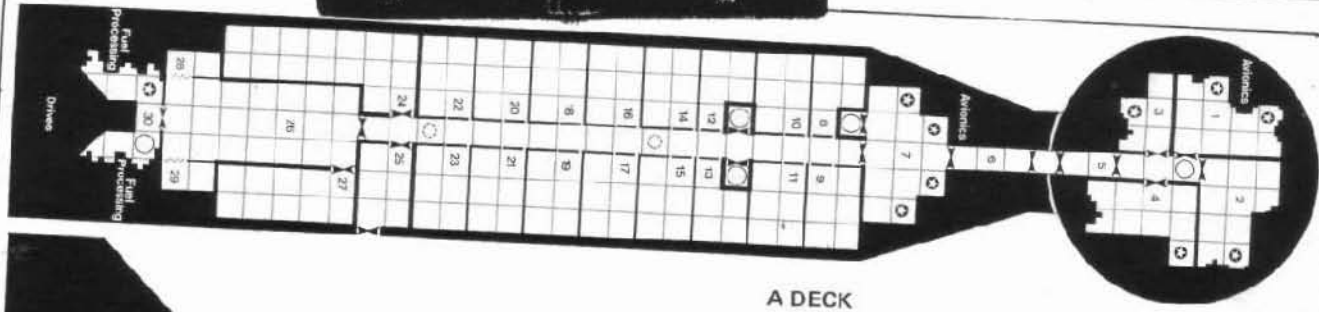
Partition walls and cabin doors require 100 points of damage before they will break open enough for a human to pass. Cabin doors are sliding. Bulkhead walls and floors are airtight and require 1000 points of damage to break through as do the iris valves, which are also airtight. These doors are opened by controls at the side of door, and will not open if there is a vacuum present at only one side of the door. The missile turret has an autoloader which extends down into the cargo bay, where missiles are kept.

#### 6. THE CREW

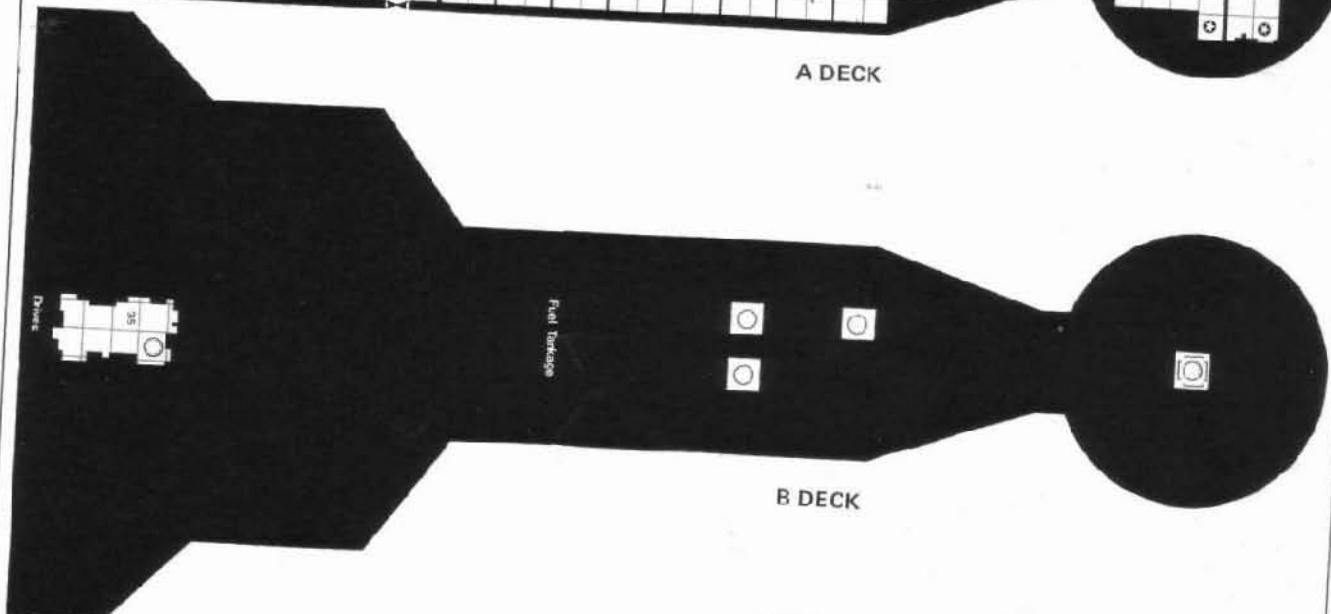
Name Job	UPP Service	Age/Terms Location Night/Day	Character Skills
Lance Baun Captain/Pilot	B59897 Scout	34-04 9/7	Pilot-1, Navigation-1, Vacc Suit-1, Computer-1
Ichter Badmanne Chief Engineer	7868A8 Navy	26-02 35/11	Engrng-2, Navigation-1, Mechanical-1
Ace Callaghan Navigator	78599A Navy	50-08 13/7	Navigation-2, Medic-1, Admin-1
Joe Jewell Ship's Boat Pilot	777869 Navy	22-01 15/26	Ship's Boat-1, Admin-1
Donald McDonald Medic	758696 Army	26-02 17/31	Medic-2, Computer-1
Zareth Seer Cook/Clerk	56A855 Army	26-02 19/20	Jack of Trades-2, Admin-1
Bernie Battles Gunner	558774 Navy	34-04 21/Fwd Turret	Gunnery-2, Vacc Suit-1, Admin-1
Ted Fores Gunner	656578 Navy	26-02 23/Aft Turret	Gunnery-1
Skip Benson Engineer	868548 Merchant	30-03 38/22	Engrng-1, Electronics-1
Argo Gothnar Engineer	78B/8A Merchant	26-02 18/30	Engrng-1, Mechanical-1
Paul Finter Security Guard	A6786A Marine	30-03 25/16	Tactics-1, Vacc Suit-1, Laser Rifle-1, Blade-1
Bella Moreno Security Guard	788586 Marine	26-02 25/14	ATV-1, Vacc Suit-1, Laser Rifle-1, Blade-1

All the crew carry snub pistols, the two security guards have laser rifles and wear cloth and reflex armour. The ship's locker is in room 10 and contains a further 2 laser rifles, 8 submachine guns, and 10 sets of cloth armour.

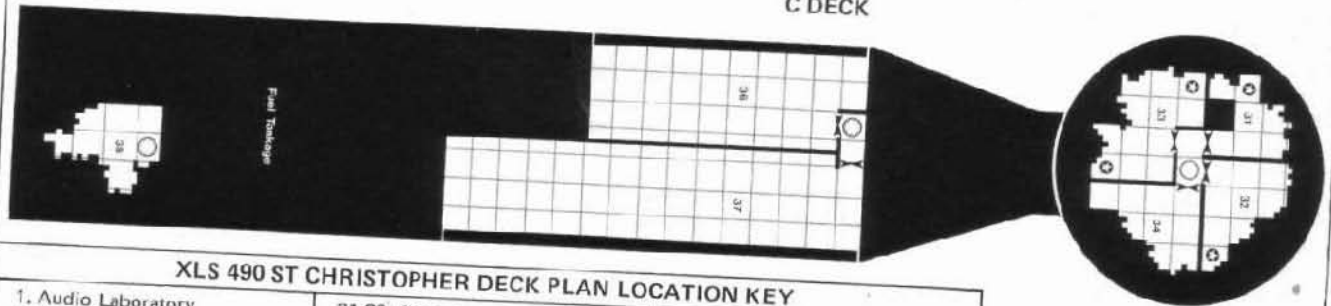
The ship's boat has a beam laser, and has on board an air raft and an auto cannon.



A DECK



B DECK



C DECK

**XLS 490 ST CHRISTOPHER DECK PLAN LOCATION KEY**

1. Audio Laboratory	21-23. Staterooms	33. Survey Laboratory
2. Control Room	24. Cargo Hold & Missile Storage	34. Remote Sensing Laboratory
3. Auxiliary Laboratory	25. Airlock	35. Middle Drive Room
4. Scanner Systems	26. Common Area	36. Lifeboat Bay
5. Airlock	27. Cargo Hold	37. Ship's Boat Bay
6. Airlock	28, 29. Freshers	38. Lower Drive Room
7. Bridge	30. Upper Drive Room	
8-19. Staterooms	31. Biology Laboratory	
20. Galley	32. Electronic Laboratory	

Note: Ceiling iris valves on A dock lead to turrets.

GENERAL SUPPLY AND REPAIRS Headquarters Dept.	
PROJECT: ST CHRISTOPHER	
JOB NO: 2291	DRAWING NO: 340
TITLE: PRESENTATION DISPLAY	
DATE: 05A 1100	DRAWN BY: [Signature]
DESIGNED BY: [Signature]	

**7. REFEREE'S NOTES**

*Storming of the Ship*

The four security guards at the hangar will send two men on a perimeter patrol of the loading bay at infrequent intervals, about twice an hour. The security platoon will patrol at night and be in reserve during the day. These night patrols will be undertaken every half hour and will consist of a single ATV with 10 men aboard. The ATV is equipped with night fighting gear and individual weapons are fitted with night sights. The Imperial marines will arrive at the source of any trouble within 10-15 combat rounds, arriving on port road A in squad strength aboard an ATV. After a similar delay another squad will arrive. The Imperial marines are from the *Kinunir* class cruiser. If this adventure is not available then each squad should be in battle dress armed with PGMP 13. The bunkers on the transit road are in radio contact with the security platoon, and no traffic is expected through the night. However, there has been much disorganisation and frequent changes of plan throughout the evacuation. These bunkers have walls equivalent to double-strength bulkheads and firing slits facing forward and to either side.

*Lift off*

Due to lack of maintenance there is a 1 in 6 chance that the engines will fail in flight. During the flight a scout will intercept the ship at maximum laser range and travel alongside engaging the ship for five turns, until it enters the atmosphere again and travels through a narrow gap in the chemical clouds, guided by the advanced detection systems aboard the lab. Entry into the cloud for any reason will result in two "hits" on the ship, with normal effects.

*Escape to Djinni*

Lift off after loading men and equipment at Hygar will require the ship to pass through the layer of debris, containing many still-active missiles. These can be avoided by skilled use of the lab's detection systems. If for any reason this is not done 1d6-2 missiles will be encountered, attacking as normal.

Beyond the debris belt the *Kinunir* class cruiser must be evaded, or engaged. When arrival at Djinni has been made all will be safe, although the cruiser may pursue the stolen ship at the discretion of the referee.



# Jump Drive Problems

Starbase is a regular department featuring readers' ideas for Traveller.

In *White Dwarf 24*, I asked if any readers had Jump drive problems to augment the few given in Book 2 of the *Traveller* rules. I have selected a few of the best ideas, and these are shown below with comments. Referees should combine those they like into a Jump drive problems table.

## Jump Drive Problems — Chance System by Stephen Cook

There are 6 basic types of Jump drive (roll 1d6 for random encounters):

Die	Type	Cost	DM	Die	Type	Cost	DM
1	Scrapheap	-50%	+50	4	Standard	—	—
2	Jerrybuilt	-25%	+25	5	Safe-standard	+15%	-10
3	Substandard	-05%	+05	6	Extra-safe	+50%	-20

Roll 1d100 and add DM if type 1-3. If the modified result is 100+, roll again, adding DM (all types) and the tonnage code from *High Guard* (convert letters to numbers A = 10, B = 11, etc). If the result is 80+ then there is a problem. Repeat this roll, and if the result is 70+ there is a second problem. Continue rolling for additional problems until the result is under 70.

Dice	Problem	Dice	Problem
01-12	Power Surge	65-92	Major Problem
13-24	Power Drop	93-99	Delayed Action Problem
25-36	Directional Error	00	Other
37-64	Minor Problems		

**Power Surge:** Add 1d6 to intended Jump number. Ship travels this distance in intended direction unless new Jump is 7+, in which case an explosion wrecks (10 x Jump number x tonnage code) tons of ship.

**Power Drop:** Subtract 1d6 from intended Jump number. Ship jumps this distance in the intended direction unless the result is 0-, when the fuel required for the intended Jump is wasted and a minor problem (37-64) occurs.

**Directional Error:** Roll 1d6 for new direction of Jump. The ship travels the intended distance. If the ship's new direction is the one intended, roll again.

**Minor Problem:** Explosion wrecks 1d6 x 10 x tonnage code tons of ship.

**Major Problem:** Explosion wrecks 1d6 x 1000 x tonnage code tons of ship.

**Delayed Action Problem:** Roll again in 1d6 Jumps' time and apply that result then.

*Other:* Referee's special.

**NB:** A misjump is a combination of a directional error and a power surge/drop.

**Comments:** The idea of different standards of drive is good — it gives choice in starship purchase if money is tight or no object; it also gives an alternative to DMs for missed maintenance — drives drop a category.

Stephen has relied heavily on drive explosions — I would use other ideas, perhaps from this column.

## A Selection of Jump Drive Problems by John Roberts

**Initiator Failure:** The Jump drives fail to start. A repair attempt takes 20 minutes and is successful on a roll of 9+. DMs +1 per level of Mechanical and Electronic skill. If this roll is failed a Starport is needed for repairs, taking 1D days and will cost 1-6000 Cr per day.

**Deformed Jump Field:** Part of the ship is outside the Jump Field generated by the engines. This part is left in normal space whilst the ship makes the Jump. It is common for small projecting-pieces, eg aerials, to be left behind, causing only minor damage. However, when the Jump Field cuts the hull (very rare) both parts of the bisected ship stay where they were in normal space and are explosively decompressed.

**Fuel Flow Blockage:** The ship arrives 1D days late. It costs 2,000 Cr to have the fuel system flushed at a Starport to cure the problem.

**Jump Stabiliser Fault:** The ship is subjected to severe buffeting in Jump space. This causes no damage, but is extremely annoying (lost sleep etc). Roll once per day: 8+ to repair, DMs + 1 per level of Engineering and Electronic skill.

**Gravitational Influence:** If the ship crosses the gravity well of a star-system it may spend its time in Jump space orbiting that star instead of continuing its journey, and come out of Jump space in that system.

**Navigational Interact Malfunction:** Information from the computer is mishandled by the drives; the ship comes out of Jump space in a hex adjacent to that intended.

**Jump Governor Failure:** This is only possible for ships with Jump governors. All the ship's fuel is used in making the Jump. To cure this problem the governor must be replaced (see *High Guard*).

**Total Drive Failure:** This is the worst breakdown, the ship falling out of Jump space at some point along its route. Major drive overhaul or replacement is required.

**Bounce:** This only happens to ships with Jump governors. After emerging from Jump space the ship 'bounces' back into Jump space and repeats the Jump, travelling in the same direction until all fuel is used up. If a bounce is likely roll 10+, DMs +1 per level of Pilot skill, to avoid it. Afterwards, governor replacement is advisable.

**Comments:** Fuel Flow Blockage could cause early Jump exit if severe. Jump Stabiliser Fault, if severe, might trigger a Deformed Jump Field.

## Jump Space Relativity by Bob McWilliams

*Book 2* implies that whatever the length of the Jump, occupants of a ship experience a week's time in Jump space. Therefore, this could differ from the time which has passed in the outside Universe, due to a fault in the drive.

Fuel impurities, fuel metering, field formation and lack of maintenance might cause this.

Faults to do with the fuel supply lengthen time spent in Jump space by 1d6 or 2d6 days, depending on the severity of the problem. This may cause component failures elsewhere. In this case, the outside Universe and the ship in Jump space 'agree' that the voyage is unexpectedly long.

Field formation and maintenance faults might lengthen (or shorten) the time spent in Jump space as perceived by the ship's occupants, while the rest of the Universe sees the voyage as taking the expected time. ■

# ON THE CARDS

A Ready-reference System for Weapons

by Bob McWilliams

Starbase is a regular column devoted to ideas on Traveller. This issue, a way to speed up combat.

**CUTLASS**  
 Wt: 1250 gr  
 lg: 800 mm  
 TL: 3

STR REQ: 1-6: DM-2; 7-10: DM 0; 11+: DM+2; Wknd: DM-4  
 ARMOUR: None Jack Mesh Cloth Reflec Ablat Battle  
 +4 +3 -2 -5 +4 -2 -6  
 RANGE: Close Short Med+ Long+  
 -4 +2 n/a n/a

SKILL CLASS: Sword  
 Base Pr: CR 100

WOUND 2D+4

**SNUB PISTOL**  
 Wt: 250 gr Ammo Wt: 30 gr per 6 or 125 gr per 20 Base Pr: CR 150  
 lg: 100 mm 6 individual or 20 rd mag Ammo (per 6): CR 10  
 Ammo (per mag): CR 40

SKILL CLASS: Zero-G Wpns

TL: 8

DEX REQ: 1-6: DM-2; 7-9: DM 0; 10+: DM+1  
 ARMOUR: None Jack Mesh Cloth Reflec Ablat Battle  
 +2 +2 -1 -3 +2 0 -8  
 HE +2 +2 -1 -1 +3 +2 -3  
 HEAP -1 -1 -4 -6 -1 -4 n/a  
 RANGE: Close Short Med Long+  
 n/a +2 -8 n/a 4D  
 HE +1 +2 -8 n/a 4D  
 Tranq +1 +2 -8 n/a Variable

**AUTO PISTOL**  
 Wt: 750 gr  
 lg: 175 mm  
 TL: 6

DEX REQ: 1-6: DM-2; 7-9: DM 0; 10+: DM+1  
 ARMOUR: None Jack Mesh Cloth Reflec Ablat Battle  
 +1 +1 -1 -3 +1 +1 -5  
 RANGE: Close Short Med Long VLong+  
 +1 +2 -4 -6 n/a

SKILL CLASS: Pistol  
 Ammo Wt: 250 gr per 15  
 15rd mag integral Ammo (per 15): CR 10

Base Pr: CR 200

WOUND 5D-3

**ACCELERATOR RIFLE**  
 Wt: 2500 gr  
 lg: 800 mm  
 TL: 9

Ammo Wt: 500 gr per mag  
 15 rd mag Ammo (per mag): CR 25

SKILL CLASS: Zero-G Wpns

DEX REQ: 1-5: DM-1; 6-8: DM 0; 9+: DM+1  
 ARMOUR: None Jack Mesh Cloth Reflec Ablat Battle  
 single/auto: +3/+4 +3/+4 0/+1 -2/-1 +3/+4 +1/+2 -5/-4  
 RANGE: Close Short Med Long VLong+  
 single/auto: -8/-8 -6/-6 +2/+4 +1/+2 n/a 3D

NOTE: Fires either single shot or three round auto bursts.

Every time a personal combat occurs in *Traveller*, have you, like me, become heartily fed up with having to turn the pages of Book 1 and Book 4 to collect all the relevant data? The *Traveller* screen from *Judges' Guild* should have put an end to this, but unfortunately it omits the strength and dexterity DMs and requirements and does not of course cater for any new weapons you may have added to your campaign. So, unless you are blessed with a good memory (which I am not), some quick reference system has to be devised.

I decided to construct a set of tactical cards each bearing all the data on one weapon. Though there is some work involved in writing out the cards initially, I have found this system a great saver in actual play.

Using postcards or file cards, decide on the most suitable in-

dexing system for your own use before you start. I decided to use a different felt-tip pen colour for blade weapons and gun weapons (along the top edge of the card) and thereafter filed alphabetically, but you can be as complex as you wish, perhaps with different indentations cut into the top of the card; however you think will be the best way of finding the right card quickly.

The examples given here should make the system self-explanatory — the name of the weapon along the top, followed by general data on the weapon and ammunition, then the four combat information classes: strength/dexterity requirements, target armour DM, range DMs, and wound inflicted. Four typical cards are shown: a blade weapon, and three guns — one simple, one with two rates of fire, and one with different types of ammunition. ■





A new Traveller career. Referees using this system will need Traveller books 1-5 (the basic set, plus Mercenary and High Guard).

### Background

Although every service of the Imperium maintains its own intelligence section, such as the Covert Survey Bureau, Naval Intelligence, ITTO Intelligence, etc. the major part of Imperial intelligence work is carried out by the Imperial Secret Service. This is a massive organisation estimated to employ some forty million persons throughout known space.

The service is divided into three sections: Special Intelligence, which undertakes the more important and secretive missions; the General Duty Branch, which performs the 'dirty work' and general operations; and the Detached Duty Branch, to which all retired members of the Service belong.

### Enlistment

At the beginning of any term of service after his first, a character may request a transfer from his current service to the ISS. A character may make a general application, or a special application.

The general application requires a roll of 9+ on 2d6 to successfully transfer; DMs are: Strength +1; Intel 8+, +2; per assignment to Intelligence School, +4; per level of Streetwise skill, +1. The successful applicant enters Special Intelligence if the modified score was 15+; if the score was 9-14, he enters the General Duty Branch. An unsuccessful applicant remains in his original service.

The special application requires a modified roll of 15+ on 2d6 for success; DMs are: Intel 9+, +2; educ A+, 12; social 9+, +1; per assignment to Intelligence School, +4; per level of expertise in Streetwise or Bribery, -1. The successful applicant is assigned to Special Intelligence. Unsuccessful applicants must continue in their original service, with a DM of -1 on all rolls for promotion that term.

If once rejected, a character may apply again at the beginning of a new term; such attempts have a cumulative DM of -2 per previous rejection to the enlistment roll.

### Service

The ISS provides no training programme for recruits; the character's previous service is assumed to have provided this.

Assignments are handled in the same way as assignments in Book 4, *Mercenary*, or Book 5, *High Guard*. Each lasts one year. Special Intelligence agents may only receive one promotion per term unless one of their assignments for the term is Imperial Attache, in which case two are possible. General Duty Branch agents may receive one promotion per year, and if promoted from rank E6, are transferred automatically to Special Intelligence with a rank of O1. Ranks are as follows:

**GENERAL DUTY BRANCH**  
E1 Field Operative 3rd Grade  
E2 Field Operative 2nd Grade  
E3 Field Operative 1st Grade  
E4 Imperial Agent 3rd Grade  
E5 Imperial Agent 2nd Grade  
E6 Imperial Agent 1st Grade

**SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE**  
O1 Lieutenant  
O2 Captain  
O3 Major  
O4 Lieutenant Commander  
O5 Commander  
O6 Subsector Marshal

### ASSIGNMENT TABLE (Roll once per year)

Dice	Special Intelligence	General Duty Branch
2	Military Duty	Military Duty
3	Infiltration	Military Duty
4	Infiltration	Infiltration
5	Infiltration	Communications
6	Communications	Communications
7	Base Duty	Base Duty
8	Training	Training
9	Surveillance	Surveillance
10	Special	Surveillance
11	Special	Special
12	Special	Special

**Military Duty:** The character is posted to an active military unit as intelligence officer/operative.

**Infiltration:** The character is planted in hostile territory to infiltrate the enemy's command structure, survey planetary defences or some other dangerous mission.

**Communications:** The character serves in a communications unit linking intelligence units in the field with subsector command. This frequently involves starship travel.

**Base Duty:** The character is held in reserve for future operations and is often used for administrative work for the service.

**Training:** General training to improve the character's specialist skills.

**Surveillance:** Observation of enemy agents, military units and fleets, both within the Imperium and beyond.

**Special:** The character has been selected for a special assignment, roll 1d6 (DM+1 if Special Intelligence agent):

1: **Survival Training.** Roll 3+ on 1d6 to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: Vacc Suit, Survival, Hunting.

2: **Cross-Service Training.** The character is posted at random to another service; roll 1d6, with 1 indicating Navy, 2 Marines, 3 or 4 Army, 5 Scouts and 6 Merchants. The character may select any branch of service, and roll for one skill on the service skills of MOS tables of that branch.

3: **Specialist School.** The character receives a level of skill in one of the following areas of expertise (roll 1d6): 1 indicating Demolitions, 2 Commo, 3 Forgery, 4 Admin, 5 Interrogation, 6 Computer.

4: **Medical Academy.** Roll 3+ (1d6) to receive a level of Medical expertise, and 5+ (1d6) to receive a level of expertise in the following skills: Admin, Computer.

5: **Ground Operations College.** Roll 4+ (on 1d6) to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: Streetwise, Gun Cbt, Admin.

6: **Space Operations College.** Roll 4+ (1d6) for each of the following skills to receive one level of expertise: Pilot, Ship Tactics, Vacc Suit.

7: **Imperial Attache/Aide.** Roll 1d6; on a roll of 1-4, the character is assigned as an Imperial Attache, receiving +1 social standing and automatic promotion of one grade. On a 5-6, the character has been assigned as an Imperial Aide, receives +1 social standing and may select his next assignment, other than Imperial Attache/Aide.

### RE-ENLISTMENT

A character may re-enlist in the ISS on a roll of 6+ to serve another term. He may re-enlist automatically in his previous service, or any in which he has cross-trained.

### MULTIPLE SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

The ISS has such excellent instructors that an

unlimited level of skill can be gained from such assignments.

### MUSTERING OUT

Mustering out benefits are received from the character's initial service, in the normal way. Characters who retire (not fail the re-enlistment throw) are retained in the Detached Duty Branch. At the beginning of each game year thereafter the referee rolls 2d6 to determine if the service requires the character to perform any mission that year: a roll of 2-8 indicates no task assigned, 9 mercenary service, 10 surveillance, 11 kidnapping or rescue, and 12 assassination. The service pays well for work done in this way, and in addition members of the Detached Duty Branch draw a handsome pension, calculated as Cr 5,000 pa per term of service over the fourth, and Cr 5,000 per rank in Special Intelligence. Should a character fail in a task, he is removed from the Detached Duty Branch. Further details are the province of the referee.

### ASSIGNMENT RESOLUTION TABLES

	Military Duty	Infiltration	Communications	Base Duty	Training	Surveillance
Survival	5+	6+	4+	Auto	Auto	4+
Decoration	7+	6+	10+	None	None	9+
Promotion	6+	6+	10+	(8+)	(7+)	9+
Skill	5+	4+	7+	9+	5+	8+

**DMs:** For promotion, +1 if intel 9+; for survival, +1 if Streetwise 3+. Figures in brackets indicate that Special Intelligence agents may not make the roll.

**Decorations:** If the required score is exceeded by 0-2, the MOCUF is awarded; the character has a DM of +1 on all promotion rolls that term. If the score is exceeded by 3-5, the MCG is awarded, yielding a DM of +2 on promotion rolls; if the score is exceeded by 6 or more, the SEH is awarded, with an attendant +3 DM.

### SKILLS TABLES

The skill table a character may consult if he rolls the requisite number for a skill depends on his current assignment. Agents on Military Duty may use the Branch, Combat or ISS tables; Infiltration allows use of the Branch, ISS or Underground tables; Communication, Branch, ISS or Space tables; Base Duty, Branch or ISS tables; Training, the Branch table only; and Surveillance, the Branch, ISS or Underground tables.

### BRANCH TABLES

Special Intelligence	General Duty
1 Gun Cbt	Gun Cbt
2 Liaison	Brawling
3 Computer	Interrogation
4 Forgery	Forgery
5 Bribery	Electronics
6 Leader	Demolitions

### OTHER TABLES

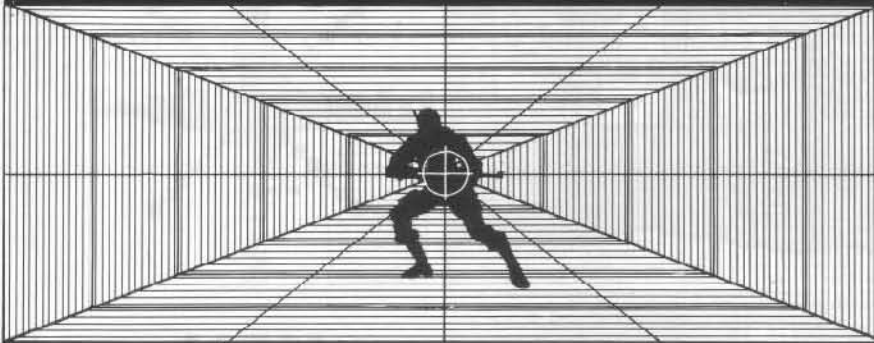
Space Skills	Combat Skills	Underground Skills	ISS Skills
1 Zero-G Cbt	Gun Cbt	Gun Cbt	Vehicle
2 Ship's Boat	Gun Cbt	Streetwise	Carousing
3 Vacc Suit	Hvy Wpn	Streetwise	+1 Stren
4 Commo	Tactics	Liaison	+1 Dext
5 Pilot	Medical	Carousing	+1 Endur
6 Ship Tactics	Interrogation	Bribery	+1 Intel

Vehicle, Gun Cbt and Hvy Wpn skills require immediate further specification.



# ON TARGET

A Critical Hit System for Traveller by Steve Cook



## HEAD HIT SPECIFIC AREA TABLE

This includes everything from the shoulders upwards.

Die	Roll	Specific Area
1-3	1-3	Eye(s)
4-6	4-6	Right eye
7-10	7-10	Left eye
11-15	11-15	Mouth
16-20	16-20	Neck
21-25	21-25	Ears
26-30	26-30	Nose
31-35	31-35	General

**Notes:**  
 1: Any hit on the head will stun the victim for 1 combat round, and if it causes more than 15 points of damage will knock the victim to the ground.  
 2: In all areas, apart from the neck, penetration to the brain is possible hence the high damage multiplier.

## Head Hit Damage Multiplier Table

Weapon Type	Eye(s)	Mouth	Neck	Ear	Nose	General
1	x4	x3	x3	x3	x3	x3
2	x6	x4	x3	x4	x4	x3
3	x2	x2	x5	x2	x2	x2
4	x4	x3	x6	x4	x3	x4
5	x6	x4	x4	x3	x4	x3
6	x2	x2	x3	x3	x2	x3
7	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2
8	x3	x3	x6	x3	x3	x3
9	x3	x2	x5	x2	x2	x2
10	x6	x5	x5	x4	x4	x4

## Additional Damage Table For Head Only

A hit on areas 1 - Eye(s), 2 - Mouth, 4 - Ear and 5 - Nose has a percentage chance of destroying, or at least damaging, the appropriate sense, respectively - sight, speech, hearing and smell. The table below should be consulted for these affects.

Weapon Type	Eye(s)	Mouth	Ear	Nose
1	99%	05%	08%	03%
2	100%	12%	19%	04%
3	92%	07%	04%	01%
4	07%	09%	07%	13%
5	100%	11%	26%	18%
6	23%	01%	-	01%
7	06%	-	-	-
8	58%	08%	06%	02%
9	67%	14%	01%	01%
10	99%	20%	14%	08%

The number indicated or less should be thrown on percentage dice for that particular sense to be affected.

## LOWER TORSO HIT SPECIFIC AREA TABLE

This area covers the torso from the waist downwards, including the hips but not the legs.

Die	Roll	Specific Area
1	1-3	Backbone
2	4-6	Left/Right Hip
3/4	7-10	General

## Lower Torso Damage Multiplier Table

Weapon Type	Grain	Left/Right Hip	General
1	x1%	x1%	-
2	x1%	x1%	-
3	x2	-	-
4	x1%	x2	-
5	x1%	x1%	-
6	x1%	-	-
7	x1%	-	-
8	x2	x1%	-
9	x1%	-	-
10	x2%	-	-

## CHEST HIT SPECIFIC AREA TABLE

The chest area covers the torso from the waist upwards to the shoulders.

Die	Roll	Specific Area
1	1-3	Heart
2	4-6	Lungs
3	7-10	Backbone
4	11-15	Organs
5/6	16-20	General

**Note:** Any wound causing more than 15 points of damage knocks the victim to the ground and stuns him for 1d6 combat rounds.

## Chest Hit Damage Multiplier Table

Weapon Type	Heart	Lungs	Backbone	Organs	General
1	x6	x3	x3	x3	x3
2	x6	x4	x3	x2	-
3	x5	x4	x2	x3	-
4	x5	x4	x4	x2	-
5	x6	x4	x4	x3	-
6	x2	x1%	x1%	x1%	-
7	x1%	x1%	x1%	-	-
8	x3%	x3	x2	x2	-
9	x3	x3	-	x1%	-
10	x6	x5	x4	x3	-

# BROKEN BONES

In addition to all normal damage sustained from cuts, falls, bullets etc: there is the possibility of a broken bone. All additional immediate damage is listed under the specific areas. For a broken bone several things have to be determined: 1) the damage taken before hospital is reached; 2) how long the hospital stay is; 3) how long the victim must rest when out of hospital.

The broken bone and levels are:

- Level Bone Broken
- 1 - Finger
- 2 - Nose, rib
- 3 - Ankle, hand, wrist
- 4 - Forearm
- 5 - Jaw, foot, elbow, upper arm
- 6 - Lower leg
- 7 - Knee, shoulder
- 8 - Upper leg
- 9 - Hip
- 10 - Neck, skull, spine

**Wounding**  
 Before hospital is reached some wounding occurs: 1-3 points per 6 hours, + 1 hour per level of Medic skill present.  
 Example: A character assisted by a Medic-2 sustains 1-3 damage every (6+2) = 8 hours.

## No Hospitalisation

If no hospital is available the following procedure should be used: Patient must be stationary. All references to the table refer to the table under the hospital section. Add 5 to the medic expertise present, treat Medic-0 as Medic-1. This gives the equivalent tech level for the hospital. 1-3 damage per level of broken bone are suffered each day. Divide total wounds by 4, this amount is suffered every 6 hours. This wounding is suffered until the end of the hospitalisation period. Normal recovery rules apply during this period but if at any time the character would have died it is assumed that he has died from his wounds.

## Hospitalisation

While in hospital no wounding occurs except in extreme circumstances. The following table gives the length of time spent in hospital.

Broken Bone Level	Time (Hours)	Minimum Time (h)	DMs (+ or -)	Resting
1	4d6	1	2	x 1d6
2	6d6	2	2	x 1d6+1
3	8d6	4	4	x 1d6+2
4	8d6+12	6	4	x 2d3-3
5	8d6+24	12	6	x 1d6+3
6	8d6+36	24	6	x 2d6-2
7	8d6+48	36	6	x 2d6-1
8	8d6+72	48	6	x 2d6
9	8d6+168	60	10	x 2d6+3
10	8d6+336	72	12	x 3d6

The Broken Bone Level column refers to the level of the broken bone.

The Time (Hours) column refers to the length of time it is necessary to spend in hospital. This is not only treatment time but time spent waiting and under observation etc.

The Minimum Time (h) column refers to the absolute minimum amount of time which should be spent in hospital, in some cases this will be impossible due to high necessary time but in no circumstances should the time go below that.

The DMs (+ or -) column refers to the DMs on time according to the tech level of the hospital. For every tech level over 8 take the number away from the required time in hospital, for every tech level below 8 add it on.

The Resting column refers to the length of time which must be spent resting once hospital is left. To calculate multiply the hospital stay (in hours) by the modified die roll. This is then the resting time in days. During this period of time the victim cannot do any strenuous actions which involve the damaged bone.

Example: A character with a broken lower leg goes to a tech level 10 hospital. A broken lower leg is a level 6 broken bone. He rolls 8d6 for hours, 36 then adds 36, giving a total of 72. The hospital is tech level 10 so a DM of (10-8) x 6 = 12 is applied, 12 giving a total of 60 hours. The time resting is 2d6-2 x 60 days. The 2d6 are 5 giving a total of 3, so therefore time = 3 x 60 = 180 days. So 180 days must be spent during which time the character can't perform any strenuous activity which involves his leg (running, climbing etc).

## Cost

The cost of the stay in hospital is calculated as follows: Multiply the length of stay in hours by 1d6 (same number every time for the same hospital) and this gives the cost in Credits. In all cases a minimum charge of Cr 50 is enforced. Note on some primitive planets this might have to be paid in potatoes, petrol or even 'magic' from strange and wonderful worlds.



# SORRY!

By Bob McWilliams

*Starbase is a regular department. This issue, a short Traveller scenario.*

Are you tired of players treating your latest animal creation to a fusillade of gauss rifle shots without being asked the colour of its fur? Try this situation on 'shoot first and ask questions later' player characters.

The world on which this situation takes place may be varied within the parameters given below:

E class starport. Size 6+, atmosphere 4-9, hydrography 2-9, population 2-5, government 0-7, law level — any, tech level 0-5. Candidates within the *Spinward Marches* are: Kegenia/Rhylanor, Leander/Trin's Veil, 876-574/Five Sisters, Cunnonic/Darrian, Plaven/Cronor.

The primary requirement is that the players should have no prior knowledge of the world in question, whether they arrive in their own ship or as passengers on a merchant. In the latter case the merchant crew should not know anything about the planet either, to prevent them being pumped for information by the players. There are a number of ways to arrange this (such as a misjump into the system) or it could be incorporated into an adventure such as *Leviathan*, where all worlds are unknown.

The ship's computer contains no data on the planet, but once in orbit, a small orbital transponder station will issue a standard communications recording giving basic navigational directions for atmospheric entry and starport location and a statement to the effect that the starport is usually unmanned but the authorities have been informed and someone will be at the port in time for touch down. There is also a brief statement that the intelligent population is mixed race — both human and native minor race, the Urthai.

*(Referee's note — The station and landing system is automatic due to the world tech level, and very basic due to the comparative poverty of the world. Such a system would be inspected and maintained by an offworld contractor at intervals. No information on the Urthai will be found in the ship's computer).*

After a routine re-entry, the ship touches down at the starport. The landing system switches itself off, and no further communications are heard. Actually the term 'starport' is a grandiose name for the scene from the viewport — the landing ground and blast walls are scorched, compacted earth and the few buildings are dilapidated structures of native wood. Thick jungle surrounds the place. Everything is very quiet — no one rushes out to meet the ship. Obviously, some exploration is necessary, so the players form a ground party to investigate.

*(Referee's note — If the ship [or ship's boat] has a merchant crew, the referee needs to do a bit of arranging to make sure it is the players that stumble on the melee described below, either by dividing the area to be searched between merchants and players so that the players search the warehouses, or by moving the location of the melee).*

**The Starport** (see accompanying plan) — Making their way through the access baffle, the party's view across to the warehouses confirms the impression of neglect, with heaps of junk, weeds and peeling paintwork. Worn areas show the place is still used, but obviously no one gives a damn about the appearance. Rounding the last corner of the baffle, tucked under the blast-wall's lee — and thus hidden from the ship's view — is a battered jeep type ground car, its engine still clicking as it cools. Obviously

someone did arrive not too long ago, but why no sign of them now?

**The Investigation** — Using the plan and the building descriptions, the referee should moderate the players' search for the occupant(s) of the jeep. Nothing of any significance occurs until they approach warehouse D. The unlocked door and slight sounds of movement within should alert them to suppose they have made a discovery and so the situation reaches its critical moment.

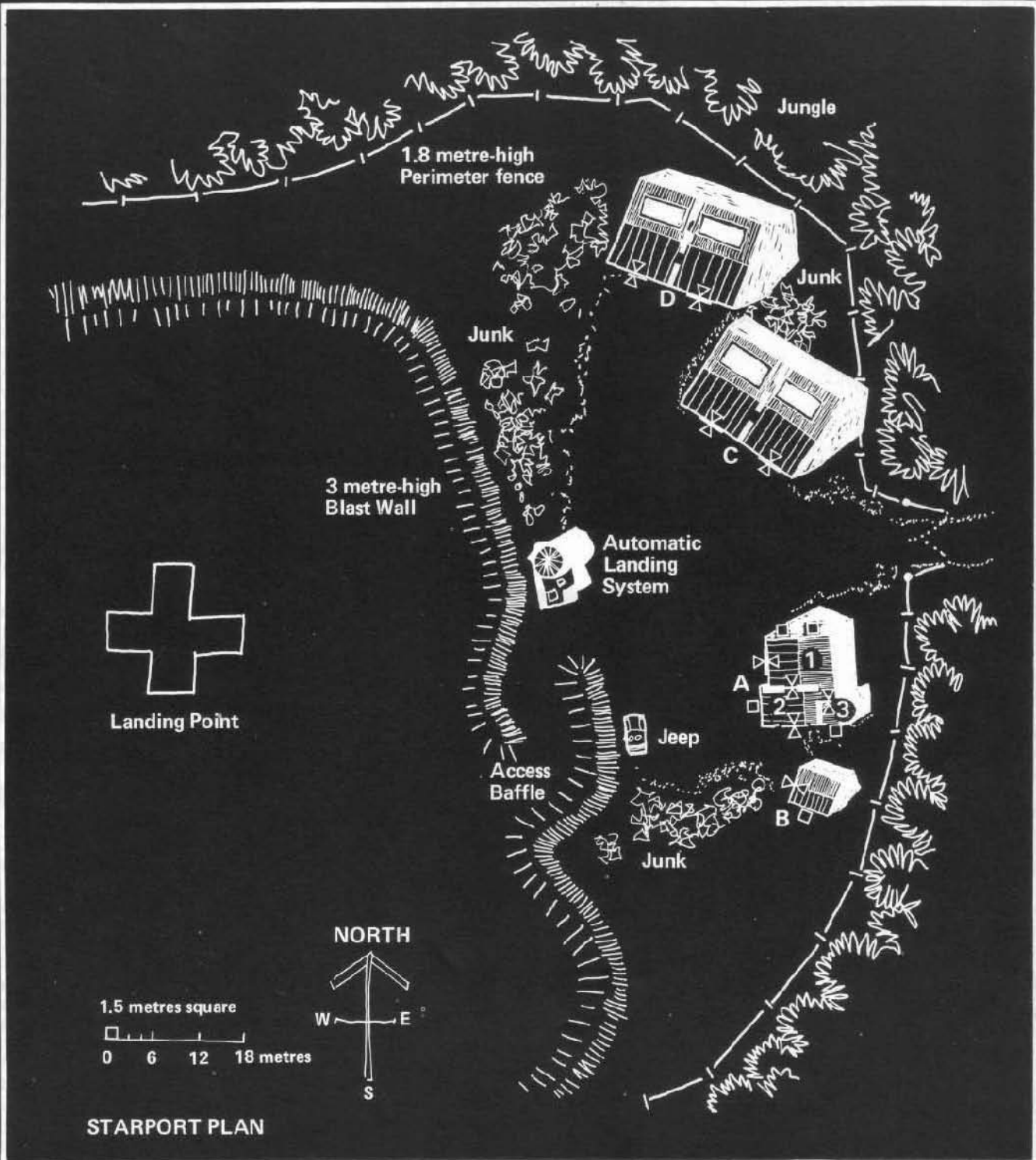
**The Melee** — As the players approach the western half of warehouse D, they notice that the large door is closed but not padlocked as all the others are. If the players are quiet they will hear slight sounds of movement within. If the players now slide the door open, the following scene greets them:

The place is a shambles. Crates and boxes are strewn around, and many split open — their contents (foodstuffs, clothing, leatherware, pottery and so on) scattered over the floor. The adventurers might have time to notice that the skylight is smashed, and they will certainly see at their feet just inside the door an automatic pistol which appears to have been kicked there from within. The padlock also lies on the floor here. The scene which holds their attention however is in the centre of the room. Two alien species appear to be in the final stages of a fight to the death — both are obviously seriously wounded. On the floor a roughly man sized (about 50 kg) being with feline features and orange, black and green striped fur that wears what appears to be a leather bandolier over one shoulder, is desperately scabbling backwards away from the other creature, which has dull grey and brown scales glistening here and there with blood. It sways drunkenly and attempts to reach a position where it can fall on the other to administer the fatal blow.

*(Referee's note — the true situation is as follows. The feline is a carnivore/chaser and not intelligent. Two days ago it entered the starport via a tree overhanging the starport fence and since then has wandered around trying to a) find food and b) get out. Attracted to the warehouse, by the scent of the foodstuffs inside, and finding no way in at ground level, it climbed to the roof and accidentally fell through the skylight. Most of the mess has been caused by its efforts to get at the food — in the process entangling itself with a smashed crate of leather belts and bandoliers.*

The reptillian is of course a male Urthai. Having arrived to meet the ship and making a routine check of the port buildings, he too heard noises within. Returning to the jeep, he retrieved an auto pistol from the glove box, then went and opened the warehouse padlock. Once inside he slid the door closed again (to prevent whatever was inside from escaping) and moved in. At this point the feline pounced, knocking the auto pistol from the Urthai's grasp, and since this time the two have stalked and fought each other until at last the Urthai is gaining the upper hand).

What happens subsequently in the situation depends on the player's actions. If they are trigger-happy (as when I refereed this situation) they will promptly shoot the Urthai in the belief that the feline chaser is the native. When a group of armed inhabitants — mixed humans and Urthai — come to investigate the gunfire (the settlement is only a mile or so away), the referee can take his revenge, and throw the lot of them into prison for manslaughter, or rather, Urthaislaughter.



STARPORT PLAN

**Building Interiors**  
 — Internal Partitions    ⚡ Doors    □ Windows

The referee should elaborate on these basic descriptions as required.

**A. Port Office.** 1) Public Room, serves the function of a ticket office, waiting room and immigration control. A few lounge chairs, an old solid fuel pot boiler, and some out of date notices and a magazine rack. 2) Staff Office, with desks, filing racks and a good deal of disorganised paperwork. In one corner is a small kitchenette unit. 3) Convenience with two units — one of human and one of alien design.

**B. Store.** Single room with maintenance and cleaning equipment. Most of this is of obsolete design. Some ground car spares and a supply of gasoline (for ground cars) in jerry cans.

**C/D Warehouses.** Identical structures each with a central partition. The SE half of warehouse C has a more sophisticated lock than the others, and if the players break in they will find that it is leased to the landing system maintenance contractors and contains parts and repair machinery and electronics of tech level 11-12. The other warehouse areas contain stacks of crates, barrels, sacks and other containers of low-tech goods. There are large skylights in the roof.



# THE MUDSKIPPER

## A MULTI-TERRAIN VEHICLE

by Dryden Badenoch

Starbase is a regular department devoted to readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.

### Construction

The original design for the 100-ton Multi-Terrain Vehicle was produced by CN Dubaric, the Commercial Transport division of Monark Transtel. The first model was sold in 827 and, though production ceased in 863, *Mudskippers* remain in service throughout the Imperium to this day. Several inferior models have since been produced by pirate manufacturers in the outlying regions.

### Specifications

The standard Transtel *Mudskipper* has a crew of three (pilot, co-pilot and technician), with a passenger capacity of seventy and a cargo capacity of twenty tons. On most journeys, four stewards are also carried. The mudskipper is capable of three modes of travel: aquatic (sub-sea and surface), cross-country and arctic. If weaponry is required, hardpoints for two autocannons are fitted as standard, though these may be adapted for RAM auto-launchers for subsea use. The hull is fully airtight, and may be used in vacuum or at sea depths of up to 250m due to the strength of the hull armour.

### Performance

The fusion reactor gives a *Mudskipper* almost unlimited endurance, but standard operational range is set at 10,000km, and onboard facilities in their basic form are not designed to cope with a journey of more than 12 hours, there being only limited facilities for the preparation of meals. The reliability of the Hunslett 2.7ves reactor is almost legendary, so the *Mudskipper* can operate on the minimum of maintenance (throw 11+ for a breakdown to occur, DMs -1 if the technician has Engineering-2 or Mechanical -2 (cumulative) and +1 per month without a maintenance period. Throw monthly for Transtel models, and weekly for others).

The cruising velocity of the *Mudskipper* in each mode over various terrains is shown below:

Crawler: 50kmph Road; 30kmph Rough; 20kmph Cross-country.

Floatar: 25kmph Surface; 30kmph Submerged.

Skimmer: 75kmph Ice; 25kmph Snow.

*NB* Skimmer and Crawler modes require the deployment of skis and tracks respectively. These are contained in the outboard pods and in the lower hull, controlled from the cockpit.

### Suggestions for Use

Base price for the *Mudskipper* is MCr10 at TL9, so it is unlikely that any *Traveller* player should wish to own one, unless he has at his disposal a ship large enough to transport the craft from world to world. The standard *Mudskipper* is obviously a replacement for an airliner on worlds where, for one reason or another (lack of air, fluctuating gravitational and magnetic fields, etc) flight is impractical. Variations on the standard design include a cargo carrier, where the second-class section has been removed to enlarge the cargo bay, and a long-range version in which the seating is replaced by staterooms.

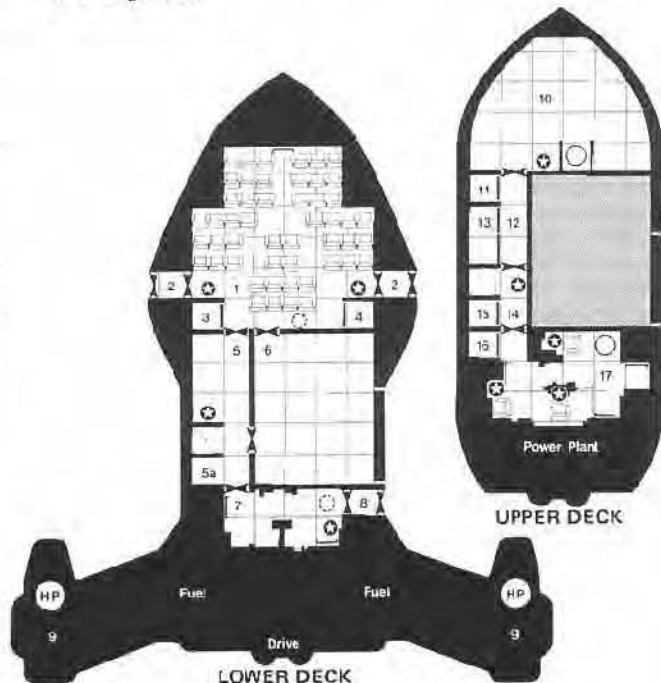
Due to their low TL, *Mudskippers* will be encountered mostly on frontier worlds as explorers and transports, though planet-bound mercenaries or armies may invest in the vehicles as command bases. The possibilities are endless, but remember to use commonsense: a *Mudskipper* will rarely be found in situations where a standard vehicle would be less expensive, faster and/or more suited to the task.

### Interior Details

- 1. Second Class Passenger Seating.** Cramped seating for fifty passengers; seats incorporate video screens and com-consoles for use during the journey. Relevant survival apparatus under each seat.

- 2. Airlock.** Standard starship fitting.
- 3. Fresher.**
- 4. Equipment Locker.** Tools, medical supplies and survival equipment relevant to the planet on which the *Mudskipper* is operating.
- 5. Galley.** Designed to cater for the passengers during long journeys (over two hours), the galley consists mainly of a cold store and a series of microwave cookers for the preparation of freeze-packed meals. Lift to upper deck.
- 5a. Pantry.** Storage for foodstuffs and utensils.
- 6. Cargo Bay.** Twenty tons of cargo space, accessible by an armoured cargo door.
- 7. Lower Drive Access.** Contains systems monitors and access to the fusion reactor, and controls for refuelling the ten-ton capacity fuel tanks.
- 8. Airlock.** Standard starship fitting.
- 9. Outboard Pod.** A stabiliser/float for the ship when in floatar mode, incorporating ballast tanks and aqua-jets for use in submarine operations. Also contained are remotely deployable skis and crawl-tracks, and remote firing systems for the auto-cannon turrets.
- 10. First-class Lounge.** A luxury lounge area seating twenty, with a bar and other comforts for first-class passengers only.
- 11. Fresher.**
- 12. Circulation Space.**
- 13. Supply Store.** General storage area for maintenance equipment and spare parts.
- 14. Circulation Space.** Lift to lower deck.
- 15. Store.** Cleaning and miscellaneous equipment.
- 16. Fresher.**
- 17. Cockpit.** Control consoles for the pilot, co-pilot and engineer.

The pilot console is on a raised dais to allow a view through the piateel cupola, which can be covered in seconds with an armoured shield. The vessel may be piloted by remote cameras and instrumentation instead. The area includes the onboard computer, which is equivalent to a Model/3 for programming and combat purposes. It provides complete autopilot facilities, as well as a library service for the passengers. In practice, most commercial journeys are made on automatic, the crew taking manual control only in the event of emergencies.



- Scale: 1 square = 1.5 metres
- Bulkhead with large drop door/ramp
  - Lift shaft
  - HP (Hard point)
  - Access panel
  - Com-console
  - Iris valve
  - Vertical shaft in floor
  - Vertical shaft in ceiling
  - Interior partition with sliding door



# WEED WAR: VINORIAN

by S McIntyre

A Traveller scenario for 2-8 players.  
The referee will require Books 1-4,  
and Supplements 2 and 4.

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R, 0701

to put a stop to this, but is unable to use force because that would seriously damage its already shaky public relations. If, however, some off-worlders were to find out how the pirates operated, as if by accident, and render their trawlers useless, then Lindar could not possibly be connected. Any measures the players deem necessary could be used, if the action did not harm the weed crop or appear to be connected with Lindar. Lindar Chemitechnics would provide equipment for the operation: swimming equipment, and oxygen tanks for each man, along with a CO<sub>2</sub> harpoon gun and knife. Lindar would also arrange for the hiring of a minisub, with undersea equipment handling gear and micro-torpedoes. The pay for a successful mission, which would require the immobilisation of whatever the pirate group are using to harvest the weed, would be Cr 50,000 per man, and possibly some little gift from the firm if the mission was carried out particularly well.

## Minisubs

Displacement: 5 tons.  
Dimensions: 11 x 2 x 2 metres.  
(Note: Hull is cylindrical.)  
Speed: 30 kph submerged/25 kph surfaced.  
Passengers or crew: Max = 5.  
Range: Powered by a nuclear micropile, 4800 km or four days.  
Depth limit: 300 m.

## Prices

Submersible: Cr1,000,000; Micro-torpedo: Cr 5000; Equipment pods - Worker unit: Cr 10,000, Drive pod: Cr 2000,000.

*Special Weapon:* CO<sub>2</sub> Harpoon Gun.

## Range Matrix

Close	Short	Medium	Long	Very Long	Damage
-4	+1	-2	-4	-6	3d+1

## Armour Matrix

None	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat	Battle
+2	+1	-2	-1	+2	0	-6

## Dexterity Requirements

Req Dex	DM	Adv Dex	DM
7	-2	9	+1

## Weights and Prices

Base	Gas	Base			
Weight	Bolt	Canister	Price	Bolt	Canister
4000g	500g	1000g	Cr500	Cr50	Cr100

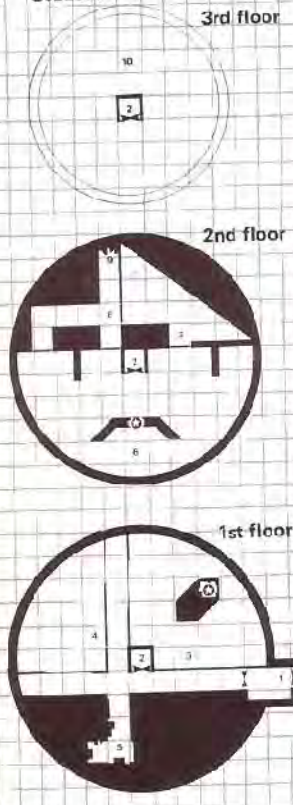
## Key to Minisub

1. *Bridge:* At the bow of the submersible is the bridge, a small space with one chair and controls (simplified) for the pilot. The bow portion of the bridge is made of reinforced glassteel, and searchlights mounted in the bridge includes sonar, image intensification and controls for the equipment mounted on the pylons. The airlock doors may be controlled from here.

2. *Fore corridor:* This narrow corridor is flanked by equipment lockers and the

## THE PIRATE BASE

Seadome



**KEY**  
 Iris Valve  
 Com-console  
 Sliding door

Scale: 1 square = 1.5 metres

## Referee's Map



Depth in metres



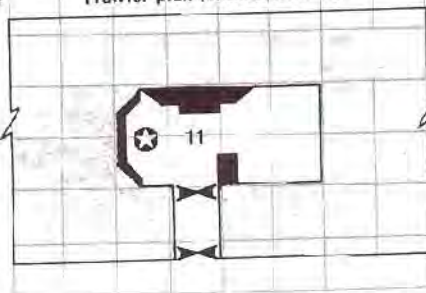
Symbol's

\* Settlement  
 △ Base

Scale

1 hex = 1 km

## Trawler plan (crew areas only)



## Introduction (Players and Referee)

Vinorian/Rhylanor (0701) is a medium sized world, largely covered by water. The atmosphere is heavily tainted with chlorine, which occasionally creates a green mist just above the surface of the sea, and which dissolves in the water forming very dilute hydrochloric acid. On the surface of the sea grows a kind of seaweed unique on Vinorian, which can be used to make certain drugs. The monopoly for this trade is currently held by Lindar Chemitechnics Ltd. The population of just over one million are mostly company employees, and live in Lindarport, a large comed city some two kilometres from the starport. The starport is on piles and stands twelve metres above the surface of the sea, but Lindarport itself is beneath the sea, on a plateau. The seas are warm, but the land masses are arid and support

very little animal or plant life.

When the players land on Vinorian, they are forced to wait while their papers are updated. During the delay, a Lindar executive recognises them as travellers, who he supposes might be interested in earning the price of a passage off Lindar. He fetches his superior, a major of mercenaries, who is in charge of security. This man makes a proposition:

Lately drugs have appeared on the market, on Rhylanor and other worlds, which could only have been produced from this weed, but which were marketed by a rival company. This prompted an investigation, as the drugs undersold Lindar's products by a considerable amount, and the company's profits were threatened. The investigation showed that large amounts of weed were being harvested, by an unknown agency. Obviously Lindar wishes



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bow steering motors. The lockers have space for a wetsuit and oxygen tanks, with a little other equipment, and there are two in the forward passage. On the roof of the passage is a glassteel dome.

**3. Cargo bay/sleeping area:** This area is a cargo bay holding one ton of cargo. It can alternatively be used as a sleeping area, and beds are fitted, behind metal panels in the hold. There are four beds.

**4. Aft corridor:** This narrow corridor is similar to the fore corridor (2), but there is no glass dome.

**5. Lounge:** The so-called lounge is a small area about the size of the bridge, but without any control panels. There are two chairs in place, and the roof of the area is glassteel. The rear end is the airlock door. There are controls for the airlock above one of the seats, protected by a wire mesh cover which must be raised before the buttons can be pressed. The panel includes a warning light for each door, to show whether it is open. Another light indicates whether the airlock contains air (green) or water (red).

**6. Airlock:** When the airlock controls are operated, the inner door folds up into the ceiling of the lock. When this happens a buzzer sounds in the bridge. There is a control in the airlock, which, when pressed once closes the inner door. If pressed again it opens the outer door after a thirty-second delay. If, within that delay period the button is pressed again, the outer door opening process is aborted, and the inner door opens. The outer door is controlled by a stud on its surface, and will open the outer door if the inner door is closed. Each time the outer door is opened, there is a pressure equalisation period during which time the lock is filled with water. The airlock does not function below one hundred and fifty metres depth.

**7. Steering jets:** These jets are the main drive and steering controls of the submersible. It is powered by water jets, which are fitted at bow and stern, top and bottom, mounted so as to be able to swivel, thus applying equal force in any direction. The work of the waterjets is assisted by hydroplanes mounted on the fins.

**8. Equipment pylons:** These pylons are mounted on the sides of the sub, and are intended for carrying weaponry or equipment. Each pylon includes a power supply, and universal fitting. Alternatively, equipment may be chained to the pylons, and there are shackles onto which the chains may be fitted. Such chains are carried as part of the usual equipment in a sub.

**9. Work pack:** This equipment unit contains grabs and wrenches, powered by an internal electric motor, and controlled from the bridge. The cameras mounted on the pod and the fine scales and controls on the bridge allow remarkably accurate control.

**10. Micro-torpedo:** This is a small torpedo, powered by compressed oxygen. An internal system uses infra-red to locate its target. The images are relayed to the sub-

marine which fired it, and the torpedo is controlled by the pilot. The explosive charge carried is sufficient to chase off most sea creatures, and can possibly damage a submarine.

**11. Drive pod:** This equipment unit contains extra, independent motor units which can increase the speed of a submarine carrying them by some 2½ kph for each one carried. As there are two pylons, a submarine's speed can be increased by a maximum of five kilometres per hour.

## The Mission (Referee)

The players are flown by air/raft to Valarus, a small trawling colony near the scene of the trouble. There, their submarine has been prepared. They will start out at once, searching to the south, but also checking the various small 'hamlets' for any clues. The three nearest colonies are LC-261, IG-43 and AS-5TZ. This last is a special deep-water base, on the sea-floor, which is about three hundred metres deep at this point, approaching the depth limit of the submarines. Each hex on the map represents one kilometre, thus allowing the submarine to cover the distance in a fairly short time. However at each of the small clusters of houses they must stop off. Each time they stop roll 8+ for there to be a rumour awaiting them.

## Rumour (1d6, 1d6)

1-3 :1 = The pirates are based at Valarus.

:2 = The pirates are due south of Valarus.

:3 = The pirates use submarine trawlers.

:4 = A man called here lately — he was selling weed-derived drugs, but was not a Lindar employee. He left in a mini-sub.

:5 = A submarine was destroyed last week by a Gunni skate — a kind of giant flatfish.

:6 = The pirate base is not at any listed area. Not LC-261, IG-43, AS-5TZ.

4-6 :1 = A man purchased some illegal explosives under the counter at Valarus only last week.

:2 = A trawler pilot reports seeing a gigantic blue-grey bulk on the surface in a weed patch. It dived at once, and he thinks that it must have been some kind of sea creature, as it let out a blast of air and water as it went under.

:3 = A fisherman in a weed-clear area heard powerful submarine drives running on the surface at night, but saw nothing.

:4 = The weed was largely chewed up to the south of here.

:5 = The pirates are based at LC-261.

:6 = A coastguard saw a starship land at night in the sea to the south.

## Encounters/Events (Referee)

Roll 10+ on 2d6 per hex crossed or entered for an event or encounter, then 2d6 for type.

**2:Gunniskate.** This large grazer is not intentionally dangerous, but if attacked it

will fight back on a thrown of 5+ on 2d6. See submarine combat.

**Gunniskate** 35,000 kg. A10/F8/S3. Hits: 38/14. Damage: 8D+8. Thrasher.

**3:Undersea turbulence.** Roll 9+ to regain control. Each time the throw is failed, roll 8+ for the submarine to be damaged. If the submersible is currently at 300m or near the floor of the sea, add 4 to the chance to be damaged. If it is damaged roll on the hit table under submarine combat.

**4:Mechanical failure.** Some piece of equipment fails. Roll randomly on the diagram (2d6-2) to determine what part of the submarine is affected, then decide which particular piece of equipment is affected. The failure may not be noticed until the equipment comes to be used.

**5:Sonar malfunction.** The curious nature of the water causes a sonar echo to appear 1-6 hexes away from the submarine. The echo vanishes, and when the sub arrives there is nothing to be seen.

**6:Weed trawler.** A legitimate weed trawler passes by, forcing the submarine to dive if it is on the surface or at a shallow area.

**7:Submersible.** Another minisub is encountered — roll on the random person encounters table (*Book 3*) to find out who the occupants are. Dice also for a rumour to be available, if the crews of the two subs talk with each other. Use common sense.

**8:Sandy water.** The water is clouded for the next 1-6 hexes, and vision is reduced to just over 100 metres.

**9:Subsea forest.** A dense tangle of weed appears unexpectedly. Roll 8+ on 2d6 to avoid becoming entangled. If the sub is entangled it must be freed by the crew. 4-24 man hours of work will be needed, and during the time roll every 6 hours for an animal encounter: 9+ on 2d6, and use the Animal Encounters Maritime locations in *Supplement 2*. The referee must choose which table is most suitable. An event should also be rolled for on these tables.

**10:Seaquake.** A small seaquake occurs. Roll 8+ for the submarine to be damaged, taking 1-3 hits, and 1d6 damage to each person in the submarine.

**11:Shoal.** If the submarine is near the seabed, an unexpected shoal occurs; roll 8+ on 2d6 to avoid it. If the roll is failed, the submersible takes 1-6 hits.

**12:Pirates.** Real pirates, as opposed to weed pirates. They will either have torpedoes of lethal capability and order the players to stop and hand over their sub, or they may try to board the ship by either pretending to be in need of help or simply inviting the players aboard their own ship.

## Submarine Combat

Submarine combat is basically similar to space combat, and the control of torpedoes is much the same as that of missiles. Consequently Gunner expertise is of use here. Any expertise the character may have in submersibles is also valuable. The

weapons used are of two types: (1) Micro-torpedoes — intended to scare off animals, but sometimes effective against submarines; (2) Torpedoes — the illegal weapons used by pirates. They consist of two or three micro-torpedoes welded together, with the warheads replaced by mining explosives with contact fuses. The basic roll of 8+ applies for the 'to hit' roll; DMs are: target's Submersible skill, + gunner's Gunnery skill.

If a hit is scored roll on the table below to see where the hit occurred. The number in parenthesis is the number which must be rolled on 2d6 for a micro-torpedo to do damage.

#### Hit Location (2d6)

**2: Airlock.** (5+) A hit here will destroy the airlock, and flood the submarine on 8+.

**3: Steering jets, aft.** (9+) A hit here will render the submarine incapable of forward movement.

**4: Lounge.** (6+) A hit here will do 2d6 damage to anyone in the lounge, and blow the roofplate in on 9+, flooding the submarine, and doing another 1d6 damage to anyone in the lounge.

**5: Aft corridor/ballast tanks.** (9+) A hit here will incapacitate the aft ballast tanks and slow the submarine. It will also do 2d6 damage to anyone in the corridor.

**6: Cargo hold.** (8+) A hit here will burst the cargo doors on 9+, but otherwise will only shake equipment off wall racks, and do 1d6 damage to anyone in the hold.

**7: Cargo hold.**

**8: Cargo hold.**

**9: Fore corridor/ballast tanks.** (9+) A hit here will have the same effect as in area 5. It will also burst the dome on 8+, flooding the submarine.

**10: Equipment pylon.** (6+) A hit here will ruin the equipment pylon, and any cargo or equipment currently on the pylon. It may start a fire in the bridge on 10+, or flood the cargo hold (9+).

**11: Bridge.** (6+) A hit here will do 2d6 damage to anyone in the bridge, destroy the sonar (1-3), pylon controls (4) or sub controls (5) or two of the previously mentioned (6). It will also flood the bridge and the rest of the ship on 8+. Any damaged equipment may be repaired on 9+, DM of relevant expertise. Repairs take 3-13 minutes — expertise level. (2d6+1 — skill level).

**12: Hull.** (9+) A hit on the hull may split the submarine open on 9+. If a hull hit occurs, the submarine is totally wrecked, with crew taking 1-3d6 damage, and drowning if they cannot find breathing gear and get it on.

**Damage:** A torpedo does 10d6 damage to a man in the open sea; a micro-torpedo does 5d6 damage.

#### The Pirate Base (Referee)

The base is on a subsea peak, just below the surface of the water. There are two minisubs, one of which is armed with two torpedoes and will be on patrol. There is

a small dome, and two large subsea vehicles: submarine trawlers. These are very large submarines, in the seventy-ton range, and largely automated. They are parked on the hill top. There are various men swimming nearby, or in the vehicles.

#### Sighting of the Base, and Beginning of Adventure

When the base is first sighted, the pirates will already have detected the minisub on sonar. The patrol minisub will be detached from patrol and sent in to destroy the intruder. Meanwhile the guards will take torpedoes from the armoury, and fit out the second sub for battle, a complex process which will take some 5-25 (4d6+1) minutes. If the patrol sub fails to report back with proof of a kill, the second sub will be sent out. If neither submarine returns the base will go to full alert. While the submarines are in action, one man will be sent into the glass dome on top of the Seadome, while the other four guards will wait in the airlock. If an approaching submarine is sighted, they will send out two men, who will wait in the seaweeds near the lock and attack any men in the water. The others will wait just down the passage from the airlock, ready to fire with their harpoon guns or snub pistols. The guards will almost always be in this position when the players arrive, unless the players take special action, ie stirring up sand to hide their approach, covering behind other submarines, or approaching swimming. The crews will be in their vehicles, the others at their posts.

#### Location Key to Pirate Base

Note of explanation: The Seadome is made of reinforced plastic, and is likely to be punctured in a prolonged shoot-out. The walls can take 15 points of damage from a single shot, or a total of one hundred points. If the wall is punctured, the room will fill with water in 2-7 minutes. The sub trawlers have much stronger walls: the glass forward view ports can take 30 points from a single shot, or a total of 225. The steel hull can take a total of 300 points.

**1) Airlock:** This automatic airlock opens when a stud is pressed on the outside. The outer door closes after one minute, and the water is let out. When all the water is out, a period of about forty-five seconds, the inner door opens. The process is reversed for someone exiting the Seadome.

**2) Central Shaft:** The Seadome is built around a central ladderwell, which goes from the bottom deck to the observation area at the top. There are exits at each of the floors, with watertight doors fitted.

**3. Lower Control Room and Sleeping Area:** This room contains three beds, and basic control systems. The control systems include television screens showing all the rooms in the dome (currently bland) and areas of surrounding sea. In this room will be also the breathing gear and swimsuits for the sponsor, and command personnel.

**4. Bunkroom:** This room provides sleeping quarters for the guards and scientists. There are simple beds, lockers and overhead lighting. There is nothing of particular value or interest in the room.

**5. Power Maintenance Area:** This small area is in the centre of the dome's life-support systems. It has various controls, including a large switch marked *on/off*. Nearby are buttons, with green lights glowing above them labelled *lighting, air, commo, lock, scan*. *Lighting* shuts down all lighting in the dome, *air* will stop the air circulating if pressed, *commo* will cut power from the dome's communications, *lock* will make the airlock inoperative, *scan* will cut the power to the internal and external television systems, and the sonar. The *on/off* switch, if moved from *on* to *off*, will cut off all these functions. Pressing the button again will restore the green light, and make the function work again.

**6. Central Control Area:** This large control room contains commo gear, television screens showing the inside and outside of the dome, sonar and hydrophone equipment, computers and automatic analysis machinery. There are seats loosely scattered around the control room.

**7. Armoury:** This room contains two harpoon guns, each with five bolts, and ten daggers. There are also two torpedoes chained to one wall. The padlocks on the chains prevent removal of the torpedoes without the keys, which are carried by the security officer.

**8. Generator Maintenance Corridor:** This corridor runs between two minor generators, allowing their repair and maintenance. The generators are protected from the corridor by wire mesh screens.

**9. Gunlock:** This device allows the insertion of a weapon, which will then be manoeuvred by grabs to protrude from the side of the dome. By using a remote control panel set by it, the weapon can be made to fire in a wide arc over this side of the dome. The weapon currently in place is a heavy gas gun (as normal +1, 4d+1 damage).

**10. Observation Area:** This clear glass observation deck allows vision in a 360° area. The glass is one-way glass, which does not let light out from the inside, but allows light on the outside to penetrate. A bracket on the ladder shaft holds three pairs of light intensification goggles, and a pair of binoculars.

**11. Subtrawler Control Deck:** This control deck contains the highly complex equipment necessary for the running of a subtrawler. At the front are the submarine controls, on the right is the trawl control desk, on the left is the airlock and drive control desk, and the rear of the deck is given over to the crew's beds. The rear wall is a panel covering the essential controls for the submarine. An explosive here will render the subtrawler totally useless; the high-tech innards cannot be repaired on this world.



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## Equipment

Equipment	Pirate No:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Harpoon Gun		*	*					*	*	*	*	*					
Sheath Knife (Dagger)		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Auto Pistol			*					*					*				*
Revolver												*					
Snub Pistol		*							*	*					*	*	
Cutlass											*	*					
Blade					*							*	*				
Foil																	*
Swimming Equipment		*	*	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(*)
Oxygen Tanks		(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	*	*	*	*	*	*	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Reflec Armour																	*
Cloth Armour								(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)					
Jack Armour													*				

The asterisks below the pirate's number indicate which particular pieces of equipment he has on him. If the asterisk is in brackets it indicates that the pirate possesses the equipment, but is not wearing it. The guards for instance, have cloth armour in their quarters, but as it is rather uncomfortable, they do not wear it until necessary. The crew of the station all have swimming equipment, but in the relatively safe environment of the Seadome they have abandoned it. The sub pilots and crew wear their swimming gear, hanging such items as flippers by their belts, and racking their oxygen tanks. The guards wear full swimming equipment, and carry their oxygen tanks while on duty. The second minisub pilot possesses a harpoon gun; it is in his sub, parked close to the dome.

## Pirates

- 1) Minisub Pilot:** Lieutenant 668463 Age: 30 Terms served: 1 (Sailor)  
Submersibles-1, Demolition-1, Gravitics-1, Mechanical-1
- 2) Minisub Pilot:** Sailor 49C483 Age: 22 Terms served: 1 (Sailor)  
Submersibles-1, Battle Dress-1
- 3) Chief Pirate:** Manager 885898 Age: 34 Terms served: 4 (Bureaucrat)  
Interrogation-1, Carousing-1, J-o-T-1, Leader-2, Auto Pistol-1, Admin-1, Brawling-1
- 4) Second-in-Command:** Lt Cdr 986A74 Age: 30 Terms served: 3 (Navy)  
Electronic-1, Blade-1, Navigation-1, Ship's Boat-1, Fwd Obsv-1, Pilot-1, Computer-1
- 5) Scientist:** 865A87 Age: 30 Terms served: 3 (Scientist)  
Computer-2, Electronic-2, Medical-1
- 6) Scientist:** 7AAA97 Age: 30 Terms served: 3 (Scientist)  
Computer-2, Electronic-1, Medical-2
- 7) Security Officer:** Major 69BAA6 Age: 26 Terms served: 2 (Army)  
SMG-1, Rifle-1, Pistol-1, ATV-1, Mechanical-1, Tactics-1, Air/Raft-1, Fwd Obsv-1
- 8) Guard:** Trooper C64965 Age: 22 Terms served: 1 (Army)  
Rifle-1, Pistol-1, ATV-1
- 9) Guard:** Trooper 979684 Age: 22 Term served: 1 (Army)  
Rifle-1, Tactics-1, Admin-1
- 10) Guard:** Marine 7C7977 Age: 30 Term served: 2 (Marines)  
Cutlass-2, Medical-1, ATV-1, Vacc Suit-1
- 11) Guard:** Lieutenant 6855A3 Age: 26 Term served: 2 (Marines)  
Cutlass-1, Revolver-1, Tactics-1, Computer-1, ATV-1, Blade-1
- 12) Trawler Captain:** Lieutenant 368879 Age: 38 Term served: 5 (Sailor)  
Computer-1, Electronic-1, Commo-1, Gravitics-1, Brawling-1, Fwd Obsv-1, Submersibles-1
- 13) Trawler Captain:** Lieutenant 669643 Age: 26 Terms served: 2 (Sailor)  
Grav Vehicle-1, Streetwise-1, Submersibles-1, Pistol-1
- 14) Technician:** A8B665 Age: 22 Terms served: 1 (Scientist)  
Computer-1, Electronic-1, Mechanical-1
- 15) Technician:** 4th Officer 475572 Age: 22 Terms served: 1 (Merchant)  
Engineering-1, Navigation-1, Electronic-1
- 16) Sponsor:** Knight 8786AB Age: 26 Terms served: 2 (Noble)  
Hunting-1, Admin-1, Brawling-1, Leader-1

## Some Notes on Play (Referee)

The essential part of this scenario is the actual pirate base, and it is important that the players should be able to cripple both submarines. For that reason, the two trawlers are at the base, when it might reasonably be expected that they would be out trawling. Optionally, one might be trawling and the players would have to set a trap. The trawlers are currently full of weed, to an estimated value of around Cr 2,000,000, and if this is not destroyed the players could expect a bonus of 5%. The employers will almost certainly give some bonus to the players, at the referee's option, if the players have thought their problems out well. Examples of good play are caution (but not paranoia), ingenious and plausible solutions to problems, careful planning and so on. The bonuses might be a packet of rare drugs, or some little item to lead them into another adventure, or an introduction to a non-player character who could be useful to them.

Using one's imagination to solve the problems presented is important to the scenario. A micro-torpedo could be used to detonate an approaching torpedo. A work pack could do the work of four men if the submarine became trapped in seaweed (Event 9). If the players come up with any other solutions in this line, the referee should view them favourably. He must of course not suggest them himself, but if the players do think of them, they should be suitably rewarded.

Fighting in the water may pose considerable problems. The nearest equivalent is fighting in zero gravity, and the procedure for zero-gravity combat outlined in *Mercenary* should be used, with the following notes: A CO2 harpoon gun is a low recoil weapon. As water is slightly easier to hold one's position in than vacuum, especially while wearing flippers, the throws to avoid losing control, and to re-orient oneself should be reduced to 8+.

## Pirate Locations

Pirate No	Duty Station	Area: 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Outside	Minisub
1	Minisub						6					5	4	1-3
2	Minisub						1					2	3	4-6
3	(6)			1-2			3-4		6		5			
4	(3)			1-4		6	5							
5	(6)				1-2		3-4					6	5	
6	(6)				5-6		1-2					3	4	
7	(10)			1-2						3	5	4	6	
8	(1)				1-2			6			5		3-4	
9	(1)				5-6			4			3		1-2	
10	Outside				1-2			6			5		3-4	
11	Outside				5-6			4			3		1-2	
12	(11)											3-6	1-2	
13	(11)											3-6	1-2	
14	(11)											1-4	5-6	
15	(11)											1-4	5-6	
16	(6)			1-3			4-6							6

The first column shows which area the pirate will be in if the players are spotted first. The next section of the table is the die roll for a pirate to be in a certain area if the players have surprise.

*'It is the character that makes the man, not the clay which is its abode.'*

—John Carter of Barsoom

An android is a technologically produced manlike organism made of organic material, which is capable of rational thought, feelings, and behaviour to a reasonably human degree, but not capable of reproduction. The development of androids depends (obviously) upon a highly advanced framework of biological science, as well as advancements in other fields, but there *must* be practical reasons for developing androids, where their existence is relevant to the needs of the human culture hosting them. Android populations are typically created and maintained by human societies requiring their services in occupations involving much physical labour, repetitive tasks, and considerable to extreme hazard. The tasks do not usually require above-average intelligence or planning to carry out, as well. The human population in charge of the androids is generally unwilling to perform these tasks themselves and cannot or will not use robotic assistance. Problems often arise due to the androids' similarities to humanity; androids may be equated with slaves and suppression of their rights to proper care may occur, or well-intentioned humans may believe them equal to humanity and develop expectations

education is given except as required to perform their jobs. Android thought processes tend to be concrete, literal, unimaginative, and naive early in their lives, but as they gain more experience they can adopt more independent and creative personalities. It has been demonstrated that only androids in services involving considerable activity and variety, and close contact with humans, will develop the self-initiative and flexibility to enter the mainstream of human society as independent beings. Androids employed as common labourers or in other dull and repetitive tasks will almost never do so, but will perform adequately (and unexceptionally) until death. Studies of successful independent androids show most of them were employed previously in military and commercial-merchant organizations, which require considerable independent thought and action. These androids were released from their organizations after extensive testing and interviewing, as required by various local and Imperial laws (eg, *Androids Freedoms Act*). Exceptional work performance has often helped some to be released from service earlier than others, though there are human detractors who argue that this keeps the incompetent ones in service and casts out the competent ones — an assertion that is not particularly true. One practical reason for releasing androids from service is that, though they do not deteriorate for a long time, after a certain age an-

# Androids in



# Traveller by Roger E Moore

of them that the androids cannot meet. Androids are often seen as expendable and given little control over their fates.

Though commercial varieties of androids differ considerably on the surface, virtually all of them have certain physiological and psychological characteristics in common. Androids are produced in basically human form, though there are larger and smaller sorts with varying personal skills, characteristics, colourations, and so on. Most androids are stronger than normal humans (muscle tissue is relatively easy to construct) but have poorer physical co-ordination and below-average intellects (nervous and cerebral tissue being more difficult to create and maintain). A high tolerance to pain and physical damage, with a conversely lowered level of self-preservation, is also present. An android may defend itself if attacked, but it may be taught to disregard environmental hazards such as radiation, mildly poisonous/tainted atmosphere, and unsafe surfaces and structures. Respiratory and digestive systems of a typical android are analogous to those of a human, and many of the same sorts of foods may be eaten by either (though androids must consume more protein supplements, and usually eat more vegetable material than meat).

Initially, androids tend to be quite passive and require considerable human instruction and care. After they are trained to follow human behavioural and thought norms, little formal

androids will show aging effects as humans do but at a very accelerated rate. Android medicine, though extensive, has never developed the refinement and sophistication of human medicine. Freeing androids from service in most cases releases the organization from responsibility for the care of such aged androids (which can be very expensive). There are few services providing outpatient care for androids after their 'retirement', though extraordinary endeavours and deeds might bring a reward of such free medical care.

Androids do enjoy minimal legal protection, and free androids have all the rights of an average human. Ancient fears of android groups killing their human leaders and rebelling in general have proven to be mythical, though individual androids have proven themselves capable of anti-social activities (especially those from combat-oriented military services and piratical/terrorist groups).

Locally, androids are known by a variety of nicknames, nearly all of them from the rich fictional literature of the Solomani: droids, drones, muncs (homunculi), golems, rossums, neuters, franks (frankensteins), hormads, synthetics, mannequins, and many others. Obviously some of these terms are derogatory, reflecting fears and prejudices a few humans still have toward androids. People who manufacture and sell robots strongly dislike androids for reasons of commercial competition.



### Android Prior Service Tables

Androids may be produced on most worlds of tech level 15 or higher. A typical android may be grown and matured physically in about four years; it then undergoes an eight-year course in social skills training, with a rudimentary general education and a more advanced, career-directed training. Androids have their life careers selected for them depending on current occupational needs when they reach the half-way point in their social training.

Androids may be used either as non-player characters or as player characters in *Traveller*, as the referee and players like. In either case, the UPP of an android is generated according to the following table:

Strength — 1d6+5 (6-11)      Intelligence — 1d6+2 (3-8)  
 Dexterity — 1d6+3 (4-9)      Education — 1d6 (1-6)  
 Endurance — 1d6+4 (5-10)      Social Standing — 1d6/2 (1-3)

This represents the android immediately after it has completed its social skills and educational training. The android then is entered into a service organization at random (Tables I and II).

#### Android Prior Services

Table I	Table II
1 Army	1 Belter
2 Marines	2 Flyer
3 Merchant	3 Pirate
4 Merchant	4 Rogue
5 Navy	5 Sailor
6 Roll on Table II	6 Scout

These are the 'active' services from which PC androids and free agents may be created. The number of four-year terms served in any service is generated as 1d6+4 (5-10 terms, or 20-40 years); survival rolls are excised for convenience (life is usually dangerous for androids at any rate). The chance that an android will learn a skill each term is 5+. A skill may be rolled on either the service skills table corresponding to the android's career or on the Personal Development Table as the player or referee chooses. No skill level in any skill may exceed a rating of 4; thus if an android rolls five separate gun combat skills, it cannot have a rating of more than 4 with any one weapon. This is a result of the limited memory retention of androids for more subtle skill levels. Excess levels are lost.

#### Personal Development Table

- 1 +2 Strength
- 2 +1 Endurance
- 3 +1 Intelligence
- 4 +1 Education
- 5 Steward
- 6 Carousing

#### Army Skills

- 1 Blade Cbt
- 2 Fwd Obs
- 3 Gun Cbt
- 4 Gun Cbt
- 5 Vehicle
- 6 Vehicle

#### Navy Skills

- 1 Blade Cbt
- 2 Fwd Obs
- 3 Gun Cbt
- 4 Gunnery
- 5 Ship Boat
- 6 Vacc Suit

#### Marine Skills

- 1 Blade Cbt
- 2 Gun Cbt
- 3 Gun Cbt
- 4 Vacc Suit
- 5 Vehicle
- 6 Zero G Cbt

#### Belter Skills

- 1 Fwd Obs
- 2 Prospecting
- 3 Prospecting
- 4 Ship Boat
- 5 Vacc Suit
- 6 Vacc Suit

#### Merchant Skills

- 1 Electronic
- 2 Gun Cbt
- 3 Gunnery
- 4 Steward
- 5 Vacc Suit
- 6 Vehicle

#### Flyer Skills

- 1 Air Craft
- 2 Air/Raft
- 3 Commo
- 4 Gun Cbt
- 5 Vehicle
- 6 Vehicle

#### Pirate Skills

- 1 Blade Cbt
- 2 Gun Cbt
- 3 Gun Cbt
- 4 Gunnery
- 5 Vacc Suit
- 6 Zero G Cbt

#### Rogue Skills

- 1 Blade Cbt
- 2 Demolition
- 3 Gambling
- 4 Gun Cbt
- 5 Gun Cbt
- 6 Vehicle

#### Sailor Skills

- 1 Air/Raft
- 2 Air/Raft
- 3 Commo
- 4 Fwd Obs
- 5 Gun Cbt
- 6 Water Craft

#### Scout Skills

- 1 Electronic
- 2 Gunnery
- 3 Mechanic
- 4 Vacc Suit
- 5 Vehicle
- 6 Vehicle

Blade, gun, vehicle, air craft, and water craft skills must be further specified by rolling on the following tables:

#### Blade Combat

- 1 Dagger
- 2 Blade
- 3 Foil
- 4 Sword
- 5 Cutlass
- 6 Cutlass

#### Air Craft

- 1 Propeller-Driven Fixed Wing
- 2 Jet-Propelled Fixed Wing
- 3 Jet-Propelled Fixed Wing
- 4 Helicopter
- 5 Air/Raft
- 6 Air/Raft

#### Water Craft

- 1 Small Water Craft
- 2 Small Water Craft
- 3 Small Water Craft
- 4 Hovercraft
- 5 Hovercraft
- 6 Hovercraft

#### Vehicle

- 1 ATV (tracked)
- 2 ATV (wheeled)
- 3 ATV (wheeled)
- 4 ATV (wheeled)
- 5 Air/Raft
- 6 Air/Raft

#### Gun Combat

- 1 Pistol\*
- 2 Autorifle
- 3 Rifle
- 4 SMG
- 5 Shotgun
- 6 Laser Weapons†

\* Revolver and Autopistol

† Laser Carbine and Rifle

All skills listed are as described in *Traveller Books 1-5*, and in *Supplement 4*. Regardless of however many terms of service were served by an android in whatever service, only five rolls may be made on the mustering-out table, which combines monetary and material benefits:

#### Mustering Out Table

- 1 Gun
- 2 Blade
- 3 Low Passage
- 4 Middle Passage
- 5 5000 credits
- 6 5000 credits

Androids survive low passage travel on a 4+ roll per time, with a +1 DM if a person with Med-4 or better is present. As android physiology is somewhat different from a human's, a -2 DM is applied to the skill level of anyone attempting to treat one medically. Androids must use drugs of different chemical compositions from the ones humans use to achieve the same effects as described in *Book 2*, and these drugs cost 2-7 times as much on the open market; they are available only on worlds with tech level 15+.

Androids do not develop psionics because of their brain structures. On a roll of 4-, an android will be immediately slain by a psionic assault, regardless of whatever other damage is done, and will otherwise lose a point of intelligence on a second roll of 4-.

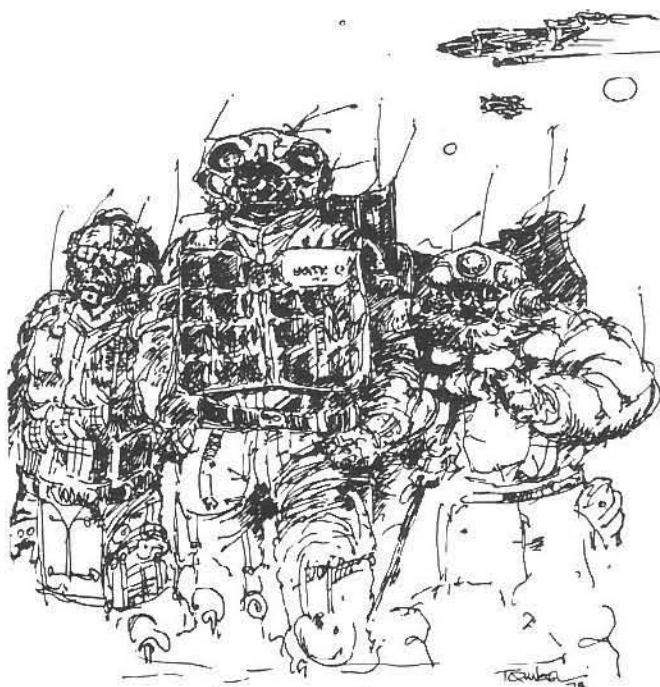
An android's life begins, for aging purposes, when it first starts its social skills and educational training. It enters a service at age eight, and will finally begin to show signs of aging at age fifty-two. Every four years starting at age fifty-two and after, an android character must make two saving throws of 9+ to prevent these scores from dropping two points each as well. At age sixty-four, all four saving throws must be made on an 11+ or else the two point deduction for each score is made.

NPC androids may be quickly generated by assuming they have served 2-12 terms in a randomly selected service, and have one skill roll for every two full terms of service they have served.

If wounded, androids will remain conscious until two characteristics (or either strength, dexterity, or endurance) have been reduced to zero or below, to represent their increased tolerance of pain and shock. If one score falls below zero, it temporarily becomes 1 until a second score falls to zero.

Learning new skills by sabbaticals or instruction is always possible for any android.

Androids frequently have some distinguishing physical characteristics. None of them have navels, sexual features or organs, and most have no body hair. Senses of touch, smell and taste are slightly less discriminative than human senses, but sight and hearing are as normal. They have faces capable of expressions (from smiles to frowns) and none have any major bodily deformities, though they may appear larger than humans and broader due to their increased musculature. Many bear discreetly located company trademarks or identification numbers on their bodies, and a few have been given skin tones mildly divergent from general human norms (like a crimson or orange tint). ■



# IDEAS FOR TRAVELLER

by Bob McWilliams

*This issue Starbase, a regular department, looks at sources of material for Traveller referees.*

A few issues ago (*WD25 Starbase*) I mentioned some of the science fiction novels I thought would be relevant to *Traveller* referees as a source of ideas for situations, themes and settings, and in this issue I want to cover some non-SF sources.

*Traveller* is essentially a game about life — albeit a fantasy one set in the far future. Mankind hasn't altered radically in the *Traveller* universe, and the same ambitions, hopes and fears guide the actions of characters as they do in the present. Apart from making it easy for players to 'fit' their characters, this also allows us to delve into the whole spectrum of literature past and present, giving a truly immense selection of source material.

In a short article such as this I can only give a few suggestions, which I hope may encourage you to adapt ideas which might not be seen to be immediately relevant. In fact, the film industry has been doing this for years — the recent film *Outland* is a classic example, using the basic theme of *High Noon* in space. There are two major areas where general literature (including films and TV) can be useful.

The first is as a source for adventure ideas or themes. The film *The Magnificent Seven* (or even better, Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* on which it is based) serves to illustrate the point admirably. Here we have a plot made for role-playing and for easy refereeing. A location is chosen — probably a backward, colonial planet where the immigrants have enough trouble just staying alive, and a local warlord who extracts every last credit from the farmers, in return for his 'protection'. Enter our seven assorted adventurers looking for money to pay for repairs to their trader, who realise the farmers' plight and vow to take on the warlord's thugs the next time they turn up.

Another type of situation — one of my personal favourites — is the train journey thriller, ranging from Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* to Colin Forbes' *Avalanche Express*. Transferred to a different era (the transcontinental monorail,

perhaps), your imagination is the only limitation in converting the plot to the game — players leaping from grav rafts onto coach roofs, mysterious aliens in private first class compartments, and so on. Some of these stories can also be converted to take place on passenger starships with a little extra work.

Thrillers such as *The Day of the Jackal*, *Ice Station Zebra* and *Guns of Navarone* can all yield *Traveller* situations if the background settings are suitably altered, both to make them more SF in content and to disguise their origin from the players. Nor does one have to stick to recent literature — the novels of authors such as Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas will also provide suitable material.

On the subject of converting a book or film plot into a *Traveller* adventure, we hope to cover that subject in detail at a later date. For now, I advise you to choose a book you have read and not use a film unless you know it very well. This is because of the need to refer back to it — difficult with a film unless you have a home video. Read the book again, and this time make notes as you go, under three headings.

Firstly, note the basic elements of the plot, including what the players know about it at each stage and when they find out new elements. Different players may know different elements. Secondly, make notes on the main characters in the plot, and how they interact. Decide which characters will become player characters (not always obvious), which should remain under the referee's control. You might want to rig the Reaction Table with plus or minus DMs to get the right relationships. Thirdly, note any particular incidents you find interesting and might want to use in the game. Also note any incidents that would give away the plot being used. As an example, in *Where Eagles Dare*, Richard Burton and his pals use a cable car to reach their objective. Even if you have succeeded in convincing the players that the plot is taking place on Regina in mid-winter, and not Norway, using the same element will now tip off the quicker-thinking players who have seen the film. Of course you can bluff the players by using the cable car sequence from *Where Eagles Dare* when you are actually following the plot from *Guns of Navarone*!

The second area of usefulness for non-SF material is in providing ideas for background people, places, animals and artifacts. In the broadest sense everything is useful, from discussion on government economic policy to *Training Dogs the Woodhouse Way*. Obviously some of it is of more immediate use. A lot of my ideas for incidental information and locations comes from documentary TV programmes on wildlife, travel, science and so on. Similarly, magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Scientific American* are a fund of ideas — libraries usually have back copies of these.

There are no hard and fast rules about using information, but I have found that it rarely seems to work out that you find exactly what you are looking for, when you want it. This means you will need to store ideas in some form, perhaps by keeping a notebook which indexes each subject and where to find it. Using the same guidelines as for plots (altering and disguising ideas), you can come up with many interesting and unusual ideas for incorporating into a *Traveller* adventure, which have the added bonus of being based on fact.

Finally, I'd like to say a few words about material we could do with for *Starbase*, as well as thanking everyone who has already sent in contributions.

There is quite a lot of material in the *Starbase* file, but it seems mainly to be on one or two common subjects of which the most popular are starships and weapons. This doesn't mean we won't consider any more contributions on these subjects, but they need to be interesting: no-one for example has yet submitted a truly alien starship design, or much in the way of alien weapons.

What, then, do we want? Well, I hope to devote a few issues to specific subjects in much the same way as *Treasure Chest* does for *D&D*, and contributions are welcomed for these. In the near future there will be items on grav vehicles and other forms of planetary transport, new skills, new computer programs, and new items of equipment. Even if you can't think of anything to submit yourself, tell us what you would like to see in *Starbase*. ■



Starbase is a regular department composed of readers' ideas for Traveller. This issue . . .

## ADDITIONAL DETECTOR SYSTEMS FOR TRAVELLER STARSHIPS

by Antony Cornell  
and Martin Barrett



There are, in our own world, many different systems for the detection of aircraft. Therefore it follows that in a *Traveller* universe there will be a great variety of systems for the detection of spacecraft. In the rules governing starship construction there is a very limited selection of detection equipment available to players. We feel there is a need for a wider range for use in scenarios and campaigns and so put forward a few suggestions.

*NB* An active system is one in which an object is detected by the reflection of some ray or beam transmitted by the detecting ship. A passive system is one which detects an object by receiving emissions directly from the object.

### The Basic Sensor Package

This is an expanded description of the system outlined in *Book 2*, page 33. It consists of a radar guidance system which can detect any object up to one hundred thousand miles distant, in open space, and an object in planetary orbit at up to ten thousand miles. There is also a companion passive system capable of detecting ships only, as opposed to space debris, at ranges of up to half a million miles when installed on civilian craft, and at up to two million miles when installed on scouts and other military vessels.

The final component of the basic sensor package is the transponder decoder. All ships are fitted with transponders which continuously transmit the name of the ship into which it is fitted, its planet of registration and purpose. The transponder is extremely inaccessible and is thus very difficult to tamper with except on pirate vessels as described in *Supplement 4*. The basic sensor yields no information about the object other than its presence, position and trajectory.

*NB* A ship which shuts down all its systems, including power plant and transponder, is treated as space debris for the purposes of detection.

### Engineering Perception Package

This is the first sensor package to give more detailed information about the vessel being observed. It is a passive method of detection working on the neutrino emissions of power plants, manoeuvre drives and jump drives. It relays accurate information on the size, in tons, of each of these major engineering components. It also gives the total displacement of the observed vessel.

*NB* If the *High Guard* construction rules are being used then it is the tonnage of the power plant that is given and not the power plant number. In other words the sensors can not define the tech level of a vessel.

### Component Perception and Analysis Package

This is a more sophisticated version of the EPP. It is an active system and analyses all the major components and areas of a vessel to deduce its specifications (if *High Guard* is being used then the entire USP will be given) except that it can only estimate the number of personnel on board. This estimate is based on the number of staterooms and low berths present. For example, if a ship has four staterooms then the ship's complement will be between four and eight.

### Deck Plan Analysis

A finely tuned advancement of the CPA, this package gives all the information relayed by a CPA and in addition gives full deck

plans. The deck plan readout takes twenty minutes to be collated before being displayed, as opposed to all other sensor packages which produce readouts instantaneously. Like the CPA, it is an active system.

*NB* Referees are advised to prohibit this sensor package's use by civilian player characters, for obvious reasons!

### Life Detection

This is the most sophisticated sensor unit and, because it provides no information about the physical nature of the ship it scans, it is generally used in conjunction with one of the aforementioned packages.

The visual display takes the form of one dot for each living cell present, thus on scanning a normal atmosphere, a haze of dots, representing micro-organisms, is seen. Higher organisms are seen as silhouettes unless micro-organism density is very high, obliterating all detail. As death of individual cells takes place subsequent to actual body death, a corpse may register on instruments for some time.

The angle of scan is very small and therefore it will take several minutes to build up a complete picture of a ship. Range is extremely limited, being only three hundred miles.

### Scanner Alarms

These appear at tech level A. They have a mass of three tons and a cost of five hundred thousand credits. The alarm alerts the crew whenever it is scanned by an active system.

### Planetary Scanning

Planetary surface installations may be scanned by the more advanced sensors in the same way as spaceships, unless the installations are subterranean. It may be impossible to scan for surface life due to the overlapping effect of atmospheric micro-organisms forming an opaque layer.

### Sensors in Play

All sensors, active and passive will require equipment on the ship exterior and must be protected by radomes etc. Sensors are especially vulnerable to battle damage and cost of repair is as for any other ship system as described in *Book 2* or *Book 5*. Attempts at repair by characters during battle requires at least one character to leave the ship and for the ship to stop accelerating.

This system of detection methods and equipment is only intended as a framework and leaves room for addition and adjustment as referees and players see fit. ■

	TL	Mass	EP	Cost	Range
Basic Sensor Package	9	—	0	—	as <i>Book 2</i>
Engineering Perception Package	A	2	1	1.5	250
Component Perception and Analysis	C	3	2	2.5	500
Deck Plan Analysis	E	3	2	3	250
Life Detection	F	2	1	5	0.3

*Mass is in tons; EP is energy point requirement; Cost is in MCr; Range is in thousands of miles; ships maintaining complete silence and ships in orbit are subject to the standard Book 2 ranges.*



An alternative to *Basic Traveller*, for generating characters from the Navy and Marines.

by John Conquest

# PRIOR SERVICE

The prior service rules in basic *Traveller* have always struck me as inadequate and unconvincing. They produce, at best, middle-aged characters, without generating the kind of highly trained specialist who's already typical of armed forces and will be completely dominant in a *Traveller* epoch. Here are some suggestions for remedying this.

First, abandon the draft and some of the service options. In practice virtually all draftees should go to the Army, and being a ground-hog grunt isn't much of a background for a *Traveller*. The common lot of soldiers, popular history, fiction and films notwithstanding, has been, is and will be backwater garrison duty, with not much chance of going anywhere or learning anything but square-bashing. The Scouts should recruit from the Navy. The Merchant Marine might take on ex-servicemen, but they wouldn't train anybody but family. (Other is still being developed, probably in the direction of Elite convict units.)

That leaves, for the time being, the Navy and Marines. Assuming the Marines to be on the lines of *Starship Troopers*, both services will require at least average intelligence in recruits, so the Intelligence throw should be 6+1d6. The first step is to test (2d6) all characters for Spatial Co-ordination. High scores (8-12) go to the Navy, low (2-7) to the Marines.

**Basic Training.** All recruits receive Basic Training. The Navy's is Vacc Suit-1, Cutlass-1 and Free Fall-1 (the ability to function in zero gravity). The Marine's is Battle Dress-1, Automatic Rifle-1 and Survival-1 (the ability to live off the land). Recruits also get increments to characteristics; Navy get +1 Dexterity and/or Education, Marines +1 Strength and/or Endurance, depending on how generous the ref is.

**Aptitude Tests.** During Basic, recruits are tested for possible officer or non-com specialist training. Throw 2d6 against each category; high scores (10-12) qualify for officer training, medium (7-9) for specialist training.

Navy		Marines	
Officer	Specialist	Officer	Specialist
Pilot	Helmsman	Command	Platoon
Navigation	Bosun	Tactics	Platoon
Fire Control	Gunner	Mechanical	Technician
Technical	Technician	Electronics	Technician
Medical	Orderly	Medical	Orderly
Communications	Signalman	Communications	Radioman
Computer	Computerman	Computer	Computerman
Administration	Purser	Administration	Clerk

Though Intelligence and Education need have no direct bearing on Aptitude, referees can apply DMs if they wish.

Throw again to distinguish between Navy Technical Aptitudes, for Mechanical, Electronics and Engineering. High score counts as speciality, any other scores over 3 count as Aptitudes. Record all high and medium scores. The referee should interpret the results creatively. For instance, medium scores in both Pilot and

Navigation might qualify a character for the Scouts, medium scores in several categories might indicate suitability for general officer/NCO duties, and so on. Basically, characters should be assigned for training in their strongest Aptitude, unless an element of bureaucratic ineptitude is introduced. Scores should be kept as characters will qualify for subsidiary training and, in any case, will remain a measure of ability to pick up new disciplines.

A character who gets low scores all round is assigned to a unit as a non-specialist ranker. Specialists are assigned to units with a 0 grade in their speciality. Officers are assigned as Ensigns or Lieutenants with a 1 grade in their speciality.

**Service.** Characters continue to receive training. Options for skills gained are:

Navy	Specialists	Officers
Rankers	Speciality	Speciality
Weapons	Aptitudes (if any)	Aptitudes (if any)
Vacc Suit	Weapons	Weapons
Ships Boat	Vacc Suit	Free Fall
Free Fall	Ships Boat	Shipboard
Shipboard	Free Fall	
	Shipboard	

Marines	Specialists	Officers
Rankers	Speciality	Speciality
Weapons	Aptitudes (if any)	Aptitudes (if any)
Battle Dress	Weapons	Weapons
Vehicles	Battle Dress	Battle Dress
Air Raft	Vehicles	Survival
Survival	Air Raft	
	Survival	

**Notes:** Shipboard (general working knowledge of basic ship functions) is available to general duty officers. Survival is available to Command and Tactics officers only. Characters can improve 1 grade in two different categories per term, of which, in the first term, one must be their speciality (if any). Referees can decide on cut-off points in subsequent terms.

**Weapons.** Armed forces have standard issue weapons and don't provide training in exotica. *Traveller* seems obsessed with weaponry that is, or will be, obsolete and incredibly dangerous to use on spacecraft. While in the services, training is only available in:

Navy	Marines
Unarmed	Unarmed
Unarmed/Free Fall	Blade
Cutlass	Automatic Rifle
Cutlass/Free Fall	Laser Carbine/Rifle
Shotgun	SMG (Specialists and NCOs only)
Electronic Whip	Automatic Pistol (officers only)

## THE MAD DWARF

A As you approach the door you see that this place is an inn. A dilapidated wooden sign with the paint mostly gone is flapping in the wind. It shows a dwarf with an axe in hand and his tongue sticking out. If you have the ability to detect magic, go to 18A. Decide whether you wish to enter this place, or take your chances with the wolves. If you knock on the door, go to 18C. If you bypass it, go to 17C.

B An argument ensues as you try to talk him down from the outrageous price of 10ggs. Make your first level saving roll on Charisma (20-CHR). Unless you are an elf, in which case try for a third level saving roll on Charisma (30-CHR). If you make the roll, you talk him into giving you food and drink included in the 10gp. If you miss the saving roll you find yourself paying 20ggs for the evening's hospitality. At any rate you pay him. Go to 15A.

C You lay aside your weapons and armour and flop down on the bed. If you are less than 4 feet tall, go immediately to 26D. Otherwise, when you let your legs dangle over the foot of the bed, you get a horrible surprise. A razor-sharp gullotine blade shoots up out of the footboard and goes through your legs like a knife through soft cheese, inflicting 30 hits worth of damage immediately. If you still live make a first level saving roll on what's left of your Constitution to see if you were able to apply tourniquets before bleeding to death. (20-CON). If you make the saving roll, go to 13C, if you miss it, it is *The End*.

D You quickly skin the carcasses and cut out their hearts to eat on the trail. The pelts keep you warm, and the wolf hearts give you strength. A few days later you stagger out of the mountains alive and intact. This adventure is worth 500 adventure points to you, and you have 2000 gold pieces worth of treasure in your pack. Go to 15B.



# IN TRAVELLER



Referees can decide whether expense is no object and go for Laser Rifles or be penny-pinching and settle for Carbines. An Electronic Whip, like Stun Guns, is the kind of weapon people would use on spaceships.

**Leisure Activities.** Even on active service, characters won't be on duty all the time. Assuming they use their spare time creatively, they can add 1 to any characteristic, except Social Standing, per term. Alternatively they can take up gambling, learn languages or anything else that suggests itself.

**Promotion.** Promotion is invariably easier at the beginning, getting tougher as you climb upwards. Throw 1d6 per term. A lieutenant in the Marines would need a 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 to be promoted to Captain.

Navy		Promotion Throw
<i>Other Ranks</i>	<i>Officers</i>	
Crewman	Ensign	not applicable
Leading Crewman	Lieutenant	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Petty Officer	Lt Commander	3, 4, 5, 6
Warrant Officer	Commander	4, 5, 6
	Captain	5, 6
	Admiral	6

Marines		Promotion Throw
<i>Other Ranks</i>	<i>Officers</i>	
Marine	Lieutenant	not applicable
Corporal	Captain	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Sergeant	Force Cdr	3, 4, 5, 6
Master Sgt	Lt-Colonel	4, 5, 6
	Colonel	5, 6
	Brigadier	6

**Re-enlistment and Mustering Out.** Characters sign up, initially, for 5 years or the duration and re-enlist for 4 year stints. Under normal circumstances characters will leave the services no later than the end of their 5th term, having completed 21 years of service and reached age 39. They may, of course, be prevented by the galactic situation (see below).

At the end of each enlistment period, the referee should throw 1d6 to determine the galactic situation.

- 1. Severe cutbacks in services.** Re-enlistment on throw of 5 or 6 only.
- 2. Partial cutbacks in services.** Re-enlistment on throw of 4, 5 or 6.
- 3. Situation normal.** Automatic re-enlistment if desired.
- 4. Situation normal.** Automatic re-enlistment if desired.
- 5. Partial mobilisation.** Muster out on throw of 5 or 6 only.
- 6. Total war.** No mustering out.

In situations 5 and 6 each character throws 1d6 to see if he or she has been in combat. Referee assigns probabilities as desired. In situation 6 the probabilities should be high, but not 100%, as even total war isn't that total.

## Combat Throw 2d6

2. Killed in action.
3. Dishonourably discharged for cowardice.
4. Discharged for incompetence.
5. Wounded and invalided out with pension and Service Medal.
6. Wounded but retained in service. Awarded Service Medal.
7. No effect.
8. Awarded Campaign Medal.
9. Awarded Service Medal.
10. Awarded Distinguished Service Medal.
11. Awarded Imperial Medal of Honour.
12. Awarded Imperial Cross.

Referees should determine nature of wounds and extent of cash bonuses for awards.

**Mustering Out.** All characters, unless discharged as above, receive a gratuity on leaving the service. Characters who have completed 5 terms also receive a pension, collectable in cash once a year from any A or B Class Starbase. Other ranks get Middle Passage automatically if they have completed 5 terms, otherwise they get Low or Middle at the referee's discretion. Officers get High Passage. Characters who have been decorated should qualify for membership of the Traveller's Aid Society.

Gratuities		Pension
Crewmen/Marines	2000Cr x terms served	2000Cr pa
Leading Crewmen/Corporals	2500Cr x terms served	2500Cr pa
Petty Officers/Sergeants	3000Cr x terms served	3000Cr pa
Warrant Officers/Master Sergeants	5000Cr x terms served	5000Cr pa
Ensigns/Lieutenants	4000Cr x terms served	4000Cr pa
Lieutenants/Captains	5000Cr x terms served	5000Cr pa
Lt Commanders/Force Cdrs	6000Cr x terms served	6000Cr pa
Commanders/Lt Colonels	7500Cr x terms served	7500Cr pa
Captains/Colonels	10000Cr x terms served	10000Cr pa
Admirals/Brigadiers	15000Cr x terms served	15000Cr pa

The hazard throw of the original rules has been omitted. Under normal circumstances the services would lose a tiny number of men and women in training and ordinary duties. It's ridiculous to spend time trying to build up a character to have him or her killed by a single unlucky dice throw before the game's even begun.

Hopefully, these rules produce more convincing and consistent characters and remedy several faults in the basic *Traveller* rules — no mention of Communications, Battle Dress training, proper Basic Training, logical Weapons training, possibilities for advancement for non-officers, the elimination of chance from the acquisition of skills, a proper gradation of gratuities and pensions. A possible flaw is that players may wish to keep characters in the services for a full 5 terms, if possible, with the result that characters will all tend to be in their late 30s or early 40s. A solution to this might be to tighten up the odds against re-enlistment, though the equivalent of redundancy payments should be used to offset this. ■

## THE MAD DWARF

A He takes the money. 'Sit down, stranger. Do you want some stew? How about some booze? Tell me about yourself. What have you got in that backpack? Been dungeon delving, eh?' On and on he chatters in a voice like gravel scraping on glass. If you order some stew go to 18C; if you just want some booze go to 19A. If you refuse them both and ask to see your room, go to 28A. If you just want to stand in front of the fire and get warm, go to 26E.

B Greetings! This is the exit paragraph. I trust you enjoyed the hospitality of the *Mad Dwarf Inn*. Any character reading this paragraph is prohibited from going through this adventure again. Considering that you probably thrashed the place, you can understand why. However, feel free to take another character into the adventure in a week or so if you want. If this is the second or third time you are reading this paragraph, please make your decisions randomly on future forays.

C It doesn't matter what spell you threw. Make your third level saving roll on 'luck' (30-LK). If you make the roll, you succeeded in defeating or driving the wolves away. If you missed the roll, they killed you. If you have beaten the wolves, you must still walk out of these frozen mountains. Try to make a 10th level saving roll on Constitution (65-CON). If you made it, you were so tough that you walked to safety. You have 2000 gold pieces worth of treasure in the pack on your back and get 500 adventure points for the adventure, go to 15B. If you missed the saving roll, you died of exposure and were eaten by wild beasts. *The End.*

D He snatched up an axe that was leaning against a wall. The weapon is worth 4 dice + 4 adds making a total of 4 dice + 34 adds for the dwarf. You also manage to get your best weapon out. Do regular T&T combat until one of you is dead. If you kill him, go to 25C. If he kills you, it is *The End.*

# STL

## Slower Than Light Ships in Traveller

by Marcus L Rowland

Jump travel is such a basic part of *Traveller* that referees may forget that other systems exist. Methods for Slower Than Light (STL) interstellar travel are available at tech levels of 7+, though more common at higher levels where cultures have failed to discover jump technology. There are several possible techniques for STL flight, some slow and some approaching lightspeed.

### Ramships

These craft use intense magnetic fields to sweep molecules of interstellar hydrogen into a fusion reactor powering a conventional reaction drive. High speed is required to accumulate sufficient hydrogen to sustain the reaction and a secondary fuel supply is thus needed for initial acceleration and final deceleration, usually carried in drop tanks which are also used as shields at high speed. The massive field generation equipment and drop tanks limit these ships to a relatively small payload, usually less than 50 tons of cargo and passenger

accommodation (including life support equipment) in a 500-ton hull. The main advantage is their high speed, with relativistic velocities achieved during mid-flight. This means that a journey of one parsec (3.26 light years, equivalent to J1) will take at least 3.26 objective years but may take much less subjective time (see Table 1). Ramships are limited to speeds below 0.8C, suffering severe field instability and radiation problems at higher velocities. Hazards include intense magnetic fields, endangering unshielded life at several hundred kilometres range, immense kinetic energy, and the normal dangers of fusion drives. Ramships are relatively vulnerable to micro-meteorites at high speeds, taking damage as though hit by missiles, and may also suffer if they hit unusual concentrations of interstellar gas or dust.

The ramship's low agility is primarily due to the power requirements of its magnetic scoop systems. Ships auxiliary equipment includes normal fuel scoops, helicopter, ATV, and scout and military gear.

Costs and specifications are estimates

based on ancient Terran plans for several craft apparently built before that world's discovery of jump travel, and may be partially inaccurate. No Imperial contractor is currently equipped to build this type of ship, and it is not believed that such vessels are in use anywhere within the Imperium.

### Lightjammer

These are much slower than ramships, with maximum speed around 0.01-0.05C, and are usually a product of TL 6-8 spacefaring cultures. A typical lightjammer has a light-weight hull (costing half as much as a normal hull of the same displacement) deploying a metallised plastic sail with an area of a square kilometre or more per ton of hull. This sail absorbs energy from photons and accelerates accordingly. There are no special advantages to any particular size of ship, but sail costs rise with size. Typical costs per square kilometre are 0-100K<sub>m</sub><sup>2</sup> (M<sub>Cr</sub> 0.01); 100-200K<sub>m</sub><sup>2</sup> (M<sub>Cr</sub> 0.02); 200-300K<sub>m</sub><sup>2</sup> (M<sub>Cr</sub> 0.03); 300-450K<sub>m</sub><sup>2</sup> (M<sub>Cr</sub> 0.04); 450-700K<sub>m</sub><sup>2</sup> (M<sub>Cr</sub> 0.05): Sails above 700K<sub>m</sub><sup>2</sup> show accelerated failure rates, and are not usually constructed.

They are occasionally used within the Imperium as low cost bulk cargo carriers, usually unmanned and fitted with a minimal power plant, an extensive foamed plastic micrometeorite shield, and a guidance and maintenance computer.

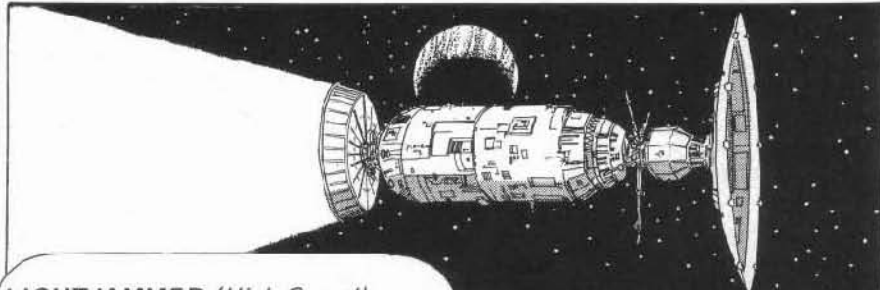
### Asteroid Ship

There are several examples of interstellar STL craft based on natural asteroid hulls, most built at low technological levels. One example, found drifting in the Glisten sub-sector, had the following approximate specifications:

The vessel used fusion bombs, exploding against a buffered rear plate, for propulsion, and was also equipped with low power manoeuvring thrusters. It is estimated that several hours were required between each propulsion explosion. The price is an estimate based on the ship's structure as originally built, and includes an estimated 1,000 small fusion bombs (based on hold capacity), eight non-standard unpowered re-entry gliders (based on one surviving example and hangar space), and two chemically-propelled auxiliary vessels of unknown construction (based on hangar space and fittings). The vessel was apparently abandoned at some time in the early 500's, and when discovered was travelling towards the Galactic South 'below' the normal plane of exploration.

### RAMSHIP (High Guard)

SZ-5401A31-200000-30002-0 M<sub>Cr</sub> 395.7 TL12 500 tons  
 Batteries Bearing 2 1 Crew = 4  
 Batteries 3 3  
 Passengers = 0 Low = 4 Cargo = 20 Fuel = 250 Agility = 1.5 EP = 50  
*Maximum Acceleration of Ramship:* 1g normal use, 2g emergency (but ship has no compensators). Drive can be operated at all times.



### LIGHTJAMMER (High Guard)

WN-5700010-000000-00000-0 M<sub>Cr</sub> 42.5 TL 9 500 tons  
 Passengers = 0 Low = 0 Crew = 0 Cargo = 450 Fuel = 4 Agility = 0 EP = 0  
*Maximum Acceleration of Lightjammer:* 0.0001g near sun, decreasing as craft leaves solar system. Extensive use is made of tacking manoeuvres around larger planets, and close solar approach manoeuvres are also used to get around larger planets.

### ASTEROID SHIP

PN-S900023-630000-30007-0 M<sub>Cr</sub> 205.45 TL 7 Mass 250,000 tons  
 Batteries Bearing 3 3 1 Crew = 30 (rotating with low watch)  
 Batteries 1  
 Cargo (includes available space) = 12000 Fuel = 800 Agility = 0 Low = 400  
 EP = 15 (from onboard fission reactor not shown in USP)  
*Maximum Acceleration of Asteroid Ship:* Each bomb imparts approximately 10 minutes of 1g acceleration to the vessel, peaking at 2-3g a few seconds after the explosion then decreasing to an eventual 0.5g as acceleration ends. Extensive use is made of 'slingshot' manoeuvres around larger planets.

Table 1  
 Speed, Time Dilation and Journey Times for a 1-Parsec Flight  
 (ignoring initial acceleration and final deceleration)

Velocity (C)	Velocity (Kin/Hour)	Time Dilation (Tau)	Journey Time (Years)	
TC=Lightspeed			Objective	Subjective
0.1	107000000	0.995	32.6	32.44
0.2	214000000	0.98	16.3	15.97
0.3	321000000	0.954	10.87	10.37
0.4	428000000	0.917	8.15	7.47
0.5	535000000	0.866	6.52	5.56
0.6	642000000	0.8	5.43	4.35
0.7	749000000	0.714	4.66	3.33
0.8	856000000	0.6	4.075	2.45
0.9	963000000	0.436	3.62	1.58
0.95	1016500000	0.312	3.43	1.07
0.99	1059300000	0.141	3.29	0.46
0.999	1069800000	0.045	3.263	0.146



## Scenarios

The following scenarios are a skeletal framework for adventures involving STL starships. The format consists of an initial listing comprising the nature of the patron or source of information, required skills, and required equipment, a paragraph of players' notes, and referees' information including several options for the outcome.

### 1. Shipowner

**Required Skills:** Pilot, Vacc suit

**Required Equipment:** None

*Players Information:*

The patron recently inherited a small shipping line, whose assets include five light-jammer freighters launched in the early 800's. These craft will arrive in a neighbouring system in five years. An audit suggests that one of the craft may have never been launched, with the cost of construction embezzled. The patron intends to use one of his firm's small freighters to jump to the estimated location of the ship and investigate. He is hiring an independent crew for the sake of secrecy.

*Referees Information:*

The patron has radio codes necessary to disarm the lightjammer's automated meteor defence laser and internal security programmes.

1-2: No ship will be found. The money was embezzled. The patron will ask the players to keep the matter secret so that a quiet investigation can be made, but this will really be an attempt to protect the firm's market viability.

3: The craft will be found after 4d6 days search, with a cargo of low-grade fissionable ores worth MCr 0.4.

4: As 3 but the patron's codes will fail to disable the ship's defences.

5: As 3 but the cargo is platinum ore worth MCr 6.2.

6: As 5 but pirates have heard rumours of the investigatory flight and a corsair will arrive 3d6 hours after the team.

### 2. Pirate

**Required Skills:** Vacc suit, Combat

**Required Equipment:** Vacc suit

*Players Information:*

The patron has heard rumours that a local shipowner is going to intercept a lightjammer launched in the early 800's, and that it may contain a valuable cargo of ore. He has bribed a computer programmer to give an estimated position for the lightjammer, and intends to intercept it and steal the cargo before the shipowner's craft arrives.

*Referees Information:*

The ship is equipped with an automated meteor defence (pulse laser) and an internal security programme, but this is not known to the patron.

1: No ship will be found, as the programmer gave the wrong co-ordinates.

2: The lightjammer will not be found but a small freighter will arrive after 4d6 days search, holding the owner of the shipping line and a hired crew.

3: As scenario 1, 3. The shipowner's craft

will arrive 1d6 days after the pirates.

4: As 3 but the two ships arrive together.

5: As 3 but the shipowner reaches the lightjammer 1d6 days before the corsair.

6: As 5 but the lightjammer's cargo is platinum ore worth MCr 6.2.

### 3. Scout

**Required Skills:** None

**Required Equipment:** Starship

*Players Information:*

The players meet Patrick Falkirk, a retired scout, in a bar. He is apparently in the last stage of alcoholism, and repeatedly tells a rambling story about a strange starship he found drifting in space, an asteroid propelled by fusion bombs. Falkirk says that he never reported the discovery, intending to return one day and loot the vessel. After producing a small data-chip he collapses and later dies.

*Referees Information:*

1: Falkirk is insane. The chip is an adventure game programme set in a lost primitive starship.

2: Falkirk told the truth, and the ship will be found at a location described in the chip after 2d6 days search. The vessel holds several primitive (and extremely unstable) hydrogen bombs, four primitive pulse lasers, and tools and ores worth several hundred thousand credits.

3: As 2 but the ship was rediscovered by the Imperial Navy and has been posted with automatic interdiction buoys to prevent unauthorised intruders.

4: As 3 but a commando squad is on board disarming and removing the bombs.

5: As 4 but the squad is supported by two picket vessels which are outside detection range.

6: As 5 but the commando team will arrive 1d6 days after the team.

### 4. Diplomat

**Required Skills:** None

**Required Equipment:** Starship

*Players Information:*

The patron is a Flosk, an alien from a world with an exotic atmosphere recently contacted by the Imperium. Its race have always suspected that they originated on another world, and the scout who discovered their planet confirmed this hypothesis by finding an archaic STL starship adrift in the local asteroid belt. The diplomat wishes to hire the team to search the ship for clues then try and find its race's ancestral home. It cannot accompany the team, since Flosk technology is not yet capable of building a reliable spacesuit and normal ship purifiers cannot duplicate the Flosk atmosphere.

*Referees Information:*

The ship is an asteroid propelled by fusion explosions, but all machinery and most other fittings are removed and the vessel is little more than a hulk.

1: A thorough search of the ship (no time limit) will find no clues.

2: A thorough search of the ship (lasting 2d6 days) will find a stylised diagram etched on a cabin wall. If the diagram is

entered into a computer it will eventually print a list of three possible systems. 1: The first system is the Flosk home. 2-3: The second system is the Flosk home. 4-5: The third system is the Flosk home. 6: None of the systems hold the Flosk home world. The Flosk homeworld has degenerated to near-savagery following a biological war. 3: As 2 but the Flosk world was devastated by nuclear war — all life is extinct.

4: As 3 but there is a small technologically-advanced enclave of survivors who will attempt to steal the ship and escape their dying world.

5: As 2 but the Flosk homeworld's sun has gone nova, and all life is extinct.

6: As 2 but the computer will take 2d6 hours to establish that the diagram is a representation of the Flosk equivalent of DNA.

### 5: Noble

**Required Skills:** Pilot

**Required Equipment:** None

*Players Information:*

The patron is an amateur archaeologist, and has long been interested in the history of STL interstellar travel. Two years ago astronomers in a neighbouring system detected an object moving at relativistic velocities, apparently some sort of fusion-powered starship. The patron wants to intercept this vessel in flight, and board it if possible. He has managed to interest the subsector's Navy Admiral in the project, and the patron's yacht will be ferried to an appropriate launch point and boosted to ¾ of the necessary speed during the trials of a new Frontier Cruiser. It is fitted with boosters and drop tanks so it can reach the correct velocity and decelerate after an investigation. The patron is an experienced navigator, but needs a pilot and crew.

*Referees Information:*

The yacht is a standard *Book 2* design, though fitted with a turret and two beam lasers and with boosters and drop tanks for the mission. The flight will take a total of 90 days, 50 on board the cruiser and another 40 making the final boost, and deceleration another 120 days.

1: The object is a fast asteroid made of antimatter, releasing energy as it touches molecules of interstellar gas. Any attempt to land will be disastrous.

2: The object is a hydrogen ramship, sweeping gas into a fusion reactor to power its drives. The craft was built on a lost human colony, and its crew will be delighted (though very surprised) to meet the team. The craft's magnetic scoop fields are dangerous for unshielded personnel, but will not penetrate the yacht's hull.

3: As 2 but the crew are highly suspicious of any approach and will attack the yacht with their lasers and missiles.

4: As 3 but the ramship's crew can focus their ship's magnetic fields to penetrate the yacht's hull.

5: As 2 but the crew are aliens (though still pleased to make contact).

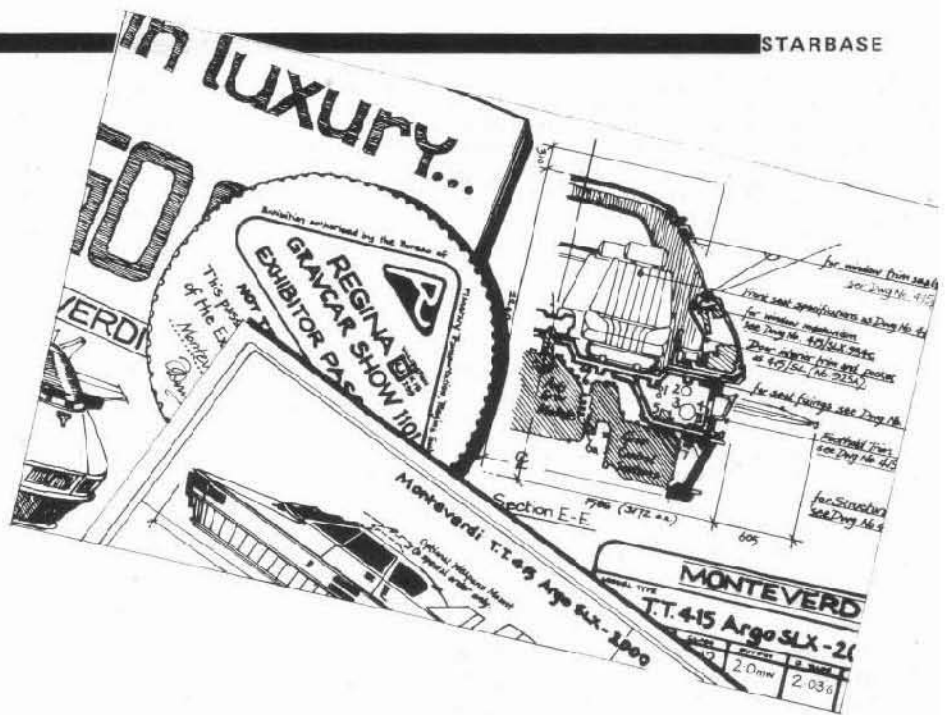
6: As 3, but the crew are aliens (and highly suspicious of any contact). ■

This issue Starbase, a regular department edited by Bob McWilliams looks at ...

# STRIKER.

## Design of Civilian Vehicles for Traveller

by Bob McWilliams



After wading through the *Striker* rules for 15mm figures combat, and seeing just how well it fitted in with the existing *Traveller* rules system, I decided to try and design a standard *Traveller* vehicle using the *Striker* rules. After a couple of false starts, I arrived at the 4-person, 4-ton pressurised gravcar detailed at the end of this article.

How well do the *Striker* design rules fit in with *Traveller*? Obviously they provide a lot more detail, on movement, power, weapons and armour. They are more restrictive (and more 'realistic') on exactly what can and cannot be fitted into a given size of vehicle. The rules work best in conjunction with *Book 4, Mercenary*: With *Basic Traveller*, my advice is to stick completely to one system or the other — either *Book 3* or *Striker* — to avoid any discrepancies that might result from mixing the systems. In other words, your campaign should use either all *Traveller* vehicles, or all *Striker* vehicles.

Designing *Striker* vehicles takes time — over two hours per vehicle, about the same time as designing a starship in *Book 5, High Guard*. However, most referees will only need a half dozen or so vehicles to cover most situations — an unpressurised air/raft, a pressurised gravcar, a G-Carrier, a wheeled ATV, a tracked ATV, and a groundcar. The vehicle examples in *Striker* cover most casual military encounters.

Apart from standard vehicles, players should be able to invent other types for specific purposes by observing present-day commercial traffic. Such things as bulk chemical tankers, ore carriers, general-purpose grav freighters, high performance police patrol vehicles, fire and ambulance grav tenders, mobile cranes, repair and recovery tenders, building and excavating machinery, agricultural machinery (such as a grav crop sprayer); even such things as snowmobiles or radioactive isotope carriers — all these could be designed using the *Striker* rules.

Obviously there isn't much point in creating all these specialist vehicles unless they are going to be useful in your *Traveller* adventures, so they will tend to be designed as required — though some of them (such as grav freighters and police vehicles) will probably prove useful repeatedly.

All this of course is in addition to *Striker's* other uses to the *Traveller* referee in military combat — new and better defined equipment, and vehicle movement rules. This is not a separate game system, but very much an expansion of the existing *Traveller* rules.

Just to get you in the mood, let's have a little *Striker* design competition. Think up a specialised civilian vehicle and design it according to the *Striker* rules, with the results tabulated in the standard format used in *Striker Book 3*, pages 29-30. Plans and sketches would be an advantage, and entries will be judged on originality, suitability for its stated purpose, and adherence to

the design rules. The winner will receive a special box of *Citadel's* 15mm *Traveller* figures, made up of the winner's choice of any 20 figures from the *Traveller* range — your chance to make up that special army unit or adventuring party. Closing date for entries is September 7th 1982. Have fun!

### MONTEVERDI T.T.402 Athena SL-2000

The vehicle is a four-seat civilian gravcar. It is unarmed in the SL version.

Height: 1.5m. Width: 2.5m. Length: 7.5m.  
Total usable volume: 14.0625m<sup>3</sup>. Weight: 13.68 tons.  
Tech level: 13. Price: Cr232,129.

**Full Load Performance:** Maximum, 540kph; Cruise, 405kph; NOE, 135kph; Range, 61,357km at Cruise speed.

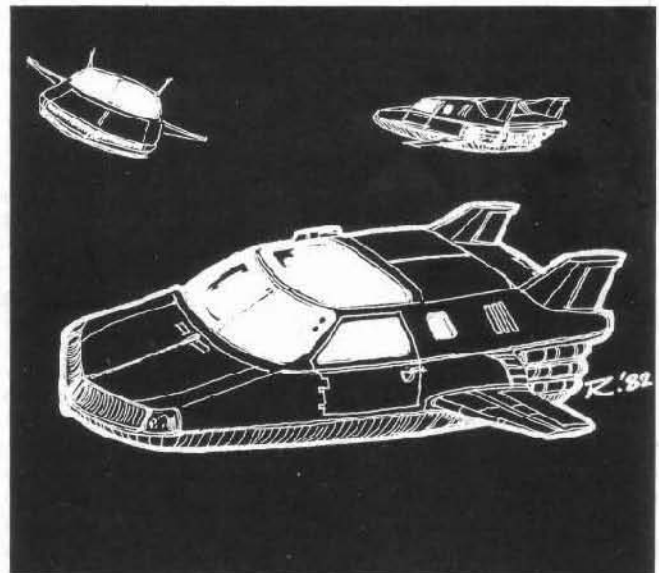
**Power:** 2 megawatt fusion power plant consuming 3 litres fuel per hour; fuel capacity is 500 litres, giving endurance of 166.6 hours. Grav generators produce 20 tons thrust, 0.46G available manoeuvre.

**Armour Ratings:** 1 on all faces.

**Target Size DM:** +2 low.

**Equipment:** Seating and life support for 4 persons; sealed environment. Intake compressors. 200-power radio, T.L 13 avionics, 4m<sup>3</sup> (4tons) cargo space. Floatable.

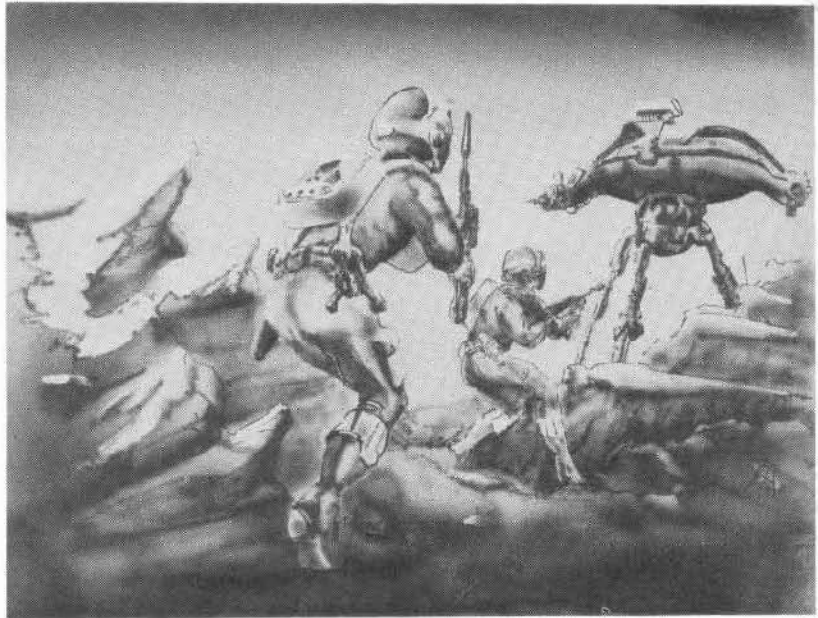
**Weapons:** None.





# GUNS FOR SALE

by Steve Cook



Starbase is a regular department devoted to readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, we look at a weapons availability system.

At the start of many adventures players wish their characters to go down to the nearest hardware store and buy a couple of FGMP 15s for their forthcoming "Trade Mission". A problem many referees face is whether the weapons would be available to the player-character. The following system is designed to calculate the chance of a particular weapon being available, any variation in cost and the waiting time.

### Weapon Availability

The figure quoted below is the base chance of that weapon being available at the minimum possible Tech Level, at the maximum legal Law Level (that is one before it is made illegal), in a specialist gun shop. It includes the weapons found in the article elsewhere in this issue.

#### Base Chances:

Accelerator Rifle . . . . .	.50%	PGMP 12 . . . . .	.2%
Adv Cmbt Rifle . . . . .	.40%	PGMP 13 . . . . .	.2%
Assault Rifle . . . . .	.60%	PGMP 14 . . . . .	.1%
Auto Canon . . . . .	.1%	Plasma Pistol . . . . .	.No
Auto Pistol . . . . .	.55%	Pike . . . . .	.40%
Auto Rifle . . . . .	.35%	RAM GL . . . . .	.25%
Auto Shotgun . . . . .	.30%	Revolver . . . . .	.70%
Bayonet . . . . .	.75%	Rifle . . . . .	.55%
Blade . . . . .	.75%	Shock Disablers . . . . .	.20%
Body Pistol . . . . .	.60%	Shotgun . . . . .	.70%
Broadsword . . . . .	.45%	SMG . . . . .	.35%
Carbine . . . . .	.60%	Snub Pistol . . . . .	.50%
Cutlass . . . . .	.55%	Snub Rifle . . . . .	.35%
Dagger . . . . .	.95%	Spear . . . . .	.60%
FGMP 14 . . . . .	.1%	Stun Pistol . . . . .	.30%
FGMP 15 . . . . .	.1%	Stun Rifle . . . . .	.25%
Flamethrower . . . . .	.5%	Submachine Pistol . . . . .	.40%
Gauss Rifle . . . . .	.25%	Sword . . . . .	.50%
Halberd . . . . .	.40%	Tonite Pistol . . . . .	.20%
Heavy Body Pistol . . . . .	.40%	Tonite Carbine . . . . .	.30%
Laser Carbine . . . . .	.20%	VRF Gauss Gun . . . . .	.1%
Laser Rifle . . . . .	.20%	Warper . . . . .	.No
LAG . . . . .	.40%	Wiper . . . . .	.No
Needle Rifle . . . . .	.10%		

*Note:* These figures may seem to be strange but it should be born in mind that they are for the minimum Tech Level. No means none for sale.

The resultant figure should be amended as follows:

- Per Tech Level world is above minimum for weapon . . . +10% (max +50%)
- Per Tech Level world is below minimum for weapon . . . . -15%
- Per Law Level world is above maximum for weapon . . . . -25%
- Per Law Level world is below maximum for weapon . . . +10% (max +30%)
- If purchased at a non-specialist shop, eg. hunting shop . . -15%
- If purchased at a general shop . . . . . -35%
- Per level of Streetwise skill character has . . . . . +10%
- If purchased on the Black Market:
- Per Law Level world is above max for weapon . . . . . +15%
- Per level of Bribery skill character uses . . . . . +10%
- These Black Market adjustments are used in addition to the normal adjustments.

### Weapon Prices

The cost should be modified as follows:

- If purchased at a non-specialist shop, eg. hunting shop . . +10%
- If purchased at a general shop . . . . . +30%
- Per Law Level world is above maximum for weapon . . . +15%
- Per Law Level world is below maximum for weapon . . . . 05% Black Market:
- Per level of Bribery skill character uses . . . . . +10%
- Per Law Level world is above maximum for weapon . . . +25%
- Per level of Streetwise skill character has . . . . . -05%
- To calculate the waiting time (time for the shop to get the gun etc.) roll percentage dice:

- 01 - 50 No delay - available straight away
- 51 - 75 Wait of 2d6 Hours
- 76 - 90 Wait of 2d6 Days
- 91 - 00 Wait of 2d6 Weeks

*Note:* payment will usually be in advance.

This system should also be used when buying ammunition. It could also be used in reverse when characters were trying to sell weapons - the base chance would be of someone wanting to buy the weapon.

*Example:* A character with Bribery 1 and Streetwise 1 on a Tech Level 10, Law Level 4 planet is trying to buy a carbine. His base chance is 60%, modified as follows: Tech Level 10, +50; Law Level 4, 25%; Purchased at a specialist gun shop, no penalty, Streetwise 1 +10% = a final chance of 95%.

The cost will be: Law Level 4, +15% = 230 cr (not including Tech Level changes). Percentage dice are then rolled to see how long the wait would be. The carbine is a light assault weapon (illegal at Law Level 4) with a maximum legal Law Level of 3. ■

# WEAPONS

## for

# Traveller

by Bob McWilliams

*Weapons seem to be a popular type of submission to Starbase; the file has built up to such an extent that I thought we should devote two pages to them, rather than one page that Starbase normally occupies. So, here is a selection of reader's submissions in the usual Traveller format. Please note, however, that publication does not constitute an endorsement of any particular weapon — it is up to individual referees to look over a weapon carefully and decide if it is acceptable in his or her campaign.*

### FLAMETHROWER

by Ian Brotzman

This is a primitive thermal energy projector fuelled by a ten-shot backpack. The second figure in the Ammo Price column is the cost to recharge the backpack. Flamethrowers are cumbersome and dangerous — the major problem is loss of pressure causing a blowback; to reflect this, attack the firer rather than the target on a natural 'to hit' roll of 2. Nevertheless, despite its drawbacks the flamethrower is a potent weapon for its tech level.

Damage is 6d6 on impact. Additional burn damage on a roll of 7+ is inflicted using the Armour DMs only, of 1d6 for an additional 1d6 rounds thereafter.

### AUTOSHOTGUN

by Ian Brotzman

Automatic variant of the basic shotgun, using the Group Hits by Shotguns rule. The weapon fires four round bursts, and is banned at Law Level 3. Semi-automatic single shot fire is as basic shotgun.

### HEAVY BODY PISTOL

by David Bell

A small pistol that fires the standard automatic pistol ammunition. It outwardly resembles a small automatic pistol but is manually cycled by pushing the barrel forward. The magazine holds 4 rounds and takes one combat round to replace, two if the user is evading. Player-Characters do *not* have any unearned expertise and will suffer from the Untrained Usage DM. This weapon cannot be effectively used one-handed.

Equivalent to the Semmerling LM-4 .45ACP, but slightly smaller since the *Traveller* Auto-Pistol is partly based on a 9mm weapon. See *Guns & Ammo*, June 1977 for the original.



### SUBMACHINE PISTOL

by Stephen Simkin

Lightweight version of the SMG, which can be fired from the hip with one hand as well as two. It fires on automatic (five rounds per pull of the trigger) and single shot; the selection being made by heavy or light pressure on the trigger. Magazines are not interchangeable with SMG ammunition, the round being 9mm x 18mm. Replacement of an empty magazine requires one combat round, during which the firer is treated as evading.

### SNUB RIFLE

by Ian Brotzman

This is a short-barelled, carbine development of the Snub Pistol. It fires 10gr bullets at up to 300 metres per second with the same warhead type availability as the pistol, and comes in two configurations, repeating and automatic. The repeating version has six chambers, fully selectable for type, and can fire once per combat round. Reloading takes one round, or two if the firer is treated as evading. The automatic version has a twenty round magazine inserted into the pistol grip. This magazine holds only one type of ammunition and takes one round to replace, during which the firer is treated as evading. First figures on the Statistics Table refer to the repeating version, the second figures after the slash to the automatic version.

### STUN PISTOL AND STUN RIFLE

by Adam Walker

These weapons fire controlled charges of electricity and act by knocking out the target. Wounds are applied to one characteristic only. The second figure under Ammo Price is the recharge cost of the powerpack.



**SHOCK DISABLERS**

by Stephen Simkin

A weapon designed for hand to hand combat, particularly by start-port personnel for stunning an opponent when reasoning fails. It consists of a pair of gauntlets with 20cm cylinders attached, below the arm. Thin cables run up the arm and into a socket on the backpack that supplies high frequency electricity. The points of both cylinders must be in contact with the opponent's body to complete the circuit. After three seconds, the shock is automatically cut out. *Note:* The pack must be turned on prior to use. Both the switch and a red 'on' light are situated on the left-hand glove. Wounds are applied to one characteristic only.

**TONITE PISTOL AND CARBINE**

by Steve Cook

Both of these weapons work according to the same principle. They both fire a purple ray of energy which explodes on impact. The power for this reaction is supplied from the magazine; hence the high cost. Both magazines take one round to change, during which the firer is considered to be evading. The pistol magazine fits into the butt of the gun whilst the carbine magazine is fitted behind the trigger guard.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the weapon itself an inordinate amount of wear is caused on the barrel, necessitating frequent replacement. After a certain number of shots have been fired a negative DM is imposed (see statistics). Barrel replacement takes two rounds if the firer is considered to be evading, one if not.

The pistol is supplied with holster and spare barrel; the carbine with sling and spare barrel. Second figures on the Statistics Table are for spare barrels. Extreme range for the carbine is 2km.

These weapons are often used instead of lasers when weight restrictions are an important consideration.

*Note:* These weapons come from Asimov's stories, especially *Black Friar of the Flame*.

**NEEDLE RIFLE**

by Stephen Simkin

A heavy, bulky rifle that emits a high intensity laser beam, designed to be effective against Battle Dress as well as other armour. The power pack (holding 50 shots) is clipped to the top and incorporates sockets for accessories such as electronic sights. The second figure under Ammo Price is the recharge cost. The weapon is also fitted with a bipod; unless this is used it fires at a DM of -4.

**PLASMA PISTOL**

by Sean Masterson

This and the following two weapons are rumoured to have been found in various locations, possibly associated with Ancient sites - but who really knows? The Base Prices represent an estimate of their value if commonly available; in practice such artifacts might be worth many times this to Imperial research agencies or collectors. The Plasma Pistol appears to work on the same general principle as the PGMP, but with a clip-on power unit, and is much smaller.

**WIPER**

by Sean Masterson

This device is sensitive to the brain waves of any intelligent creature picked up by its jam-proof polarised sensors and may scramble the brain of the target, reducing the victim(s) to a vegetable. The Wiper is a pocket-sized, wafer-thin piece of black metal with colour-coded touch sensitive controls.

**WARPER**

by Sean Masterson

This small hand-held weapon creates a temporary (two combat rounds) space/time vortex which sucks the victim(s) within it to any place and any time the referee wishes. The effects may be minimal or extreme.

Weapons Statistics Table

Item	Base		Ammo		Rounds/		Base Price	Ammo Price	Tech Level
	Weight	Weight	Clip	Overall	Price	Level			
Fiamethrower	5000	1000	10	950	450	200/100	6		
Autoshotgun	4750	1250	16	1000	750	20	6		
Heavy Body Pistol	500	100	4	100	1000	50	7		
Submachine Pistol	1800	400	25	605	550	15	7		
Snub Rifle	2000	60/220	6/20	600	400/450	15/50	8		
Stun Pistol	950	500	50	175	750	1000/50	8		
Stun Rifle	2050	500	50	850	1500	1000/50	8		
Shock Disablers	2000	2000	15	260	1000	450/20	9		
Tonite Pistol	1000/250	150	20	250/120	1500/500	200	12		
Tonite Carbine	2800/650	500	30	700/480	3000/800	450	12		
Needle Rifle	6000	3000	50	1100	8000	2500/50	14		
Plasma Pistol	300	30	20	200	50000	20000	16		
Wiper	100	-	-	120	1 million	-	17		
Warper	150	-	-	90	1.5 million	-	18		

Weapons Matrix

Attacker's Weapon	Defender's Armour						
	Nothing	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat	Battle
Fiamethrower	+5	+5	+2	0	+5	+3	-4
Autoshotgun	+8	+8	0	-3	+8	+3	-5
Heavy Body Pistol	+1	+1	-1	-3	+1	-1	-5
Submachine Pistol	+4	+4	-1	-4	+4	+1	-5
Snub Rifle,							
High Explosive	+3	+3	0	-2	+3	+1	-6
HEAP	+3	+3	+2	0	+3	+3	-2
Tranq	0	0	-2	-4	0	-2	no
Stun Pistol	+6	+5	+5	+4	+5	+4	-3
Stun Rifle	+7	+6	+6	+6	+7	+6	-2
Shock Disablers	+3	+2	0	-1	+2	-1	-5
Tonite Pistol	+2	+1	0	-1	-6	-3	-7
Tonite Carbine	+4	+2	+1	0	-4	-2	-6
Needle Rifle	+4	+4	+4	+4	-2	-4	0
Plasma Pistol	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+2
Wiper	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+2
Warper	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+1

Range Matrix

Attacker's Weapon	Defender's Range						Wound Inflicted
	Close	Short	Medium	Long	Very Long	Extreme	
Fiamethrower	-8	+1	+3	+6	no	no	see text
Autoshotgun	-12	+2	+8	-4	no	no	4D
Heavy Body Pistol	+1	0	-7	no	no	no	3D-3
Submachine Pistol	-3	+1	-3	-7	no	no	3D
Snub Rifle,							
High Explosive	no	+1	-4	-6	no	no	4D
HEAP	-2	+1	-4	-6	no	no	4D
Tranq	-2	+1	-3	-5	no	no	3D*
Stun Pistol	0	0	-2	-6	no	no	3D*
Stun Rifle	-2	0	+1	-1	no	no	3D*
Shock Disablers	0	-3	no	no	no	no	3D*
Tonite Pistol	-2	+3	-1	-6	no	no	4D-5
Tonite Carbine	-3	+3	+1	0	-21	-51	6D-4
Needle Rifle	no	-2	+3	+3	+11	+01	6D
Plasma Pistol	no	-3	+2	+3	+2	no	12D
Wiper	no	+1	+1	0	no	no	see text
Warper	no	0	+1	+1	0	no	see text

\* Applied to one characteristic only (stun weapon).

† 2/3 wounds at Very Long, 1/3 wounds at Extreme ranges.

Required and Advantageous Dexterity Table

	Required Dexterity Level	Required Dexterity DM	Advantageous Dexterity Level	Advantageous Dexterity DM
	Fiamethrower	4	-1	9
Autoshotgun	5	-2	9	+2
Heavy Body Pistol	9	-4	12	+1
Submachine Pistol	7	-2	10	+2
Snub Rifle	6	-2	9	+1
Stun Pistol	7	-3	11	+1
Stun Rifle	7	-3	11	+1
Shock Disablers	8	-1	11	+1
Tonite Pistol	7	-2	10	+2
Tonite Carbine	6	-2	10	+2
Needle Rifle	7	-1	10	+1
Plasma Pistol	9	-2	12	+2
Wiper	5	-1	8	+1
Warper	7	-1	9	+1

Barrel Wear DMs for Tonite Pistol and Carbine

No Shots	Tonite Pistol	Tonite Carbine	No Shots	Tonite Pistol	Tonite Carbine
5+	-1	-	25+	no	-1
10+	-2	-	30+	no	-2
15+	-3	-1	45+	no	-3
20+	-4	-1	60+	no	no

# DROIDS DROIDS DROIDS DROIDS DROIDS



## Robots for Traveller by Andy Slack

*'We don't serve his kind.'*  
Anonymous bartender,  
Star Wars.

This article presents a few standard models of robots, which have been designed more or less according to the referee's notes appearing in the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. The descriptions of individual robots can be shown to the players, or perhaps photocopied and used as a manufacturer's brochure (the company is of course Rossum's Universal Robots, LIC); the section headed Referee Only makes some comments on characterising robots that it would be better for the players to find out by experience.

### Dedicated Vehicle Droid

Also known as the crewbot, this is properly a family of units built at a variety of Tech Levels for a variety of purposes. However, all units have the following properties in common: The unit weighs 50kg, and is armoured to battle dress standards to resist impromptu reprogramming by boarders. It has 25 hit points. The unit is directly interfaced to the relevant controls in the ship or vehicle it is to serve, generally displacing one crew couch or seat, but occasionally occupying cargo space. It has sensors as per the Mechanical Droid. A single-frequency radio allows longer distance communication without reducing the capacity of the ship's or vehicle's comms circuits, and the droid may examine the external environment through telescopic visual sensors, with enhanced night vision provisions, active infrared detectors and a small infrared searchlight, or any sensors fitted to the vehicle or ship to which it is attached. A remote master unit allows the direction of medical rescue servos for reconnaissance or rescue purposes. The price and skill of a unit depends on its task and tech level:

12		Tech Level		14		15	
Credits	Expertise	Credits	Expertise	Credits	Expertise	Credits	Expertise
105940	Pilot-1	506140	Pilot-3	1006640	Pilot-8		
105940	Navigation-1	506140	Navigation-3	1006640	Navigation-8		
106040	Air/Raft-3	506340	Air/Raft-6	1006840	Air/Raft-11		
106040	Ship's Boat-3	506340	Ship's Boat-6	1006840	Ship's Boat-11		
106040	ATV-4	506240	ATV-6	1006740	ATV-11		
106140	Gunnery-4	506440	Gunnery-7	1006940	Gunnery-14		

### Mechanical Droid

Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr 117,000. Weight: 200kg. Speed: 75km/h on road; 30-40km on other terrain. Propelled by tracks, it has two light and one medium work arms. Sensors are equivalent to human senses in capability, and a voder/vocoder enables the droid to converse with its masters. It carries a set of mechanical tools and has a parts bin capable of holding up to 35kg of spares. Its skill level is Mechanical 6. It is treated as cloth armour for combat purposes, and has 65 hit points.

An identical droid is produced for cargo handling, but instead of Mechanical 6, this variety is programmed to load and unload cargo into and off ships or vehicles, and report unusual circumstances such as unexpected visitors, fires, etc. This variant costs Cr 116,500.

### Heavy Mechanical Droid

Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr122,520. Weight: one ton. Speed: up to 40km/h on good roads, 5-20km/h cross-country. In all other respects it is the same as the Mechanical droid except that it can carry spares and parts weighing up to 425kg, and has 135 hit points.

### Medical Rescue Servo

This robot is designed to operate in conjunction with a Robodoc (see below). Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr109,300. Weight: 100kg. One light and one medium work arm allow it to carry unconscious humans or similar objects, administer first aid, etc. Sensors are as per Mechanical Droid, and a remote slave unit allows it to be radio-controlled by a robodoc and feed data about the patients' condition to the robodoc. A padded storage tray can carry up to 3kg of drugs and medicines, while a comprehensive set of basic medical instruments is also carried. While its main purpose is to function as a mobile remote drone for a robodoc, the droid has a certain amount of 'initiative', so that it is able to fight fires and rescue injured persons from dangerous situations without supervision.

In combat, the droid is considered to be wearing cloth armour, and has 50 hits.



**Electrical Droid**

This droid is for the repair and manufacture of electrical or electronic devices. Tech Level: 12. Costs: Cr117,050. Weight 100kg. Speed: up to 200km/h on integral antigravity units. Has two light work arms, similar to human arms and hands. Sensors as per Mechanical Droid. It has internal compartments containing electronic tools and up to 10kg of spares or parts, and an expertise of Electronic 6. In combat it is treated as wearing cloth armour, and has 50 hit points.

**Robodoc**

This is a large unit, normally fitted in ships or vehicles, and less frequently in buildings. Six light work arms with multi-purpose manipulators make use of three sets of medical instruments to allow for treatment of up to three injured beings simultaneously. Human equivalent sensors are supplemented by microscopic visual pickups, low-level audio pickups, a single-frequency radio for communication with other robots or persons, a voder/vocoder for verbal communication, and a remote-control master unit which may control up to six medical rescue servos. An ultraviolet steriliser is fitted to deal with bacterial contamination. The robodoc may be interfaced directly to the ship's internal scanners and life-support monitors, so that it can observe crew members and despatch servos to bring them in for treatment as necessary. It may also interface into the ship's commo units so that similar coverage is extended to crew members outside, if they carry communicators to act as homing beacons. Integral storage trays carry up to 175kg of medicines, prosthetics etc as required. The robodoc has its own internal power source and is not dependent on ship or vehicle power supplies except to power the three integral couches in their low berth mode; for while the robodoc can deal with most circumstances, it occasionally finds damage or disease beyond its ability, in which case the injured individual is put into suspended animation until better facilities can be reached.

The robodoc's price and expertise depend on its Tech Level:

Tech Level	Credits	Expertise	Weight	Speed
12	266340	Medical-1	Two Tons	Immobile at
14	666530	Medical-3	Two Tons	all Tech Levels
15	1166940	Medical-7	Two Tons	

Should it be attacked, the robodoc counts as wearing cloth armour, and has 80 hits.

The robodoc can treat persons if one or two of their physical characteristics (strength, dexterity, or endurance) have been reduced to zero. If the character has sustained enough damage to reduce strength, dexterity and endurance to zero, and no more additional damage points than the sum of his endurance and the robodoc's Medical expertise, he may be resuscitated as long as he is placed in the robodoc within a number of combat rounds equal to his endurance. His endurance is raised to one, and the robodoc will place him in suspended animation pending full medical treatment at a comprehensively-equipped hospital of Tech Level 8 or higher. If the character has suffered more damage than this, he is dead.

*Example:* Shel Meldol has a UPP of 797AC8 and has thoughtfully fitted a Tech 15 robodoc in the hold of his scoutship (reducing cargo capacity by 2 tons), with a couple of medical rescue servos. While adventuring, he is grievously injured, taking 32 points of damage. The robodoc promptly dispatches a medical rescue servo to pick up the smoking boot which is yelling 'Medic!'; it has 7 combat rounds to get the dying adventurer into its low berths. It succeeds; we now examine the overkill. Shel's strength, dexterity and endurance sum up to 23 points; his endurance and the robodoc's Medical expertise sum to 14 (7 + 7), so if he has taken less than (14 + 23) 37 damage points in total, he can be revived. Fortunately, he has taken only 9 more hit points than he actually has; examining the storage trays, the robodoc decides he can be saved. It raises his UPP to 001AC8 and places him in suspended animation to await medical treatment at a fully-equipped base hospital. Meanwhile, the Vogons approach the defenceless starship, blasters ready. . . . The referee may opt to allow human medics a similar revival ability.

**Engineering Droid**

This droid is for the repair and maintenance of starship drives and similar heavy machinery. A medium arm enables it to carry heavy objects up to 100kg in weight; two light work arms are fitted for manipulation of tools and equipment. It carries sets of electrical, mechanical and metalwork tools to aid it. Sensors as per Mechanical Droid. Specifications depend on Tech Level of manufacturer:

Tech Level	Credits	Expertise	Weight	Speed
12	117040	Engineering-1	400g	50km/h on roads,
14	517240	Engineering-3	400g	10-30km/h on
15	1017940	Engineering-8	400g	other terrain, for
				all tech levels

In combat, treat as wearing cloth armour, with 80 hit points.

**Valet Droid**

The valet droid is constructed at Tech Level: 12. Weight: 75kg. Cost: Cr111,540. Speed: up to 200km/h on integral antigravity units. Sensors as per Mechanical Droid. It has two light work arms. It may function as a Steward-1, and in addition may serve as a personal valet, cleaning and caring for clothes, doing housework, making minor repairs and so on. It is treated in combat as if wearing cloth armour, and may carry refreshments etc weighing up to 4kg in an integral tray. It has 45 hits.

**Valet Android**

Not actually an Android, this robot is similar to the valet droid, but is much more anthropomorphic and in poor light can be mistaken for a human being. It has legs and two light work arms, and in general is capable of movement and manipulation to much the same degree as humans. Sensors are as per the Mechanical Droid. Extensive social programming enables the robot to make appropriate comments on the weather, politics etc, unlike the other droids who are entirely concerned with their normal duties and unable to 'think' along other lines. The valet android is treated as if wearing cloth armour, and has 50 hit points. All such droids are programmed for valet duties — housework and the care of clothes, etc — and in addition, as Stewards. Skill and price depend on tech level:

Tech Level	Credits	Expertise
12	208600	Steward-1
14	1009100	Steward-6
15	2010100	Steward-16

**Warbot**

Tech Level: 14-15. Weight: one ton. Cost: Cr2,000,000. Speed: 200km/h. It is, in fact, too large to be used in urban or shipboard operations; its normal use is to man bases on isolated worlds. For most purposes, human beings are cheaper to set up and maintain, and less easily damaged; they are also quicker and easier to replace, given a large population.

The warbot is armoured to battle dress standards with 260 hit points. Its size and power output render it quite vulnerable to tac missiles, however. Sensors far exceed the capability of human senses; vision is telescopic in all but the lowest levels of lighting, and infrared detectors allow the unit to 'see' heat emissions. Low level audio is fitted, which can pick up heartbeats at several tens of metres in standard atmosphere (greater range in denser atmospheres, less range in thin atmospheres). The droid communicated by a voder/vocoder or a multi-frequency radio with integral anti-jamming circuits, and has a TV camera for transmitting pictures of battlefield conditions back to base. It may carry objects up to 78kg in weight, without loss of performance, or one unencumbered person. Four light and two medium work arms are fitted; two have handlike attachments for field repairs, changing magazines and so on, while the remainder carry an FGMP-15, while two of the light arms carry an auto rifle and auto grenade launcher respectively.

The droid may be ordered to stand watch, in which case it will patrol an area at random intervals and report any intruders or disturbances. It may handle any standard infantry weapon with the two general-purpose arms, and may perform all tasks expected of a modern infantryman, even in zero-gravity. ►

**Guardbot**

The guardbot, security droid, or 'biffo' weighs 75kg and is capable of moving at up to 200km/h on its built-in antigrav units. Armoured to cloth standards and having 45 hit points, the biffo has one light work arm which may carry any standard human weapon of up to 8kg in weight (including ammunition); sensors surpass human senses, being able to see in very low levels of light perfectly, and into the near infrared to detect body heat. Its audio pickups are quite capable of tracking persons by their heartbeats up to medium range. Voder/vocoders and a single-frequency radio allow it to communicate with other robots, a central command post, or humans.

The price and abilities of the biffo vary with tech level; at TL12 for Cr105,890, it will patrol a specified area at random intervals and report any unauthorised personnel or accidents such as fires, then await further orders while observing the disturbance.

At TL14, for Cr505,990, the biffo will make random patrols and report any intruders or accidents; unless ordered otherwise, it will then attempt to detain any intruders using the minimum necessary force.

At TL15, for Cr1,006,190, the droid will make random patrols and report intruders or accidents; unless ordered otherwise, it will then attack the intruders (if any) with a view to causing death, or at least grievous bodily harm. It may also fight without penalty in zero-G combat.

Naturally, the ownership of guardbots is strictly controlled, and the least violent possible is always used. Guardbots are capable of handling any normal weapons like a human character, but gain no pluses for dexterity, strength or skill; likewise, they suffer no penalties.

**Referee Only***General*

Robots normally function under Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics, which they must obey. Despite their common usage, I shall restate them:

- i) *No robot shall knowingly harm a human or other intelligent being, or through inaction allow such a being to come to harm.*
- ii) *A robot shall obey orders literally and exactly which are given to it by a human or other intelligent being, provided such orders would not cause the robot to disobey the first law.*
- iii) *A robot shall protect its own existence unless this would cause it to disobey either of the first two laws.*

Alert readers will note these are not the usual forms in which the laws are quoted; but for game purposes, they are more accurate. Robots believe whatever they are told, and obey orders precisely. In this respect the referee's handling of them should resemble handling *D&D* wishes; if he can legally misinterpret a player's orders to a robot he should do so. This partially compensates for the robots' high skill levels. Robots have no initiative or common sense whatsoever in most circumstances. However, for their own protection, if presented with a logical paradox they will clear their input circuits and behave as if they had not heard it, or alternatively ask for it to be explained to them, depending on circumstances. If given imprecise, impossible, or contradictory orders they will point out the situation politely and ask for the orders to be restated until they can be carried out.

Robots never lie, but nor will they volunteer information which is not specifically requested of them. Security droids or warbots are often not programmed with the first law so that they may carry out their duties; these will not answer questions which they have been instructed are secret unless given the correct passwords and identification, nor will they obey orders from unauthorised personnel. Other robots will obey orders from anyone and answer any question as truthfully as possible.

In combat, any natural roll of 12 to hit will hit the robot's brain and disable it completely, provided the modified roll would have hit and penetrated armour anyway. A robot so disabled is junk. Damage reduces a machine's ability to function; exactly how is up to the referee if he hasn't got the relevant article from the *Journal*.

Robots not specified as capable of functioning in zero-gravity cannot be used in the icy vacuum of space, where lubrication is a problem and some of their metallic components may become

brittle. Robots are affected by explosive decompression as are human beings; those armoured to battle dress standards can be exposed to space without ill effect.

As a final note, so far as robots are concerned (except biffos or warbots) all intelligent beings have an equal right to go anywhere or do anything they please, so long as violence is eschewed.

*Medical Rescue Servo*

This unit is perhaps too conscientious, for example, it has a penchant for seizing people who are, say, fighting fires and dragging them off so that they will be safe, leaving the fire raging unchecked. The servo is generally not moved by pleas to release its charges until they are safely out of danger, and may decide even then that they don't know what's good for them or have been deranged by shock. Servos also indulge in such activities as stealing cigarettes because they're bad for you, reminding you to dress warmly every time you venture outside, and so on; one particularly annoying habit they have is to follow people around since they never know when they might be needed, often getting in the way at critical moments.

*Robodoc*

The robodoc shares some of the medical rescue servo's faults, though it is more intelligent and immobile and therefore more bearable. It thus tends to restrict itself to pompous lectures about the necessity of a balanced diet and regular exercise, and upon occasion will ask a character if he would like his appearance improved by plastic surgery while he is under the anaesthetic. If connected to medical rescue servos, it will also try to help wounded in battles impartially, and may ignore a player for an enemy who is more drastically wounded if left to its own devices. In times when its facilities are overloaded, the robodoc will divide injured into three categories; those who will live regardless of treatment, those who will die regardless of treatment, and those who will only survive if treated. It then treats only those in the third category.

*Dedicated Vehicle Droids*

At higher Tech Levels, these become increasingly contemptuous of human crew members who do not match up to their own high standards. The gunnery versions are not prone to this, but are very enthusiastic and will continuously interrupt with pleas to be allowed to shoot something, estimates of the ship or vehicle's chance of destroying anything in sight, and so on.

*Valet Droids/Androids*

The main problem with these droids is their humility and attempts to ingratiate themselves, especially at higher Tech Levels. The Tech 15 android in particular is always finding a way to fetch attempting sweetmeat (which naturally brings it into conflict with robodocs), polish boots (often at the most inconvenient moment), embroider floral patterns on combat fatigues, and generally be so helpful that it is acutely annoying. It is much given to heaping praise upon its masters and being servile and apologetic without real cause. On the plus side, it will leap into the path of an incoming missile even faster than the other droids — but will then make lengthy dying speeches about how grateful it is that the termination of its own worthless existence has saved the life of a Master.

*Guardbot*

Note that only the Tech 15 biffo is capable of actually injuring someone in the course of duty; the others will threaten occasionally, but if it comes to the crunch they will shy away from actually harming anyone. Since the types are externally similar, it is difficult to tell which sort you are facing, and they will take advantage of this. If faced with a more squeamish biffo, it could be diverted by for example threatening to shoot yourself unless it went away.

The second fault is not apparent until captured by a biffo; it will then spout unending saccharine morality, platitudes about the immoral nature of a life of crime, and the inevitable bad end awaiting all who stray from the straight and narrow.

I would like to thank Graham Liddiard and John Dongray for their help and ideas concerning robots of all kinds. ■



This issue Starbase, a regular department edited by Bob McWilliams, looks at Traveller morality and introduces a new alien race.

# Morality in Traveller

On the outskirts of strife-torn Blodge City the mercenary platoon commander listened with a sickening feeling to the report. It seemed that, until his arrival, troopers of his third squad had been engaged in the merciless slaughter of the defenceless alien natives amongst the hovels they called home. Swiftly, he ordered a court-martial, and medics to tend the native wounded. The natives had played no part in the ambush by Blodgian forces and it seemed only decent to repair native relations if possible (and get in the referee's good books too).

Later that same day...

The platoon's advance had ground to a halt once more. The third squad leader reported that he had a native in custody, known to have knowledge of the Blodgian positions. The native was frightened and disorientated but refused to help.

'Take it out the back and get the information, I don't care how you do it'.

Traveller referees may sometimes wish that players and non-player characters had some sort of restricting mechanism regarding their ethics, morality, state of grace or whatever. There is nothing in the rules to prevent a character from changing attitudes whenever it suits him. In the example above, it is just possible to make out a case for the platoon commander that covers both actions. If his ethics were centred purely on the interests of his own troops to the exclusion of anyone else, he might stop wanton violence unconnected with military necessity as a damaging activity (causing animosity amongst neutrals and also giving the unit a bad reputation) yet still require the same end result to prevent avoidable losses to his unit.

In a less dramatic sense, what about the character (a merchant captain, say) who is quite prepared to bribe customs officials and unload faulty merchandise on a world whose shaky economic state may collapse at any moment? Should he claim unfair treatment when the referee tells him that women, dogs and Droyne hate him on sight? That the Imperial Navy has just confiscated his Free Trader?

It should be stressed that players should be encouraged to pick some sort of moral stance without coercion from the referee and stick to it — either the player's own moral code or some other invented morality — although the possibility that this can change over time should not be ruled out. The trouble is that players like to have their cake and eat it.

There is one other method available and that is to treat morality as a numerical value. Players are allowed to choose a number between one and six, with one being the depths of depravity and six being saintly. On reaction throws, the referee compares the morality values of the two characters and uses the difference as a DIM (either a plus or minus). He can also use the value in a number of other ways, especially with non-player characters, to determine the likely response to situations. In some circumstances (alien minor races encountered for the first time, for example), he can assign a 'blanket' value to the race as a whole. Such uses of a morality value can provide the referee with a valuable tool in personalising non-player characters and races — and he needs all the help he can get.



## THE MAHWRS by Duncan Bisatt

These intelligent bipedal creatures inhabit an atmosphere 5 planet with hydrographics of 70%. They live in thick equatorial rain forests in caverns dug into hillsides. They are hunters with sonar rather than visual perceptive organs and thus have large ears and an echo chamber in the centre of their faces. This sonar is as discerning as the humaniti's visual sense, allowing them to 'see' in total darkness. They have well-developed muscles and an average strength of 11+. A typical UPP of these creatures would be:

**Strength:** B (2d+4, maximum 15[F]).

**Dexterity:** 7 (2d).

**Endurance:** B (2d+4, maximum 15 [F]).

**Intelligence:** 4 (1d+1).

**Education:** 0 (1d-4, with minus scores counting as zero).

**Social Standing:** 0 (1d-4, with minus scores counting as zero).

The tribal structure is one dominant male to 8-18 (2d+6) females with one offspring for each female. There is a 1 in 3 chance that a newborn mahwr will be male. Male offspring are allowed to stay in the group until they reach breeding age (about 20 Imperium years of age) when they are cast out or, if food is scarce, eaten unless the younger male can triumph over the older male in combat. In the hunt the male usually leads about 5 females to ambush other creatures, relying on surprise rather than speed. They use clubs spiked with hard crystal fragments as weapons and crystal edged daggers of poor quality which they copied from settlers' weapons, whilst in unarmed combat they fight with sharp claws and spikes on their knees and elbows. (Treat the claws as per the *Book 1* tables and the clubs as cudgels but doing 2d+3 wounds). If hunts fail for several days the mahwrs may engage in inter-tribal cannibalism and dominant males may even eat one of their females.

It is this cannibalistic nature which led to a deep mistrust between the mahwrs and the early settlers with genocide attempts by both sides and now the mahwrs have been forced to retreat into the depths of the forests. Any party of humaniti entering a mahwr area is almost certain to be attacked and eaten so it is only recently that study of this race has begun. This study is hampered by widespread poaching of the mahwrs for their furs. Typical encounters will be with a hunting group or a pack of 1-6 male outcasts.

### Possible Scenarios

1. Protect a scientist from the mahwrs he is studying and from poachers trying to capture specimens.
2. Poaching either for personal gain or for a patron. (NB protection of indigenous species regulations imposes penalties for such action).
3. Protection of travellers or tourists from the mahwrs and other local fauna.

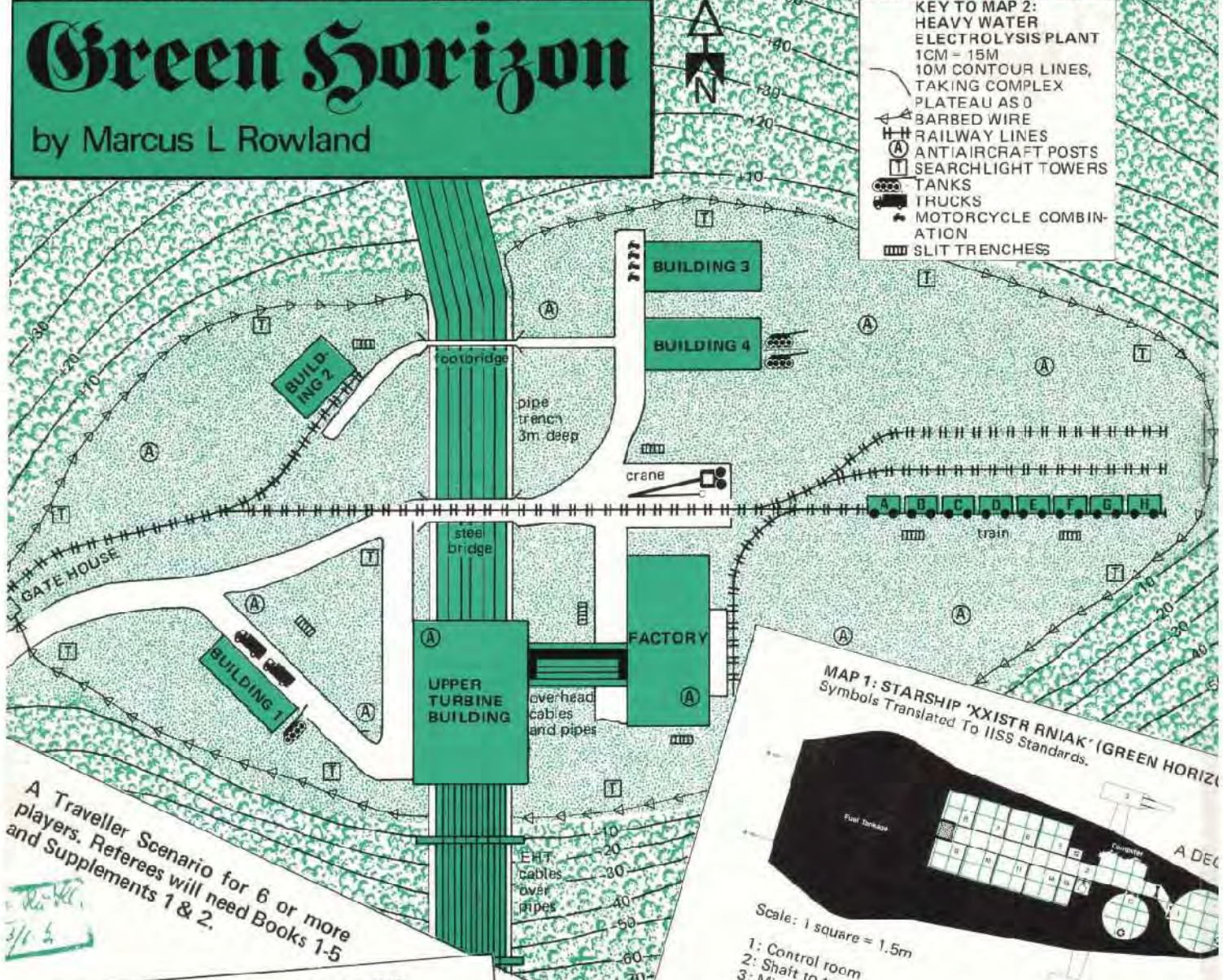
These ideas could be linked in with some other scenario idea to form one of a number of hazards to be overcome. ■



# Green Horizon

by Marcus L Rowland

- KEY TO MAP 2:**  
 HEAVY WATER ELECTROLYSIS PLANT  
 1CM = 15M  
 10M CONTOUR LINES, TAKING COMPLEX PLATEAU AS 0  
 BARBED WIRE  
 RAILWAY LINES  
 ANTIAIRCRAFT POSTS  
 SEARCHLIGHT TOWERS  
 TANKS  
 TRUCKS  
 MOTORCYCLE COMBINATION  
 SLIT TRENCHES



A Traveller Scenario for 6 or more players. Referees will need Books 1-5 and Supplements 1 & 2.

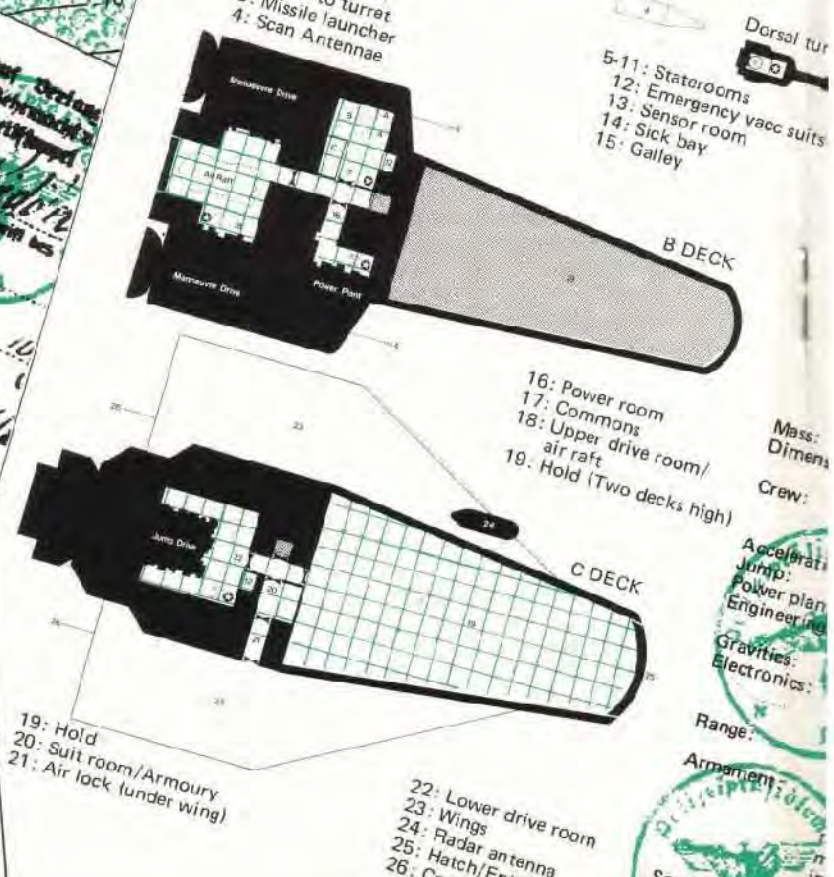
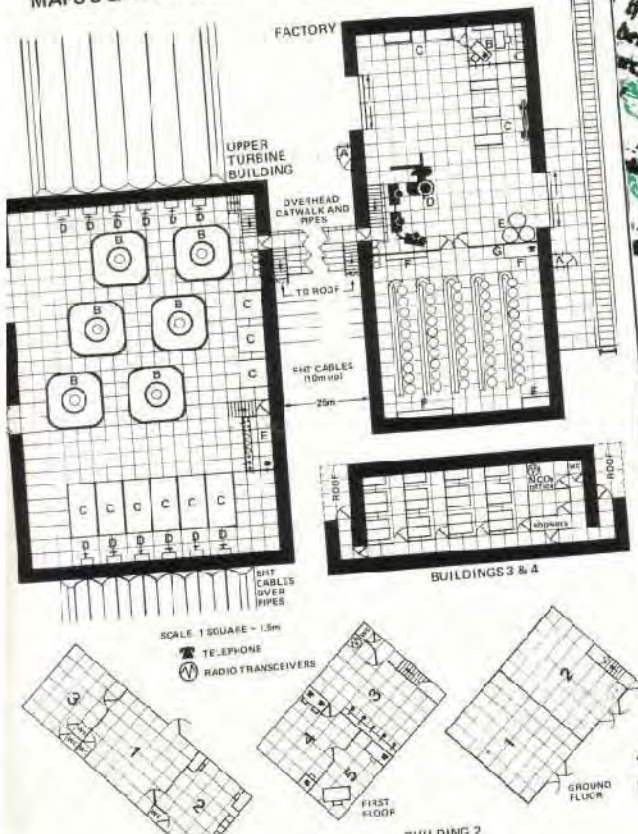
MAP 1: STARSHIP 'XXISTR RNIAK' (GREEN HORIZON)  
 Symbols Translated To IISS Standards.



- 1: Control room
- 2: Shaft to turret
- 3: Missile launcher
- 4: Scan Antennae

- 5-11: Staterooms
- 12: Emergency vacc suits
- 13: Sensor room
- 14: Sick bay
- 15: Galley

MAPS 3 & 4: FACTORY & FACTORY BUILDINGS



- 19: Hold
- 20: Suit room/Armoury
- 21: Air lock (under wing)

- 22: Lower drive room
- 23: Wings
- 24: Radar antenna
- 25: Hatch/Entrance
- 26: Comm

Mass: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dimens: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Crew: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Accelerati: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jump: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Power plant: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Engineer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gravities: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Electronics: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Range: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Armament: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Screen: \_\_\_\_\_





### MODULE 1: Introduction

Long ago, before the rise of the Imperium...

On a routine trading flight the starship *Green Horizon* ran into trouble. Ambushed by privateers and severely damaged, the Captain was forced to order an emergency jump. For a week the crew struggled with various malfunctions, knowing that the ship might well be lost when it returned to normal space.

As the ship rematerialised the jump drive blew out, showering its compartment with molten metal and killing the Second Engineer. In the resultant confusion it was several minutes before the Navigator realised they weren't in the target system, and that a misjump had occurred.

After several hours work the Captain finally reports to the crew: 'I'm glad to say that we've materialised in an explored sector of space, and we're close to a habitable world, though it sounds a bit primitive. If we can fix the jump drive it's only two parsecs to the nearest base. I'm setting course for the planet, if we can't fix the drive we might as well be in easy reach.'

Cracking her blue knuckles she adds 'By the way, the computer says the planet's called Earth. Anyone ever heard of it?'

### MODULE 2: Library Data

THIS IS A TRANSLATION

EARTH/WSA1008/3 :: X8678734 G :: Size 1, Gravity 1, 1 moon, Star G.

The planet's atmosphere is contaminated with various forms of mould spore and bacteria which have a cumulatively lethal allergenic effect unless filter masks or immunisation are available. Highest concentrations are at the equator, the polar and glacial zones are habitable without protection for short periods.

The planet was surveyed in 8755 (Translators note: 120 Ksiff years ago) at which time local governmental forms ranged from 2 to 4 and 9 to D. In accordance with standard Ksiff Conglomerate laws (see section 124355 Uniform Penal Code) the planet has been declared a cultural quarantine zone, pending emergence of a unified planetary government or self-destruction. The penalty for any form of cultural contamination is imprisonment or death.

*Ksiff Universal Data Encyclopaedia, 202nd Edition*

### MODULE 3: Briefing

As the ship approaches Earth, it quickly becomes apparent that the library data is somewhat outdated. The vessel carries sophisticated surveillance and sensing equipment which soon picks up numerous signs of a type 5 or 6 technology, including radio and radar transmissions and massive electrical static. By this time, a majority of the damage is repaired and it seems certain that the jump drive can be restored if at least 5 kilograms of Deuterium Oxide can be added to its neutron damping system.

Taking up a polar orbit the ship begins to survey Earth, eventually finding traces of the chemical over a glacial Northern country where a factory is producing the material.

Accordingly the Captain decides to attempt a secret landing somewhere near the plant and try to take some Deuterium Oxide without attracting the natives' attention.

### MODULE 4: Starship 'Xxistr Rriak' (Green Horizon). See Map 1

The *Green Horizon* is a typical merchant explorer of the Ksiff culture, and is used in a variety of roles. With the following exceptions, the ship's equipment is similar to that of later Imperial vessels:

The sensor room (13) incorporates a variety of detection gear including a psionic amplifier (see Crew). The common room (17) has usual games computer and exercise machines (A) but also a large mud wallow (B) and fresher (C) since communal wallowing and bathing are important social functions among the Ksiffchi. The drive room (18) holds the Air/Raft but though both the ship and the raft are submersible the room's hatch cannot be opened underwater since the drives would be damaged. The suit and armoury room (20) holds full vacuum suits for all hands (suits in emergency lockers 12 are lightweight plastic without armour or radiation protection, 50 rounds air supply) and the following weapons: 6 missiles (see ships armament), 3 carbines, 4 pump shotguns (7 shots), ammunition. There is also a pack of 15 filter masks with normal survival supplies.

The ship is carrying a variety of cargo including domestic goods, military supplies, trade goods and food:

12 cases x 16 bottles 98% flavoured alcohol; 20 frozen carcasses (non-sentient herbivore) in 'freeze container; 2 empty freeze containers; 1 freeze container holding corpse of 2nd Engineer;\* 45 cases x 144 sachets plant seeds in spiced sauce; 125 canisters fire-retardant foam; 16 inflatable boats; 48 spades; 6 tonnes assorted domestic glassware; 330 tow-litre cans white paint; 45 bales aluminised plastic film (light sails); 500kg medical supplies (suitable for silicon-based life forms, not Ksiffchi [or humans]).

7 containers military stores: 1 suit battle dress; 2 suits combat armour; 2 light assault guns +24 clips each HE and flechette ammunition, scopes; 3 Advanced Combat Rifles (ACR) + 27 clips HE ammunition; 1 Plasma gun (equivalent to PGMP-12); 16 x 1kg blocks plastic explosive;

8 radio detonators, 12 time pencils,

120 domestic video receivers with integral surveillance cameras; 2 lift belts.

\* The corpse is carried in the hope that revival will be possible when the ship reaches an advanced planet.

### SPECIFICATIONS (translated to nearest human equivalent):

Mass: 560 tonnes, 7600 cubic metres.  
Dimensions: 45.5 metres L; 14 metres H; 19.5 metres W; 31.5 metres Wingspan.

Crew: 7; Captain/Pilot, Navigator/Computer programmer, Engineer, Medic, 2nd Engineer/Cook, Linguist/Sensor operator, Gunner/Steward.

Acceleration: 1g, Emergency 1.5g (maximum 18 rounds).

Jump: 2.

Power: 1.

Engineering: Fusion power plant with gas scoops, single jump drive, two impulse manoeuvre drives. Technological level 11.

Gravitics: Inertial compensators, 1g floor fields.

Electronics: Type 2 bis. computer with standard software plus integral fire control programmes, extensive communication and sensor gear.

Range: Normal manoeuvre, two jumps, 315 tonnes fuel capacity, 104 days supply consumption.

Armament: One dorsal turret with single pulse laser. Fixed forward missile rack, 4 missiles; 2 HE homing, 1 ECM deception missile, 1 combination Sand/Window/Flare missile. Four more HE missiles and one of each other type are carried inboard, but cannot be loaded without EVA. See also Air/Raft, Armoury, below.

Screens: None.

Configuration: Close structure, streamlined, light armoured, submersible (maximum depth 30 metres at normal pressure).

Capacity: 60 tonnes cargo, no passenger accommodation.

Ship's Vehicles: 1 enclosed Air/Raft with submersible capacity (max. 10 metres), maximum speed 180 kph, armament 1 fixed light machine gun.

### MODULE 5: Personnel and Skills

1 IXXTFWWNJK- Female, height 1.2m, blue eyes, grey hair, blue warty skin	Merchant Captain	4/8875	Age 38	5 terms
Captain/Pilot				
2 TANGJU RUL- Male, height 1.1m, black eyes, yellow hair, blue-grey warty skin, prosthetic right arm	Ex-Scout 1st Lieutenant	569AAB	Age 47	6 terms
Navigator/Computer programmer				
3 OTNIIHQ- Asexual, height 1.15m, purple eyes, brown warty skin, grey hair	Ex-Scout 2nd Lieutenant	55798B	Age 38	4 terms
Medic				
4 ESEOPWASC- Female, height 1.3m, blue eyes, yellow hair, smooth blue-grey skin, A chlorophyll addict	Merchant 3rd Officer	889A52	Age 44	6 terms
Engineer				
5 UYRIG UNIG- Male, height 1m, grey eyes, grey hair, blue warty skin, A psionic	Ex-Scout 2nd Lieutenant	55798B	Age 38	4 terms
Engineer-4, Brawling 2, Vacc Suit 2, Bow Combat 2, Mechanic 2, Pistol-1, Cabine-1				
Linguist/sensors				
6 IJJ STARSWIMMER- Male, height 1.1m, green eyes, grey hair, blue/grey warty skin	Merchant, no rank	798960	Age 21	1 term
Gunner/Steward				
7 Gunner-2, Steward-1, Sword-1				

*Note on Ksiffchi:* The average Ksiff is a warm-blooded marsupial 1 to 1.4 metres tall with hair on its head, arms, and back. They normally have extremely warty but dry skin, with the absence of warts a social stigma and a sign of congenital disease, mutation, or drug abuse. They have highly reflective slitted eyes with extremely good night vision and moderately good day vision, through a filtering third eyelid. They are happiest in moist conditions and feel uncomfortable in especially dry or hot climates. They can stay underwater without breathing aids for 3-8 minutes.

Most Ksiffchi names relate to places, clans, etc, and are not translatable. An occasional individual or family group will change their name to indicate a particular profession or interest, as in the case of IJJ Starswimmer.

The Ksiffchi honour psionics, seeking them out in adolescence for early training or testing on entry to military or civilian service. Uyrig Unig, for example, was tested on entry to the Scout service, found to have psionic talent, and given intense training by the service, with his service speciality being related to his talents as well as acquired skills. His talents are *Telepathy* (Level 5), *Clairvoyance* (Level 6), and *Special (Total Recall - no strength penalty)*, with psionic strength 8. He has two ampoules of a drug analogous to booster. The psionic booster fitted in the sensor room amplifies his clairvoyance to permit limited effect from orbital distances without strength penalty. It is not portable since it weighs 180kg, requires computer backup, and must be attached to his head by 14 electrodes.

At the age of 48-55 Ksiffchi metamorphose into an asexual form with brown skin, but this has no other effects except that it often causes the breakup of family groups.

In addition to the weapons in the ship's armoury most crew members possess their own arms, carried or kept in their cabins: IXXXTFWWNJK: Snub pistol, 2 clips each type of ammunition, cutlass. TANGJU RUL: ACR + intensifier sights, 5 clips ammo, 2 blades. ESED PWASC: Repeating crossbow and 21 bolts, revolver (5 shot) and 125 rounds. IJJ Starswimmer: Foil, 2 daggers.





**MODULE 6: Objective and Surrounding Area — Long Range Sensor Scan**  
The objective is a factory building forming part of a hydro-electric complex and industrial plant near a small town.

The hydro-electric plant is in two sections, fed by pipes from a mountain lake, with the factory adjacent to the upper section on a mountain terrace. Pipes and power lines run down the mountain from the upper terrace to a larger industrial complex below, which includes various metal refining and chemical processing plants. The upper terrace, however, holds only the power plant, the factory, and a few other buildings which do not appear to be for industrial use. The terrace is connected to the lower area and surrounding countryside by several kilometres of winding road and by two parallel metal rods, also winding through several kilometres, which are probably supports for some form of ground transport. There does not appear to be any facility for aircraft on the plateau or anywhere in the near vicinity. The plateau is approximately 150 metres wide by 300 long, with a surface of moderately rough rock. There appears to be a road system connecting the buildings on the plateau. Several metallic objects of considerable mass (25-50 tonnes) were detected, probability 67% industrial machinery, 43% scrap metal dumps, 25% vehicles, 11% metal ore dumps.

Apart from the nearby town most of the surrounding area is apparently uninhabited forest and/or lakes. Most bodies of water are frozen, there is considerable snowfall.

**MODULE 7: Objective and Surrounding Area — Detailed Information**  
See maps 2-4.

The factory is in German-occupied Norway in 1943. Heavy water is being produced as part of the Nazi atomic weapons programme. This is known to the Allies and there have been a series of Resistance, Commando and RAF raids against the complex.

Accordingly the Germans hold several hostages in the complex and have stationed anti-aircraft guns, troops, and tanks on the plateau. Reinforcements are available from the nearby town but will take at least 40 rounds to arrive, although Luftwaffe fighters can reach the area in 30 rounds given favourable weather conditions.

In the following description of German troops on the plateau all T Troopers, NCOs and Lieutenants should be rolled on the Trooper encounter table [p39 Supplement 1], unless stated otherwise.

Troopers carry the indicated weapon used at skill level 1, on 8+ carry grenades. Those operating heavier weapons, vehicles, or communications equipment also have appropriate level 1 skills, in addition to their basic weapon and skill.

NCOs carry the appropriate weapon, used at level 2, and grenades on 6+. Those operating equipment have the appropriate skills, also at level 2. Additionally, on 7+ NCOs have a second level 1 weapon skill or level 1 brawling skill.

Lieutenants have weapon and equipment skills as NCOs, and carry a second weapon used at skill level 1 on 5+. On 4+ Lieutenants also have Command-1 or Driver-1 skills. German troops are unarmoured except for steel helmets.

The plateau is patrolled by 3-5 groups of two troopers accompanied by a guard dog (Chaser, 30kg, 7/2, Jack, Teeth, A8 F6 S2).

**AA Guns:** Manually loaded, HE shells 88mm, chemical explosive, crew 6, TL 6. Crew-1 NCO, 5 troopers. Field telephone at each post. Fixed positions.

**Towers:** Wooden towers 10 metres high holding two troopers, one heavy machine gun, one arc searchlight, one field telephone.

**Tanks:** Heavy armoured. Crew: 1 lieutenant, 2 troopers, 1 NCO; armament: 7.5cm high velocity gun (HE shell), heavy machine gun, 2 smoke mortars. Max speed 40kph.

**Motorcycles:** Half-tracked with sidecar, light armour. Crew: 2 troopers; armament: 1 heavy machine gun. Maximum speed 60 kph.

**Steel Bridge:** Heavy road bridge with rails sunk in concrete for trains, will take weight of any vehicle on plateau but is not wide enough for more than one to pass. Guarded by 1 NCO, 5 troopers.

**Footbridge:** Narrow wooden structure, breaking strain 3 tonnes, width does not allow any vehicle except motorcycles to use.

**Gatehouse:** Guarded by two troopers with two dogs.

**Building 1:** Disused storehouse occupied by Germans. Room 1 is used as a guard room, holds 15 troops. Room 2 holds 2 NCOs and 1 trooper, plus a field telephone, filing cabinets etc. Room 3 holds 12 hostages (8 men, 2 women, 2 children), plus minimal furniture, bedding, etc.

The building itself is of brick and timber construction. Parked in front of the building is a tank, externally intact but missing various engine and gun parts. It has been cannibalised to repair the other tanks and is totally unusable.

**Building 2:** This building was constructed as the rail control room and coal depot for the complex but is now also used by the German commandant as his headquarters. 1: Locked store shed holding railway sleepers, oil lamps, engine parts etc. 2: Locked store shed holding coal. 3: Point control levers, indicators, etc. The room is occupied by two Norwegian civilian railway workers and three troopers. 4: Military communications room. The room holds two radio transmitters, the field telephone switchboard, a map table, and filing cabinets, and is occupied by four troopers and NCOs. 5: Commandant's office. Occupied by the commandant — UPPA98789, Auto pistol, skills Pistol-2, Rifle-1, Command-3, SMG-1, and two lieutenants and an NCO. This building is also of timber and brick construction.

**Building 3:** Purpose-built barracks, constructed of steel-reinforced concrete. At any given time the building will be occupied by 1d6+6 troopers. If the motorcycle teams are not needed elsewhere they will also be in this building. The NCO's office holds 1-3 NCOs and 1-2 troopers, and is fitted with a field telephone.

**Building 4:** As building 3. If the tanks are not in action their crews are also based in this building, with the tanks parked outside.

**Crane:** This is a large diesel powered crane (TL 5) capable of lifting several tonnes. The engine is cold and will take 1d6-1 rounds to start, extremely noisily.

**Train:** The train is loaded with most of the heavy water produced by the factory over several months, and is due to leave at dawn preceded by troops on foot and accompanied by parallel road patrols with air reconnaissance.

Car A is an open wagon, and is to hold the Norwegian hostages next day. The engine (B) holds a German civilian stoker and is guarded by four troopers, all armed with SMGs. Car C is a wagon with high lightly armoured sides, and holds four troopers with a heavy machine gun, a light mortar, and a pack radio transmitter. The sides can be dropped to give the machine gun a clear field of fire.

Cars D, E and F each hold eight 20-litre containers of Heavy Water, the containers being made of glass inside steel canisters, chained and padlocked to the floor, and weighing 50kg. Each car is guarded by four troopers, with another inside the car. Car G is a flatbed wagon carrying a light anti-aircraft gun, 5cm HE shells, auto-loading, with 3 crew (2 troopers, 1 NCO) plus a pack radio. Car H is the control car, a lightly armoured closed wagon containing two lieutenants and three NCOs with two radio transmitters. The car is fitted with two heavy machine guns firing through slits, and stores on board include a pack flame-thrower, medical supplies, and tools for railbed repair. Four extra lengths of track are fixed to the car's side. When the train leaves next morning this car will also carry the German Commandant.

**Upper Turbine Building:** This is a massive reinforced concrete structure with spotlights fixed along its walls at regular intervals. There are two pairs of locked steel doors on its east side, both guarded by troopers with light machine guns occupying small sentry boxes (A).

The building's interior is brightly lit, and is dominated by six huge turbo-electric generators, each 4 metres high. Numerous EHT cables run from these generators to the ceiling cable network and to large transformer and rectifier units along the south and east walls (C). There is a series of large valve control boxes with protruding wheel handles along the north and south walls, manual backups for electrical valves operated from the control room (D). Six troopers patrol the main floor.

The control room (E) is a glass windowed cabin on a steel scaffold three metres above the main floor level, occupied by three Norwegian engineers and an NCO. There is a long control panel under the window along the west side of this room, operating the generators, valves, etc. It is possible to use this panel to cut power to the complex's buildings and to the lower turbine and distribution centre; the latter would black out parts of the nearby town including the local hospital. If the water valves were also closed power would be lost throughout the town and for some miles around, including the supply to the lower Luftwaffe base. If power is cut to the complex only the radio and field telephone systems will continue to operate, since they are battery powered. There is a military field telephone and a civilian telephone in this room, and an alarm button.

**Catwalk:** The catwalk between the turbine building and the factory is a slippery steel structure, with locked steel doors at each end. Steps run up from each end of the catwalk to the roof of the relevant building. These steps are used by the AA gunners stationed on the building roofs. The catwalk is also spotted.

**Factory:** Another massive concrete structure, also spotted. There are bolted sliding steel doors in the east and west walls, guarded by troopers in sentry boxes (A). The building's interior is brightly lit, divided into two sections by a 4 metre high brick partition, pierced by a pair of locked metal doors.

In the NE corner of the north section is a glass-windowed office (B) holding the works manager, his secretary, and a German lieutenant. There are 3kg of platinum electrodes in the factory safe (X). The room also holds a field telephone and a civilian telephone, plus an alarm button. South and west of the office are machine tools and workbenches (C). By day 10-15 Norwegian civilians work there, at night 1-6. Four troopers and an NCO roam this area.

Parked by the steps to the gantry between this building and the turbine building are a fork lift truck, charged for 50 rounds use and capable of lifting 350kg, (D) with three trolleys which the truck can tow. The trolleys have independent lever-operated brakes which are normally kept on when not in use. In the factory corner by the east doors are three large drums of industrial ether, (E). If these are pierced ether will spill over the floor and will ignite with any spark, for up to a 5d6 fireball depending on the amount spilled. Each drum holds 50 litres of ether. Ether is also a powerful anaesthetic.

The south part of the factory is dominated by 40 large electrolysis units, each connected to several pipes and cables on a complicated supporting frame. The cables run down from a ceiling network, while the pipes run along the frames. Each electrolytic unit is in three main parts — an upper electrical chamber in which water is 'cracked' at high voltages to produce minute quantities of Deuterium and Oxygen, a middle low





voltage arc chamber which combines the gases to form Heavy Water, and a lower condensation chamber and collection flask which holds the liquid once refined. The flask of each unit holds 150 grammes of Heavy Water, and is inside a metal jacket bolted to the unit. It takes 2 rounds to remove each flask. Two German and one Norwegian civilians work at various control boxes (F) around the walls. A German lieutenant sits at a table (G) next to field and civilian telephones and an alarm button.

#### MODULE 8: Allied Military Operations

The shipment of heavy water from the plant to Germany is known to the Allies, who have made various plans to attack the factory and train. At eleven PM the night before the train is due to leave, a mixed group of Resistance fighters and Royal Marine Commandos (who landed by glider two days earlier) will attack the German Commandants office then attempt to free the hostages from building 1. This operation is primarily to divert Nazi attention from a larger group who are mining the track and preparing various ambushes along the route. The group raiding the complex are a Commando Lieutenant, two NCOs and ten troopers, all armed with blades, strangling wires and silenced light machine guns (modified Sten) and eleven resistance fighters armed with machine pistols, blades, and grenades. All Commandos have skill level 2 with all weapons carried plus Brawling-1. Commando NCOs have skill level 3 with blades and Brawling-2. The Commando Lieutenant has the same skills as his NCOs plus Command-2. Resistance fighters have skill level 1 with all weapons. The group also have a bazooka +15 rounds. All are unarmoured, should have their characteristics rolled as randomly-encountered troopers [p39 Supplement 1], and carry additional equipment such as skis, ropes, etc.

A secondary objective of this operation, should it prove possible, is for the group to attack the train or factory. This should only be undertaken given perfect conditions.

Unknown to the raiding party, the RAF also plan to attack the factory at 2am next morning. This attack will be made by up to 12 heavy bombers, without escort, each dropping 8 tonnes of bombs (HE). The RAF are unaware of the Commando operation.

#### MODULE 9: Psychological Reactions of Humans to Ksiffchi

Reactions of humans to Ksiffchi vary considerably according to cultural background, education, etc:

Dice Roll	GERMANS	NORWEGIANS	BRITONS
2	Disbelief	Disbelief	Disbelief
3	Fear	Fear	Disbelief
4	Superstitious Awe*	Superstitious Awe*	Fear
5	Confusion	Superstitious Awe*	Fear
6	Confusion	Confusion	Confusion
7	Disgust	Confusion	Confusion
8	Hostility	Confusion	Confusion
9	Hostility	Hostility	Hostility
10-12	No reaction**	No reaction**	No reaction**

\* Both German and Norwegian legends include creatures resembling Ksiffchi, such as kobolds and trolls. Some individuals may believe they are supernatural beings.

\*\* This means that individuals react as they would to an unexpected human intrusion, and may imply that the person concerned is either short-sighted or drunk.

Modifiers to the above roll are: Intelligence 8+, +1, Education 8+, +1, Intelligence 5-, -1, Education 5-, -1. Reactions rolled on the above table are likely to be of short duration, especially in combat.

#### MODULE 9A: Ksiffchi Reactions to Humans

Without exception all Ksiffchi find humans to be remarkably ugly, and this will make it very difficult for them to distinguish men from women and military from civilians. They will find it impossible to distinguish between Norwegian, German, and British combatants. The only identification they are likely to make without difficulty is that of children.

#### MODULE 10: Referees Notes

**General:** This scenario should be played with the aid of *Traveller Books 1-5*, plus *Supplement 1: 1001 Characters*. Two additional publications likely to be useful are *Games Workshop's ISS Ship Files* and *Paranoia Press' Scouts and Assassins*. The scenario can be played in two ways. The first pits the referee, playing all non-Ksiffchi characters, against the party. In the second method players take on Ksiffchi and German roles, suitable characters being the German commandant, the lieutenants in charge of the factory and the train, and the tank commanders. Referees using the first method of play should give players modules 1-6, and can optionally accompany modules 2 and 3 with a simplified world map omitting all place names and showing the plant's position, and module 6 with a simplified outline map of the complex showing buildings and permanent installations only, without labels.

Referees overseeing the Ksiffchi vs German variant should give the above information to the Ksiffchi players and module 7 with the detailed map of the site to the German players, and control the Allies' operations themselves. It should be remembered that if the suggested assignment of player characters for the German team is followed characters would only know of each other's activities by radio messages, field telephone, or

direct observation.

Referees may find the following additional data helpful.

**Module 1:** The background to the privateer attack is a complicated network of trade rivalry involving several spacefaring civilisations. The Ksiffchi are not primary participants in this conflict, but tend to sell arms and equipment to all sides.

**Module 2:** An accurate Ksiffchi analysis of Earth in 1943 AD would be: X8669786G.

The description of Earth's atmosphere as tainted is a fiction, designed to stop chlorophyll pedlars visiting the planet. If the crew wear filter masks as directed it is unlikely they will realise this, since most have only experienced it as a synthetic drug and are unaware or have forgotten that it can occur naturally on some worlds. If masks are not worn Esed Pwac will recognise the smell sooner or later, and may desert her colleagues in order to investigate.

Elapsed time is 144 years between the original survey and the *Green Horizon's* visit. The figure can be found by consulting navigation data and converting Ksiffchi years to Terran. However, there is no way of finding Terran dates or place names from the library data since its compilers simply ignored this sort of trivia.

**Module 3:** See notes for module 2.

**Module 4:** All data is as listed. However, it should be noted that the ship now has only enough fuel for a takeoff, normal manoeuvres, and one Jump-2.

It is recommended that referees study the characteristics of all combat equipment with care, especially the Battle Armour and Plasma Gun. Both of these devices are shipped with discharged power packs to avoid accidents, and will need at least 6 hours assembly, adjustment, and charging before they are ready for use.

The ship is painted dark blue with orange stripes on wing edges, scoop intakes, jump drive and hatches, and fluorescent red identification marks.

**Module 5:** Ksiffchi usually ignore the fact that they possess belly pouches, which are normally only used by females in the first two weeks after birth of their young. However, these pouches are excellent hiding places for small weapons or tools and at their discretion referees may remind players of this fact.

An additional effect of chlorophyll addiction (apart from its social stigma) is a slowing of reflexes, giving a DM of -1 on all initiative and reaction rolls.

**Module 6:** As already suggested a simplified sketch map of the area can be supplied to augment this module.

**Module 7:** The area surrounding the power station and factory is regularly reconnoitred by the German Army and Luftwaffe. If the ship is landed in the open without camouflage it will be noticed on a roll of 8+ each day, DM +1 per day. There are several ways of hiding the ship, the simplest being to spray it with white paint (raising observation roll to 9+ without modifiers) and more effectively but almost as easily by burying it in fire fighting foam or snow (observation roll 11+, no modifiers). For maximum security the ship can be hidden underwater, which makes casual observation impossible.

For the purposes of this scenario it is assumed that the ship makes a landing at night, the crew prepare for the raid throughout the night and next day, then attack the next night. If the crew attack earlier the situation will be essentially unchanged except that there will be no Allied attack to divert German attention. If the crew attack after dawn next day the train will have left, taking most of the Heavy Water and roughly a third of the German forces with it.

German forces available as reinforcements from the town are a maximum of 3 tanks as described in module 7, 8 armoured cars (light armour, turret machine gun, max. speed 80koh), and 5 trucks each holding 20 troopers.

Weather for the night following the landing is clear at first with some snow after 1am until mid-morning, with the following afternoon and night clear and extremely cold and local open water freezing to a depth of several inches by the next morning.

There is a slight chance (roll 11+) that German observers will notice the ships landing, although it will be reported as a bomber crash or glider landing. There is an equal chance that the landing will be observed by Norwegians. If the Germans are aware of the landing the number of flights over the area will double, giving two chances per day of observation.

**Module 8:** The Allied attacks are supposed to be on different nights, but there has been a breakdown in communications. If the Allied and Ksiffchi raids coincide each is likely to attract the others attention, and an exchange of fire over the width of the complex is quite possible given the weapons used by each group.

**Module 9:** Reaction of dogs to Ksiffchi and vice versa - on a roll of 8+ dogs will react to Ksiffchi with extreme terror, and make ferocious attacks with a DM of +1. On a roll of 10+ this reaction turns to panic and dogs will flee, disobeying their handlers' orders. Ksiffchi will not feel any unusual reaction to dogs, but will feel no compunction in killing such obviously dangerous animals.

While this scenario is not based closely on historical events it was inspired by incidents of the Second World War, especially Allied operations against the German-controlled heavy water plant in Telemark, Norway. Interested referees might find it useful to see the film *The Heroes of Telemark* or read any of the standard works on Norwegian resistance operations in the war.

Starbase is a regular department devoted to readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.

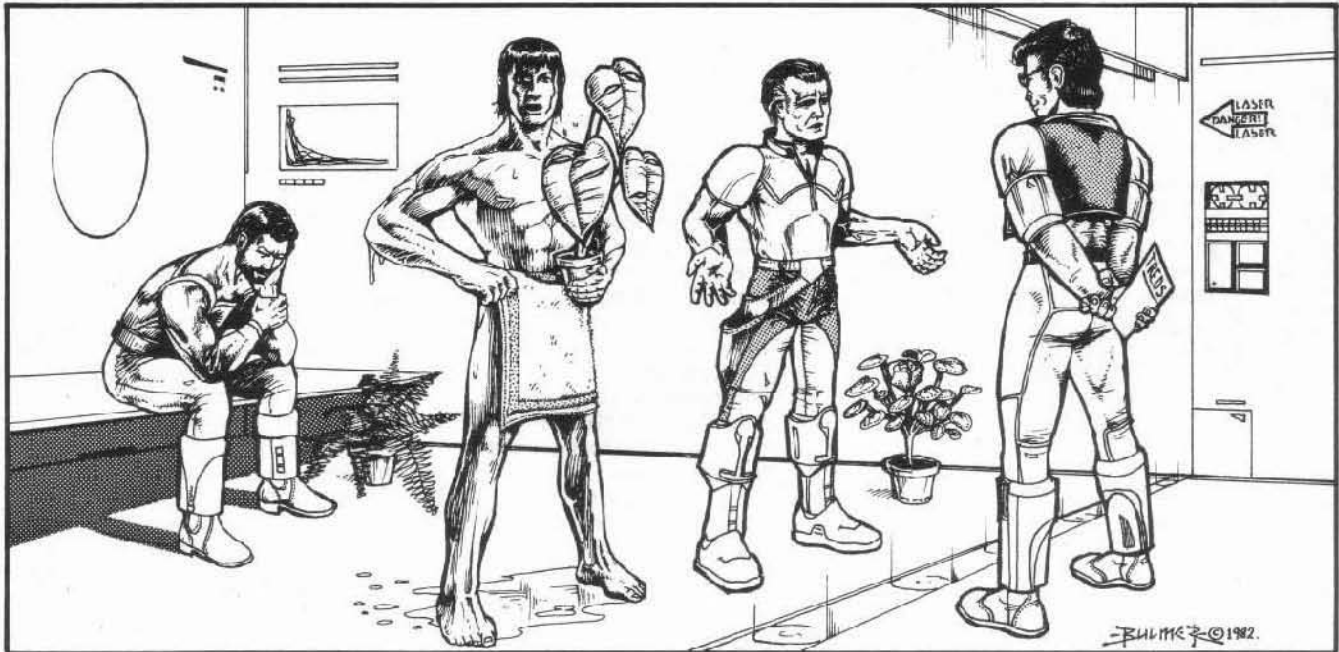
The group of players pause expectantly. Their caller has just finished outlining the next course of action they wish to take, and all eyes are focused

on the referee. The referee (whose eyes are glazed) moves his lips but no coherent sound is produced. With an effort, he clears his throat and says, 'Shall

we have a tea break while I think about your next move?' The players may or may not realise it but...

## ...We have a Referee Malfunction!

by Bob McWilliams



There are times when even the most imaginative, far sighted and knowledgeable of referees will be unable to deal with a player's question, lose his notes, forget what was going to happen next etc. The ability to think on your feet is a necessary survival trait in such circumstances and, as I have stressed in the past, it is as well to be prepared before a playing session. This includes the *Traveller* Referee's Emergency Drill for Survival (TREDS), Mark One, and I would be pleased to hear any suggestions that could be incorporated into a Mark Two, improved version.

To some extent the execution of TREDS depends on the type of calamity that has befallen the unfortunate referee so when the inevitable happens, you will have to pick the solution that seems best. I suggest you prepare and practice for the worst — have a 'dry run' or two. The shades of *'Hitch-hiker'* seems to permeate the Drill, so I should acknowledge the influence of Douglas Adams for providing the correct attitude to employ when disaster strikes.

1. Don't Panic! (Naturally this is paramount).

2. Whatever you choose to do, it must appear to be exactly what you were expecting to do at this point in the proceedings — the show must go on. Remember that you are in the business of conjuring an illusion that the players can inhabit. Therefore, without hesitation, launch into something that sounds interesting and that will cover you for the remainder of the playing session. However, sometimes you can't avoid a problem — don't despair! For example: the referee has just discovered that he has forgotten to bring *Book 7* (with all the combat tables) and none of the players has one either. The player characters are facing a group of argumentative Krull (ten foot high warrior arthropods).

'Right', you say, 'this gives us the chance to try my new Real Time Combat Perception Analysis System, which is based on perceived targeting rather than actual target size (a good deal of technical jargon is rather useful camouflage). All we need are your character's UPP and skills, plus six drinking straws'. And so on.

The rules, any rules, can be made up as you go along (but for heaven's sake don't send them to *Starbase*).

3. Attack is often the best form of defence. Especially if you attack in an unexpected direction — once the players are off-balance it is much easier to control them and to shepherd play in a direction you can cope with. For example: the referee has mislaid a vital set of notes dealing with the course of events this session. He is thus left stranded without a clue how to proceed in his intended adventure. Attack, remember.

'Player A, describe the contents of your stateroom. . . I see, no pot plants? None at all? OK, Player B, your stateroom?' (Goes through each player's stateroom, getting a description of the entire contents of each and incidentally wasting over a quarter of an hour's playing time). 'So, not one of you has a single pot plant — not surprising, I suppose, on a tramp merchant'. By now the players are worried. Is their lack of an obvious affection for plants going to get them into hot water? The referee has thought up what will happen next, during all those boring stateroom descriptions. The equivalent of a Romany caravan ship heaves to alongside and the players are encouraged to go over by rota and spend some credits. Naturally along with the clothespegs, peat turves and lace shawls they just happen to have some pot plants. Should the players buy some and fend off whatever they think the referee is plotting, or is the danger exactly those pot plants? By now the referee has had plenty of time to make up a new plot.

4. Total existence failure. This should only be used when you have really screwed things up. Very simply, the players are happily involved in doing something (keep them busy) when they are informed that everything just stops. They seem to have passed out, and wake up several parsecs away in the local jail or equivalent. How did they get there, why, and what happened in between? The players must try to find out. The referee *has* to find out, and before the next playing session.

And the best of luck to you all out there. ■



Starbase is a regular department edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue we have the winner of the Striker Design Competition WD32.

**LSP**

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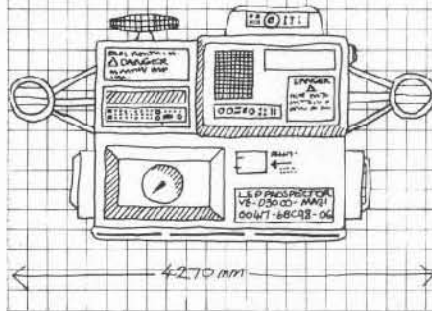
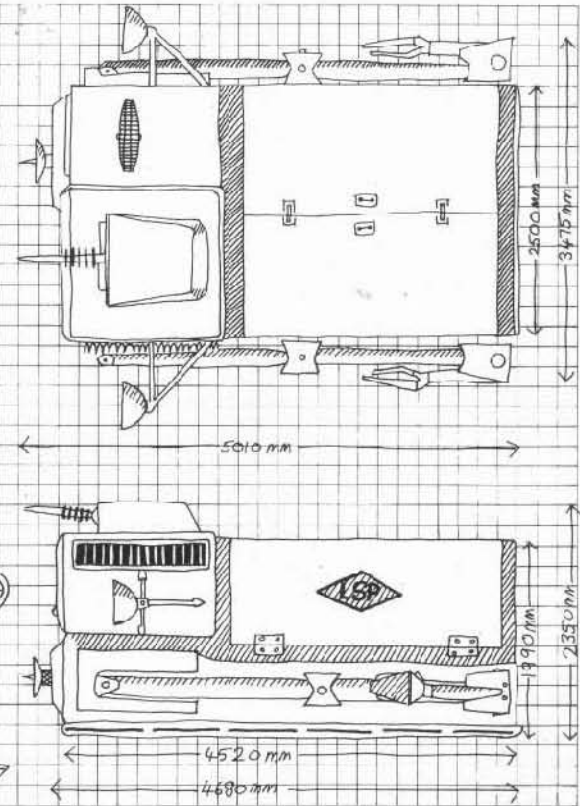
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The Prospector features sophisticated detection, analysis and handling equipment; a spacious (16m<sup>3</sup>) cargo bay; impressive range and performance figures; and that famous LSP reliability, compact enough to fit into a standard air/raft bay, yet versatile enough — thanks to its advanced design — to fulfil any task you can think of.

Available from any reputable dealer, or direct from LSP at Stroudon/Lurion (0707). Price Cr2,850,000.

LING-STANDARD PRODUCTS  
VG - D3000 - MA31 PROSPECTOR

**Specifications**  
 Dimensions: 4680mm x 3475mm x 2340mm.  
 Mass: 13983kg unladen. Max 29983kg laden.  
 Performance: Speed 362kph. Acceleration 1.334G. Range 64,780km.  
 Fuel Usage: 8.9986 litres/hour.  
 Power: 5.0MW Halonic Micro powerplant.  
 Forelle Gravitic generators, 40,000kg thrust.  
 Electronics: Ahayin BDA-13 drone brain.  
 Zaning computer and analysis systems.  
 34CM Farsight radar.  
 Equipment: Lightsword 2000kw laser with Type 6.3 Firecontrol. Twin Wallace-Sinclair Workarms.



We have had a good response to this, hence the delay in announcing a winner. Most entries concentrated on vehicles for hostile environments and there ended up being little to choose between several entries; my final decision was based on general design ability, attention to detail and keeping to the overall spirit of Traveller. The winner is Stephen Tempest's Prospector vehicle, (which appears above). Stephen wins a box of 20 Citadel Traveller miniatures of his own choice.

**Ling-Standard Products VG-D3000 Drone Vehicle**

Originally designed as an asteroid mining craft, this vehicle proved so popular that it was converted to fulfil many different roles. Since it does not require a crew and can be controlled from great distances, it has proved ideal for transporting dangerous cargoes — such as explosives or radioactives — or for entering hazardous areas, to rescue survivors, put out fires, and similar tasks.

**Basic Version (cargo carrying)**

The vehicle is unmanned and mounts no weaponry.  
 Height: 2m. Width: 2.5m. Length: 4.5m. Total volume: 22.5m<sup>3</sup>.  
 Weight: 28.3428 tons. Price: Cr2,507,894. Tech level: 13. Control unit: incorporates radio, computer and mapbox. Cr102,750, 17.1kg, range 50km. Movement: Maximum, 600kph; Cruise, 450kph; NOE, 120kph. Agility-7. Armour: 10 on all faces. Target size DMs: +2 low, no high hits. Equipment: TL13 drone brain, power-1; 2 searchlights, image enhancement; computer, TL8 avionics; sealed environment; 2 remote handling arms (weight limit 2 tons each); 16m<sup>3</sup> cargo space.  
 Power: 4.5 megawatt fusion powerplant consumes 6.75 litres of fuel per hour; fuel capacity is 2430 litres, enough for 360 hours (15 days). Range 162,000km. Grav generators produce 45 tons thrust, giving 1.59G acceleration.

**Radioactive Materials Carrier Version**

This version is fitted with a damper box, capacity 12m<sup>3</sup>, instead of the cargo bay. Price is Cr3,807,894; other statistics as above.

**Firefighting Version**

Virtually the same vehicle as above, but with a high-pressure hose in place of one of the workarms. Carries 16m<sup>3</sup> of water or other chemical. Costs Cr2,507,494.

**Rescue Version**

Contains life support for 6 passengers, medical equipment, and an automatic treatment centre. The workarms are designed to be capable of delicate work such as lifting injured people. Price: Cr2,669,194. Weight: 17.0552 tons. Capable of 2.64G acceleration. Speed: Maximum, 1770kph; Cruise 1328kph; NOE 120kph. Agility-18. Range 478,080km.

**Asteroid Mining Version**

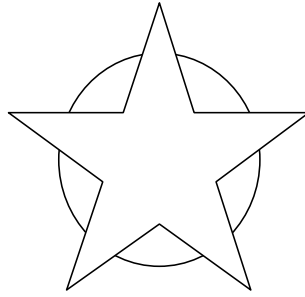
A larger powerplant, taking up room given over to fuel and generators in the other types, provides the power required for a small mining laser.

The vehicle is unmanned. It mounts a pulse laser in a remote turret, with basic (TL6) fire control. Mount adds 0.3m to height. Price: Cr2,744,369. Weight: 29.9827 tons. Movement: Maximum, 360kph; Cruise, 270kph; NOE, 90kph. Agility-4. Movement effects on fire: None. Target size DMs: +2 low, +0 high. Extra Equipment: Radar, power-1000; TL6 direct fire control; stabilization. Power: 6MW fusion powerplant, consuming 9 litres of fuel per hour. Fuel capacity is 2160 litres, enough for 240 hours; range 64,800km. Grav generators produce 40 tons thrust, giving an acceleration of 1.3G. Weapons: The pulse laser has a single lens and an input of 2MW. It engages 1 target, and has a spotting DM of +1. Ranges: Effective: 100(38); Long: 200(38); Extreme: 350(38).

**Notes**

Many Type J seekers will carry a drone mining vehicle in their air/raft bay; second-hand versions are easily obtainable for around MCr1.5 — MCr2. It is used for extracting and collecting nuggets of ore from the asteroids, a dangerous task which could otherwise only be done by the miners themselves, wearing vacc suits.

Due to their versatility, the LSP drones can be found in many different situations. They serve as exploration craft, in-flight refuelling stations, construction drones, crop sprayers, mobile isolation wards, prison vehicles (since there is no pilot who can be overpowered), and virtually anything else imaginable. One unofficial use is by criminals; especially with improved fire control the mining drone is ideal for large-scale heists and armed robbery, all done in perfect safety and with a much reduced chance of being caught. ■



# The Imperial Secret Service

by Robert McMahon

(First published in White Dwarf 27)

A new Traveller career. Referees using this system will need Traveller books 1-5 (the basic set plus Mercenary and High Guard)

## Background

Although every service of the Imperium maintains its own intelligence section, such as the Covert Survey Bureau, Naval Intelligence, ITTO Intelligence, etc, the major part of Imperial intelligence work is carried out by the Imperial Secret Service. This is a massive organisation estimated to employ some forty million persons throughout known space.

The service is divided into three sections: Special Intelligence, which undertakes the more important and secretive missions; the General Duty Branch, which performs the "dirty work" and general operations; and the Detached Duty Branch to which all retired members of the Service belong.

## Enlistment

At the beginning of any term of service after his first, a character may request a transfer from his current service to the ISS. A character may make a general application or a special application.

The general application requires a roll of 9+ on 2d6 to successfully transfer; DMs are: Stren 7+, +1, Intel 8+, +2; per assignment to Intelligence School, +4; per level of Streetwise skill, +1. The successful applicant enters Special Intelligence if the modified score was 15+; if the score was 9-14, he enters the General Duty Branch. An unsuccessful applicant remains in his original service.

The special application requires a modified roll of 15+ on 2d6 for success; DMs are: Intel 9+, +2, Educ A+, +2, Social 9+, +1; per assignment to Intelligence School, +4; per level of expertise in Streetwise or Bribery, +1. The successful applicant is assigned to Special Intelligence. Unsuccessful applicants must continue in their original service, with a DM of -1 on all rolls for promotion that term.

If once rejected, a character may apply again at the beginning of a new term; such attempts have a cumulative DM of -2 per previous rejection to the enlistment roll.

## Service

The ISS provides no training programme for recruits; the characters previous service is assumed to have provided this.

Assignments are handled in the same way as assignments in Book 4, Mercenary, or Book 5, High Guard. Each one lasts one year. Special Intelligence Agents may only receive one promotion per term unless one of their assignments for the term is Imperial Attaché, in which case two are possible. General Duty Branch agents may receive one promotion per year, and if promoted from Rank E6, are transferred automatically to Special Intelligence with a rank of O1. Ranks are as follows:

GENERAL DUTY BRANCH	SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE
E1 Field Operative 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	O1 Lieutenant
E2 Field Operative 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	O2 Captain
E3 Field Operative 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	O3 Major
E4 Imperial Agent 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	O4 Lieutenant Commander
E5 Imperial Agent 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	O5 Commander
E6 Imperial Agent 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	O6 Subsector Marshall

## ASSIGNMENT TABLE (Roll once per year)

Dice	Special Intelligence	General Duty Branch
2	Military Duty	Military Duty
3	Infiltration	Military Duty
4	Infiltration	Infiltration
5	Infiltration	Communications
6	Communications	Communications
7	Base Duty	Base Duty
8	Training	Training
9	Surveillance	Surveillance
10	Special	Surveillance
11	Special	Special
12	Special	Special

**Military Duty:** The character is posted to an active military unit as an intelligence officer/operative.

**Infiltration:** The character is planted in hostile territory to infiltrate the enemy's command structure, survey planetary defences or some other dangerous mission.

**Communications:** The character serves in a communications unit linking intelligence units in the field with subsector command. This frequently involves starship travel.

**Base Duty:** The character is held in reserve for future operations and is often used for administrative work for the service.

**Training:** General training to improve the character's specialist skills.

**Surveillance:** Observation of enemy agents; military units and fleets, both within the Imperium and beyond.

**Special:** The character has been selected for a special assignment, roll 1d6 (DM +1 if Special Intelligence agent):

1: **Survival Training.** Roll 3+ on 1d6 to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: Vacc Suit, Survival, Hunting

2: **Cross-Service Training:** The character is posted at random to another service; roll 1d6, with 1 indicating Navy, 2 Marines, 3 or 4 Army, 5 Scouts and 6 Merchants. The character may select any branch of service, and roll for one skill on the service skills of MOS tables for that branch.

3: **Specialist school:** The character receives a level of skill in one of the following areas of expertise (roll 1d6): 1 indicating Demolitions, 2 Commo, 3 Forgery, 4 Admin, 5 Interrogation, 6 Computer

4: **Medical Academy.** Roll 3+ (1d6) to receive a level of Medical expertise, and 5+ (1d6) to receive a level of expertise in the following skills: Admin, Computer.

5: **Ground Operations College.** Roll 4+ (on 1d6) to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: Streetwise, Gun Cbt, Admin.

6: **Space Operations College:** Roll 4+ (1d6) for each of the following skills to receive a level of expertise: Pilot, Ship Tactics, Vacc Suit.

7: **Imperial Attaché/Aide.** Roll 1d6; on a roll of 1-4, the character is assigned as an Imperial Attaché, receiving +1 social standing and an automatic promotion of one grade. On a 5-6 the character has been assigned as an Imperial Aide, receives +1 social standing and may select his next assignment, other than Imperial Attaché/Aide.

## Re-Enlistment

A character may re-enlist in the ISS on a roll of 6+ to serve another term. He may re-enlist automatically in his previous service, or any in which he has cross-trained.

## Multiple School Assignments

The ISS has such excellent instructors that an unlimited level of skill can be gained from such assignments.

## Mustering Out

Mustering out benefits are received from the character's initial service, in the normal way. Characters who retire (not fail the re-enlistment throw) are retained in the Detached Duty Branch. At the beginning of each game year thereafter the referee rolls 2d6 to determine if the service requires the character to perform any mission that year: a roll of 2-8 indicates no task assigned, 9 mercenary service, 10 surveillance, 11 kidnapping or rescue, and 12 assassination. The service pays well for work done in this way, and in addition members of the Detached Duty Branch draw a handsome pension, calculated as Cr 5000 p.a. per term of service over the fourth, and Cr 5000 per rank in Special Intelligence. Should a character fail in a task, he is removed from the Detached Duty Branch. Further details are the province of the referee.

## ASSIGNMENT RESOLUTION TABLES

	Mill Duty	Infiltration	Communication	Base Duty	Training	Surveillance
Survival	5+	6+	4+	Auto	Auto	4+
Decoratio n	7+	6+	10	Non e	Non e	9+
Promotion	6+	6+	10	(8+)	(7+)	9+
Skill	5+	4+	7+	9+	6+	8+

DMs: For promotion, +1 if intel 9+; for survival, +1 if Streetwise 3+. Figures in brackets indicate that Special Intelligence agents may not make the roll.

Decorations: If the required score is exceeded by 0-2, the MCFU is awarded; the character has a DM of +1 on all promotion rolls that term. If the score is exceeded by 3-5, the MCG is awarded, yielding a DM of +2 on promotion rolls; if the score is exceeded by 6 or more, the SHE is awarded, with attendant +3 DM.

## Skill Tables

The skill table a character may consult if he rolls the requisite number for a skill depends on his current assignment. Agents on Military Duty may use their Branch, Combat or ISS tables; Infiltration allows use of the Branch, ISS or Underground tables; Communication, Branch, ISS or Space tables; Base Duty, Branch or ISS tables; Training, the Branch table only; and Surveillance, the Branch, ISS or Underground tables.

	Special Intelligence BRANCH	General Duty BRANCH	ISS
1	Gun Cbt	Gun Cbt	Vehicle
2	Liaison	Brawling	Carousing
3	Computer	Interrogation	+1 Stren
4	Forgery	Forgery	+1 Dext
5	Bribery	Electronics	+1 Endur
6	Leader	Demolitions	+1 Intel

	Space	Combat	Underground
1	Zero G Cbt	Gun Cbt	Gun Cbt
2	Ship's Boat	Gun Cbt	Streetwise
3	Vacc Suit	Hvy Wpns	Streetwise
4	Commo	Tactics	Liaison
5	Pilot	Medical	Carousing
6	Ship Tactics	Interrogation	Bribery

Vehicle, Gun Cbt and Hvy Wpns skills require immediate further specification.

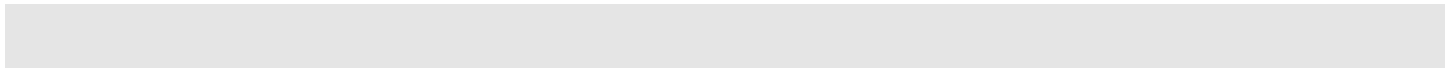


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Halfway Station Presents...

# Expanding Universe



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*White Dwarf Classic Traveller Articles*  
*by Andy Slack*



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# Expanding Universe

*White Dwarf Classic Traveller Articles*  
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## Expanding Universe Part 1

*Additions to Traveller Rules by Andy Slack*  
*Originally published in White Dwarf 13 - © Games Workshop Limited 1979*

### SKILLS AND THEIR USE

#### General Use of Skills

Normally, for combat, 8+ must be rolled to succeed, with a positive Die Modifier (DM) equal to expertise level in the relevant skill. Thus a throw of 6 plus expertise level 2 gives 8 - a success. For consistency, it would be best to adopt this system throughout, as the existing rules produce a great variety of DMs in other skills.

Parrying can be introduced into blade combat; the defending player simply subtracts his expertise level from his opponent's attack roll.

Similarly, if for any reason another character has booby-trapped or jinxed an item, the dice are rolled, the expertise level (hereinafter denoted by EL) of the operator is added and the EL of the jinxer is subtracted; a score of 8+ after all other modifiers have been taken into account means the device will operate correctly.

#### Persons Without Relevant Expertise

A person attempting something he has no skill in is subject to a DM of -3, additionally he may well use the wrong tools or technique. So the player rolls 3D6; if the result is less than or equal to his personal Intelligence, then he has guessed the correct tool or technique to use. If the result is greater, he has picked the wrong way to do it, and is subject to a further DM of -2, making -5 in all. (Referees may prefer to use Education, not Intelligence, or two dice instead of three.) Either way he adds to this his EL (if any) in Jack-of-Trades, as a positive DM.



This makes Jack-of-Trades expertise very valuable, especially if a player should reach a high level. So the J-O-T skill should be considered to be an inborn ability, as I believe was intended. Thus it cannot be learnt after leaving the Services, or increased by most normal means.

### Effects of Culture Shock

All player characters are supposed to have expertise 1/2 in all weapons. This has its drawbacks though. The hero is, shall we say, an Army veteran. All his life he has been using rifles etc. But stick him on a low tech level planet and he instinctively knows how to use a *kontos*. Players should be larger than life; but not to such an extent.

Players should have expertise 1/2 in all devices that are *common* on their home planet (except exotic ones like starships, fusion power plants etc.). Each character is assigned his home planet; its tech level is the one he is familiar with. It must be noted on his character sheet. The numerical difference between the character's tech level and the tech level of any device he is attempting to use we call D. There are two basic possibilities: the character has been trained in something similar (or at least has heard of the thing) or he hasn't. If he has, he is subject to a negative DM equal in size to D/EL. Example: The character has Rifle-4, and is given a thermonuclear phase-interlocked grunge rifle produced on a world two tech levels higher than his home planet. His DM on the to-hit roll would be -1/2, and is therefore ignored (If the grunge rifle had been 8 tech levels higher, the DM would have been -2.) If he hasn't then we must find out if he looks at it and thinks, "Hmm, that looks trigger shaped. I'll pull that bit." If the device is of a higher tech level than the would-be operator, the personal characteristic used is Intelligence; if the tech level is equal to or lower than the operator's, he uses his Education. He rolls 3D6 and adds D. If the result is less than or equal to the characteristic used he has figured it out. (Or he will figure it out - only the referee knows how long it will take. Additional DMs are needed if the object is totally alien, e.g. produced by animate 12' cockroach-eating plants on the Galactic rim.)

### The Invention and Design of Devices

The total number of appropriate expertise levels of those present in the research group must equal twice the tech level of the proposed device, as set by the referee for any chance of success. The referee must work out how long it will take them, and whether additional expertise over and above that required will help or hinder the effort.

To succeed, the group must roll its average Intelligence or less on 3D6. Computer Aided Design can save a lot of wasted effort, so subtract from the roll the sum of the model numbers of the computers used, divided by the number of people involved - effectively raising the average Intelligence.

### Repair and Maintenance of Devices

This aspect of skill use is similar to *Invention and Design* (*Culture Shock* is particularly relevant) and one expertise level is required in the repair crew per tech level of the device, e.g. Level 5 needs one man of EL 5, or two of EL 2 and one of EL 1, and so on.

### Implied Skills

(This section was brought in because at one stage in our campaign we had a player of Engineering-4 who couldn't change the wheel on his car - no Mechanical skill. But for 16 years this man has been sticking melted starships back together with cellotape. This aspect is still under scrutiny, but Pilot, Engineering and Weapon skills have been tackled.)

A Pilot has an implied skill in Ship's Boat equal to half his Pilot expertise level. Thus a man learning Pilot-2 would have Ship's Boat-1. (The culture shock rule should also apply.) A man wishing to learn Pilot skills has to first learn Ship's Boat to level 2. Only then can he become a Pilot. (This only applies on leaving the Services, of course, or nobody could learn Pilot *and* something else.) With regard to engineering skills, Engineer-1 also has implied skills of Electronics-1 and Mechanical-1.

In the matter of weapons, the Umpire must use more discretion: but if a person with Revolver-4 didn't know where the trigger was on an automatic pistol, it would be nonsensical. He might not know any gun maintenance - though I suspect he could make a very good guess - but the firing technique isn't that different. And, as was forcibly pointed out to me during one adventure, a character with both Rifle and Submachinegun skills ought to have vague ideas about the use of automatic rifles.

### Learning by Experience

Each time the character successfully uses a skill in a crisis (lasering a computer simulation doesn't prove very much, I think) he gains experience points equal in number to his Intelligence. One thousand of these can be traded in for another expertise level. Whether to keep separate e.p. records for each skill; sum all e.p.; or - my preference - split them into weapon e.p. and non-weapon e.p. is left to the referee.

Should the character do something he has no skill in, he also gets one e.p. per Intelligence point, but this should be recorded separately. Since it is a much harder way to make a living, only 100 of these e.p. are required to learn a new skill to expertise level one.

It is up to the referee whether the player should be allowed to allocate his new expertise level or skill himself, or whether it should be determined randomly; players will doubtless prefer the former method.

Some check must be kept on how many skills a player can have, though: so add the player's Intelligence to his Education and take that as the maximum number of skills (not experience levels) he can have.

### Language

An amusing way to use Education is in languages. A character speaks his native language with fluency 5. For each point of Education over 5, the player gains another fluency level, to use as he pleases. Thus he may hold it in reserve or learn another tongue. The more fluency levels devoted to a language, the better it will be spoken. Level 5 is only just distinguishable from a native. Level 1 is suitable for "Help!", "Me hungry" and so on. Fluency can be used as a DM on a roll to understand jargon or whispers, or when attempting to communicate something unusual - in which case a very low roll might be insulting to the listener.

If languages are used, it is advisable to have some patois which is vaguely understood by all spacemen and starport officials so that players can speak to someone. (According to our dice, many patrons are Serbo-Croatian, and how many players pick that to learn?) This also gives more point to Education, which didn't seem much use originally.

### Skill in Tactics

Tactical skill is difficult to simulate. In fairly large combats, use simultaneous movement to brief written orders, then Tactics expertise can be used in two ways: first, the tactician can "guess" (translation: he is told by the referee) of hidden forces on the other side; in which case if he muffs the die roll, the referee tells him a false position - so he shouldn't know what he threw on the dice for this, or he'd know he was being lied to and take no notice - and second, the tactician can write his orders, or just move, after seeing what the other side has done that turn. In either case he must throw 8+ to succeed, with DMs of plus his expertise and minus the opponent's tactical expertise. Military personnel should, I think, all have fractional Tactics, especially if commissioned.

### Leader Skills

Leader skill is even worse. However, one may find some use for it, as follows: It influences the behaviour of the leader's minions. If told to do something dangerous, or bribed, or tortured, or not paid for a long time, etc, the minion must roll his Loyalty score or less to obey orders or not betray his boss, as appropriate. His boss may subtract his Leader expertise from the die roll. (Loyalty will be covered next issue.)



Leaders will be eligible for experience points for Leader skill in the following situations:

- On obtaining a commission for his group.
- On successful completion of a mission.
- Each time his DM for expertise on a Loyalty check as detailed above is both necessary and successful.

Military officers should have fractional Leader skill.

## POISONS AND CHEMICAL WARFARE

### Saving Throws

The basic saving throw is successfully achieved by rolling endurance or less on 3D6. This must be done three times. Those failing to save at all take the Tertiary effect of the poison or agent, those saving once take the Secondary effect. Those saving twice take the Primary effect and anyone saving three times in a row has completely avoided any effects of the poison.

### Saving Throw Modifications

Persons in vacc suits are immune to all gaseous poisons; persons in filter masks or respirators gain a DM of -3 to their saving throws against gaseous agents. First aid has the effect of an additional DM to each saving throw of plus or minus the attendant Medical expertise, depending on the medic's feelings about the person he is treating. If several medics are involved, sum their expertise levels to get the DM. Assorted wide- or narrow-spectrum immunisations and antidotes of varying DM may be made available by the referee.

### Masking When Under Gas Attack

To successfully mask himself the individual must throw his dexterity or less on 3D6.

The reason for using 3D6 in these throws is to allow for persons with characteristics over 12. If the referee feels this is too harsh, alternatives are to use two dice, or give a blanket DM of -3 to all saves, thus moving the range of scores from (3-18) down to (0-15), which is a bit gentler or a blanket DM of -2, which means there is a slight chance of a 1 endurance surviving unharmed, and an equal chance of a 15 endurance being poisoned.

### Poisons and Agents

In general, a poison will have previously been rated by the referee in the following:

*Dosage:* This is a relatively simple matter; it is suggested that dosages range from 1-15, where they can usually be determined by a roll of 3D6-3.

*Effects:* All three effects of a poison - that is, primary, secondary and tertiary - must be specified. The referee should draw up a random determination chart or specify all his poisons before commencing play. Possible effects are:

Death	Euphoria	Insanity	Paralysis
Stimulant	Sedative	Hallucinations	Corrosion
Confusion	Tranquiliser	Convulsions	Twitching
Nausea	Choking	Fever	Blistering
Acute pain	Weeping	Blindness	Irritation

Alternative effects are to add or subtract from strength, dexterity, endurance, or intelligence, either permanently or temporarily. Death should always be a tertiary effect.

Stinging animals will generally use some poison that leaves their victims amenable to digestion, such as a sedative or paralysing agent. Persons with expertise in untested skills such as chemist or biologist might be allowed to design their own agents for chemical warfare.

*Speed of Action:* This is given by a simple formula and the characteristics of the poison. The formula is:

$$\text{Time} = \frac{\text{Factor} \times \text{Target Mass} \times \text{Target Endurance}}{\text{Dosage} \times \text{Attacker's Mass}}$$

Where *Time* is the time until the effects of the poison are felt; *Dosage* is as detailed above; *Target Mass* is the victim's mass in kilogrammes (about 70 for an average human male); *Attacker's Mass* is either the weight in kg of the munition delivering the chemical, or the mass in kg of the attacking animal, or the amount in kg of poison introduced into the victim by any other means; *Target Endurance* is either the player's endurance or the amount of damage required to stun an animal.

*Factor* is another item to be specified by the referee; normally roll percentile dice and call this the *Factor* in seconds. Then by working out the formula the referee can warn the adventurer when he first feels something is wrong. It is suggested that the player then has a while to get medical aid before being incapacitated. For example, the referee rolls the player's saves in secret and fails to save at all. Then after the period denoted by *Time* the referee will inform him that he is feeling the primary effect; after another period - not necessarily the same - he is told that he is feeling the secondary effect; and finally after a third period of time he is told he has suffered the tertiary effect. The process should not be irreversible until the tertiary effect is felt. Until that point, help is still possible; if the victim is hospitalised or given medical aid by a medic called in, a fresh set of saves should be made against whatever effects remain to be felt.

### Cumulative Poisons

If a person has, for example, been fed small quantities of a cumulative poison in his feed, or been repeatedly exposed to cumulative toxins, the *Dosage* is regarded as being equal to the sum of the individual *Dosages* the individual has previously received. The same process can be used with catalytic poisons, where one substance has no effect until a dose of a second chemical is administered, whereupon the product of the reaction between the two becomes poisonous.

### Burst Radii of Chemical Munitions

Anyone caught within the burst radius of a chemical munition is regarded as being affected by the agent; he must commence saving throws. If outside the burst radius, he is assumed to escape the effects of the chemical agent. Such agents seem to persist in the burst area for periods of several hours to several days before becoming harmless. Anyone passing through the area in that time must save or take the effects of the agent.

Munition	Launcher	Rough "Attacker's Mass"	Burst Radius in Metres
Grenade	Rifle Grenade Launcher Hand	1 kg	10
"Shell"	Sandcaster	50 kg	35
Missile	Missile Rack	100 kg	50
Bomb	Missile Rack	1000 kg	100



These burst radii are only a rough guide calculated from the burst radii for roughly similar amounts of TNT.

Generally, rain will clear an area more quickly, and the effects will persist longer in vegetated areas. The effects will also be more efficient in confined spaces. Decontaminants are normally available as they may be improvised from such materials as bleach; fire will almost always decontaminate. Military Chemical Warfare Officers can normally specify roughly the *Factor* and *Dosage* of their agents.

After the initial bombardment the agents will naturally tend to spread and thin out saves for each additional 'radius' the victim is away from the burst point. Also, persons outside the burst radius will almost certainly have time to mask themselves.

### "Antique Equivalents" of Chemical Agents

Information on these is surprisingly easy to find, and a trip to the library would well repay the effort. Here are brief details for several war gases:

The details of this section may well be inaccurate as I have little or no chemical knowledge; however, I am fairly confident of their accuracy as they are derived from declassified (and hence out of date) US Army chemical warfare manuals which, to my astonishment, I found on a second hand bookstall in London.

*Phosgene*: A few hours after exposure, the lungs begin to fill with fluid, rendering breathing difficult; this leads eventually to death by anoxia.

*Nerve Gases - Tabun, Sarin, Soman*: These are very similar in effect. In only a few minutes, the victim develops influenza-like symptoms, accompanied by twitching and vomiting followed by confusion and drowsiness, convulsions, and death. The entire process seldom takes more than 15 minutes, and is normally considered irreversible without immediate first aid (injection of atropine tartrate, I am told) and subsequent hospitalisation. Even so, recovery is doubtful.

*Hydrogen Cyanide*: Persons affected by this have an increased respiration rate, and generally die within a few minutes at most.

*Cyanogen Chloride*: This takes several minutes to affect a person. The lungs and exposed skin become irritated; this is followed by a decrease in the respiratory rate and choking, then death.

*Arsine*: Taking up to several days to show its effects, arsine causes headaches and uneasiness, followed by chills and nausea; its victim does not normally die, but remains anaemic thereafter.

*Mustard Gas*: Several hours after inhalation/contact, the victim's eyes and skin become inflamed. Blisters and ulcers on exposed skin follow; then, finally, inflammation of the lungs, throat, and so on, which can prove fatal.

*Nitrogen Mustards*: A group of gases with similar effects; up to three or four days after exposure are required for the full effects to show. First the eyes and skin become inflamed, followed by the blisters characteristic of all mustard type gases, and irritation of the lungs, nose and throat. Then, as a result, loss of voice, followed by fever and severe diarrhoea.

*Lewisite*: A much improved (?) type of mustard gas that acts within a quarter of an hour, first producing blisters and ulcers, then blindness and irritation of the lungs, followed by death.

*Vomiting Gases*: A group (e.g. training and riot control gases) which, like tear gases, are not normally fatal but can be so in confined spaces. They take effect in a few minutes,

irritating the eyes and nose; then a headache and symptoms of a cold appear, followed by acute chest pains, nausea, and vomiting.

*Tear Gases:* There are several of these, all with similar symptoms. They take effect within half a minute normally, irritating the eyes and lungs and causing weeping. Continued exposure results in itching and an effect similar to sunburn on exposed flesh. Severe exposure will cause blisters and nausea.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the members, past and present, of Reading University Wargames Association for their help, suggestions, and above all patience with a referee who changed the rules they were playing under almost weekly.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*This was the first RPG article I ever had published, and was knocked out on an ancient typewriter in a student bedsit in late 1977 when I should have been revising for my exams.*

*Writing these four articles taught me two main lessons: First, the value of a good editor - who can take something you thought was perfect, cut 30% of it out, and produce something that is better than your original piece. And second, how the same ideas are taken more seriously as they move from hand-written notes to typescript to published article.*

*As I look back on this now, it seems dated - most of the rules no longer survive in my games:*

- *Skills and Their Use has been overtaken by the task systems found in most modern RPGs - the DGP task system, used in Travellers' Digest, MegaTraveller and 2300 AD, was adopted as soon as I found it.*
- *Learning by Experience was one of the more durable rules, remaining in use even after Mercenary appeared and introduced the mighty Instruction skill, in fact until the mid-1980s. Traveller has official experience rules now, although those in GURPS and 2300 AD are more to my liking.*
- *Skill in Tactics was eventually replaced in my games by the DGP concept of 'roving DMs' as defined in MegaTraveller, although not until the early 1990s.*
- *Leader Skills remain something for which I have never been able to find or write rules that really please me.*
- *The section on Poisons and Chemical Warfare is the one with which I am now happiest, although these days I would only roll one set of dice and decide which effects applied based on how close the player came to saving.*

*Twenty years after, I'm still trying to recapture the fresh, heady feeling of playing original Traveller - or maybe that was just the feeling of being 20 years old, and high on a mixture of beer, chocolate, and 40 hours' straight gaming with no sleep.*



## Expanding Universe Part 2

*Suggested Additions to Traveller Rules by Andy Slack*

*Originally published in White Dwarf 14 - © Games Workshop Limited 1979*

### STARSHIPS

#### Launching & Landing

Streamlining should not apply to any sized hull; anything bigger than an 800 tonne hull cannot be re-entered in one piece. (This can lead to ingenious starship designs.)

On planets of size 8 or greater and of the same order of density as Earth, a Free Trader - or anything with a 1G drive - cannot take off. Thus, strap-on boosters are available for hire at starports of classes A or B. These help launch a vessel, and may be subsidised by local government or a purely private enterprise. In the former case, a flat rate is charged for launch at the standard ground-to-orbit cargo cost of 10 Credits per tonne; in the latter case, exorbitant fees may be charged for launch depending on circumstances. Alternatively, the vessel may remain in orbit and shuttles may be used.

There are jump boosters, manoeuvre boosters and combination boosters. The jump and manoeuvre boosters are both a small (100-400 tonne) hull with only fuel, controls, and drives/power plants. The general specification for boosters is, for example, A5FBR-type booster. The first character gives the hull size or type; the second indicates a booster variant of the hull, as distinct from other variants designed by the Referee or players, and is always "5"; the third is the jump drive classification, if any; the fourth is the classification of both manoeuvre drive and power plant, if any; the final figure may be either "R" for "Reusable" or "T" for "Throwaway". Throw-away boosters are relatively expensive and normally reserved for emergency or military use.

The purchase price of a booster is the prices of the hull, drives, power plants and controls added together and divided by 2 if reusable, by 4 if throw-away. Any space not taken up by these components will usually be fuel tankage; some users may reserve hold and computer space in order to use the booster as an unmanned exploration vessel, a "message torpedo", etc.

Reusable boosters may be used 10 times without maintenance; thereafter it requires an overhaul as laid out in the starship maintenance rules. Throw-away boosters of course are only used once. Both varieties may be built in half the time given in the tables for starship construction.

#### Failures & Breakdowns

Many things may go wrong with such a highly complex mechanism as a starship. The percent chance of a failure in a given day is calculated as follows:

$$\% \text{ Chance of Failure per Day} = \frac{E \times \text{Hull Displacement}}{100 \text{ Tonnes}}$$

Where E is the environment weighting, which is 1.5 for civil vessels and 4 for military vessels. Some players may build ships of standard types with second-hand military engines in order to reduce the chance of misjumping when running on unrefined fuel, in which case the chance of failure is increased by 10%. If the % chance of failure exceeds 100, as it well may for large vessels, each 100% indicates a certain failure that day, and any remaining figure under 100 is the percent chance of an additional failure.

Percentage dice are rolled once for each day when not in port; if the result is less than the calculated chance a failure has occurred. Next, two six-sided dice are rolled consecutively, for severity and repairability. For severity, a 1, 2 or 3 indicates a "Fail-Operational" condition, where back-up systems or voting units are able to continue the

ship's normal functioning without the failed part. A 4 or 5 indicates a "Fail-Safe" condition, where although the component which failed was vital to the function of the ship, safety interlocks prevent any damage to the passengers or crew which might have been caused by the failure. This roll has a Die Modifier of -1 for all hulls which are not custom built, and a further DM of +1 for every annual overhaul which has been missed, thus, for well-maintained ships it is impossible to get a score of 6 which is a single-point failurer, where a vital component fails without warning in a totally unexpected manner, with possibly fatal consequences. Next a roll for repairability is made; 1, 2 or 3 indicates that the faulty part can be replaced from ship's stores, a 4 or 5 indicates that although a spare is not carried, the faulty part can be repaired and replaced by the crew; and a 6 indicates that the ship's crew has neither the skill nor the spares to put things right - a shipyard or some fast thinking is required!

For the location of the fault, roll percentile dice and consult the table below:

#### Starship Fault Location

01-40	False alarm; the testing circuitry is faulty.
41-60	Computer crash.
61-64	Structural failure in the hull.
65-72	Life support system failure.
73-76	Power plant failure.
77-78	Manoeuvre drive failure.
79-80	Jump Drive failure.
81-82	Fuel supply failure.
83-92	Sensor failure.
93-98	Throw twice ignoring 93-00.
99-00	Throw thrice ignoring 93-00.

#### Acceleration Damage

Acceleration at high G causes damage to the crew. They take one D6 of damage for every G of acceleration above one; this damage is removed as they stop accelerating, unless it has rendered them unconscious.

*Example:* A ship's boat - or a ship - accelerates at 4G. Its crew take 3D6 of damage each. Later it eases off to 2G, so the crew regain 2D6 of hit points, except for Alphonso the gunner who had an unfortunate endurance of 1 and lies unconscious on his couch, and is dealt with under normal wounding rules.

A DM is applied to the dice thrown for acceleration damage. This is +2 if the victim is not protected, i.e. lying on the floor or similar; 0 if a standard acceleration couch is used; -2 for oil baths (mentioned in Niven & Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye* and other books); and -4 for fluorocarbon tanks (as used in Haldeman's *Forever War* stories).

## COMPUTERS

### Damage

The hits on computers outlined in the original rules are too lenient; a similar system to that used on engines is better, so that for example, a Mod-5 taking 3 hits in combat becomes reduced to the effectiveness of a Mod-2. This necessitates the introduction of back-up and front-end computers to take over in the event of destruction or to relieve the main machine of some burden.

### Programs

Many and varied are the possibilities for new computer programs; some examples are:

*Anti-crash Program:* This is loaded into a back-up computer. If the main machine crashes or is reduced by combat to a Mod-0, i.e. non-working, the back-up computer loads into its



own CPU all programs currently being run on the main machine, except any which caused a crash. Thus the action of the computer unit is kept up.

*Double Jump Program:* This is especially useful for attacking heavily defended ground targets. The ship jumps in, looses off a spread of missiles, and then immediately jumps out again; the entire process taking about a tenth of a second.

*Deliberate Misjump Program:* This causes the drive to make a misjump deliberately. It can be used to avoid the forces of law and order or escape from a system if there is fuel for a jump but not enough to reach the next star. It is, however, a risky business.

### **Programming Skills into the Computer**

Any skill may be programmed into a computer but the programmer must have at least the same expertise in the skill as is desired for the program, and at least a like amount of computer expertise. The cost of such a program is Cr 0.2 million if a consultant is hired (consultants will never program computer skill into a machine!), or whatever a sufficiently skilled player character will do the job for. The space required is 2 units per level of expertise. A non-detectable failure in the program reduces the expertise level programmed in by several levels.

All these programs were originally mooted by players of Reading University Wargames Association. To them therefore goes the credit.

## **ENGINEERING**

### **Nature of Manoeuvre Drive**

Manoeuvre drives operate on an antigravity principle, as this does not vapourise everything within several miles and render beam weapons useless.

### **Misjumps**

Any engine making a misjump will use up fuel for the misjump or the maximum jump possible, whichever is the larger. For each jump number that the size of the misjump exceeds the maximum possible normal jump, the jump drive will take one hit of damage.

### **Blowing the Drive**

A pilot or engineer on a doomed vessel can elect to blow the drive. (This tactic can be used to take some enemies with you or to blow up starports if you are dying and cannot leave.) When the drive is blown, it explodes with the force of a strategic nuclear device (see below), the size of which depends on the power plant size. (Type A = 1 megatonne, B = 2 megatonnes, etc.)

### **Tractor Beams**

To generate a tractor beam, 20 tons of additional control gear are required. It has the effect of making the target ship behave as if it were being accelerated by the M-drive unit attached to the tractor beam device in a direction indicated by the wielder of the beam, in addition to any other acceleration it undergoes. Extra manoeuvre drives and power plants may be built in so that the wielder's own engines are free.

### **Warp Scramblers**

These operate on a similar principle to tractor beams. Another 20 tons of controls are required, and the effect is that the target ship misjumps immediately the next movement phase comes around under the normal or amended misjump rules. The operator of the scrambler pays the fuel cost for this, as he does for tractor beams.

## Matter Transporters

These require another 20 tons of control gear and behave as laid down in the teleportation rules under psionics. Their equivalent psi strength is determined by the class of power plant driving them: A Type A has psi strength 10, a type B - 20, and so on.

## GUNNERY AND MISSILES

### Hit Equivalents

One 'Hit' is assumed equivalent to 20D of damage. A ship's hull will take 3-18 dice of Hits, as will an AFV hull; a ship's boat hull will take 2-12 dice, and an ATV, aircraft etc. 1-6 dice. Any remaining damage is carried through and distributed evenly between any crew behind the wall when it caves in. Alternatively, the remaining damage can be split into 4D6 "parcels" and disposed of as if shotguns were being fired at the occupants. Note that any Hit getting through the skin of a vacc suit, punctures it. Civilian vacc suits are about equal to jack, and military ones to mesh or ablat. Armour can be worn over them.

### Types of Missile

*General:* A ship's main defence is its laser batteries, as for all practical purposes they cannot be seen coming, whereas missiles may be spotted in time for evasive action. Thus, missiles tend to be reserved for infighting, when ships are a few inches apart.

Missiles are assumed to accelerate continuously at 10G. For quadruple the normal cost, they can be custom-built to achieve 25G.

*HE Missiles:* These are the standard variety mentioned in the rules. They weigh one ton, cost Cr 5,000, and do 1D6 hits on impact. In ground actions they will be treated as 100 kg fragmentation weapons (see below).

*Tactical Nuclear Missiles:* These weigh one ton but cost 50,000 Credits. They are treated as 100 kiltonne nukes in ground actions. A ship hit by one of these suffers (1-6)D6 Hits. If it is not in atmosphere at the time of the attack, its streamlining, if any, is destroyed and due to spallation from the walls all the crew are considered to be attacked by a shotgun wielded by someone of expertise 1.

*Strategic Nuclear Missiles:* These are hydrogen bombs of 1 megatonne yield. They cost half a million Credits. If the ship is not in atmosphere when attacked, the streamlining is destroyed and the crew are attacked as if by shotguns as for the tactical nuke above; but the "strat" does more damage. Throw one die. Each spot represents a die. Throw this number of dice. The result is then the number of dice to be thrown for Hits done to the target. Further, if in atmosphere, any ship hit which survives must immediately make a forced landing, although if in atmosphere the spallation and destruction of streamlining does not occur. The strategic nuke also creates blackout, so for 1-6 turns no radio or radar in the neighbourhood functions, and missiles attack in or behind the fireball at -5.

*HE Bombs:* Weigh one ton, cost 2,000; 2D6 of Hits vs ship, counts as 1,000 kg fragmentation weapon. Alternatively it could contain gas or germs.

*Drop Tank:* Cost 1,000 Credits. This is merely a tank containing one ton of fuel.

*Mobile Infantry Drop Capsule:* Direct from Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, this capsule costs 4,000 Credits and holds but one man in powered battle armour. It re-enters under the rules for re-entry in a vacc suit, but any weapons fired at the trooper on his way down have a DM of -3 imposed.

*Dump Box:* This is a cheap re-entry capsule for emergency escape or delivering cargo. It re-enters under the vacc suit rules, costing 5,000 Credits and capable of holding 5 men plus equipment or 500 kg of cargo.



## Missile Failures

Available data suggest that modern missiles have a failure rate of about 25%. As this is quite probably wrong and things will surely be improved in the future, missiles will fail to explode on target even though they have hit if an unmodified 12 is scored.

## Types of Sandcaster Ammunition

*Sand:* Straight from the book, this costs 400 Credits, weighs 50 kg and imposes a DM of -3 on laser fire through it.

*Window:* This costs 400 Credits for a 50 kg canister. Its effect is a DM of -3 on missile fire.

*Gravel:* This is just what it says - gravel. (Or scrap iron and other such junk.) Its cost is 100 Credits for a 50 kg canister and it is the best sandcaster weapon normally available. Missiles passing through it are total write-offs and fail to explode. It does damage on ships as follows: calculate the velocity vector of the target relative to the gravel as it hits. For each 1" (1,000 miles) of magnitude this vector has, the gravel does one Hit of damage. A ship orbiting through gravel around a planet takes Hits, as would one leaving orbit or taking off.

*Example:* A vessel in low orbit around an Earth-sized planet is doing about 17,500 mph, perhaps more; this is about 2.9 inches per turn, so a stationary cloud of Gravel - i.e. one tossed up so that the vessel hit it when it had no relative velocity toward the target, just before it fell back - would do 3 Hits of damage; one orbiting the opposite way entirely would do 6 Hits. If the target were attempting to leave the planet, it must reach at least 25,000 mph for an Earth-sized world, which is about 4.2 inches per turn. If it ran into a "stationary" cloud, it would take 4 Hits, and by dropping some Gravel over the side from a great height one could probably score up to 8 Hits.

Also, "dead" missiles, i.e. those which have failed to detonate or been burnt out by a nearby "nuke", could count as Gravel with a greatly reduced hit probability; alternatively Gravel warheads could be carried, which could do a lot of damage.

*HE Shell:* This does 1-3 Hits against a ship, counts as a 50 kg fragmentation weapon, costs 500 Credits and weighs 50 kg. It is most useful for ship defence on the ground.

## Force Fields

The force field is (tentatively) assigned to tech level 14. Its cost is 100,000 Credits per point, it weighs 0.1 tons per point. The point value of the field is the number of Hits it will absorb from missiles, lasers etc. Imperial warships have about 100 points of field, their ship's boats about 10, and naval bases several hundred to a thousand. The field can re-radiate absorbed energy at 10% of its point value per turn. When the sum of all Hits so far inflicted minus the sum of those so far re-radiated exceeds the point value of the field, it burns out, and further Hits attack the ship's structure in the normal way.

*Example:* A pinnacle with a 10 point field is hit by two HE missiles doing 6 hits. The 6 are absorbed, and one is re-radiated, leaving 5. Next turn another missile hits it doing 6 Hits. This makes a total of 11. One is re-radiated, leaving 10. At this point the generators burn out and the pinnacle is on its own.

## Use of Radar for Ship Defence

Ship's radars are very powerful, capable of detecting a ship many hundreds or thousands of miles away. So men not within ships or hard cover can be attacked by radar as if by a laser rifle, and all men within range will be affected together, i.e. simultaneously. Electronic devices not protected by ships' hulls or similar will burn out unless specifically designed for this contingency at quadruple cost.

## Slaved Turrets

In order to reduce manpower requirements, two or more turrets may be "slaved"; in this case there is a master turret, and when it attains a target and locks on, all other turrets slaved to it also lock on. N.B. this can only be done if all the turrets so slaved can point in the same direction!

## EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

### Craters

Anything or any person who would be within the crater after detonation is considered totally destroyed. Crater depths and radii are as follows:

10 MT (Megatonne) groundburst	Radius 640 m	Depth 150 m
1 MT groundburst	Radius 290 m	Depth 70 m

NB: A "groundburst" is an explosion which takes place on or very near to the surface; this is contrasted with an "airburst", where the weapon is set off high above the ground, which causes no crater.

### Blast Effects

*10 MT Groundburst:* Within a radius of 9.6 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 14.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 24.8 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

*1 MT Groundburst:* Within a radius of 4.3 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 6.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 11.5 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

*10 MT Airburst:* Within a radius of 12.8 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 22.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 42.5 km, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

*1 MT Airburst:* Within a radius of 5.6 km, buildings etc. are destroyed; persons take 6D6 damage. Within a radius of 10.4 km, buildings etc. are damaged; there are hurricane force winds; persons take 5D6 damage. Within a radius of 20.8, buildings are damaged; persons take 3D6 damage.

Damage is not cumulative; take the highest applicable.

Grounded aircraft and civilian ATV, groundcars etc. take severe damage if within the "buildings damaged" radius; airborne vehicles must immediately force-land.

Airborne vehicles and AFV are destroyed if within the "buildings destroyed" radius. (Starships count as AFV for this purpose.)

Persons within the "hurricane force winds" radius need not take damage if they seek refuge in stout structures.

Within the "hurricane force winds" radius, objects and bodies up to several hundred kg in weight in the open are hurled about at potentially lethal speeds.

### Fire Effects

*10 MT Groundburst:* Within a radius of 23.2 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 37.6 km, there will be blistering burns (2nd degree);

persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 38.4 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

*1 MT Groundburst:* Within a radius of 9 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 15 km, blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 15.2 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

*10 MT Airburst:* Within a radius of 28 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 42.4 km, blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 44.8 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

*1 MT Airburst:* Within a radius of 9.6 km, fabrics and paper ignite; persons take 4D6 damage. Within a radius of 17.6 km, blistering burns (2nd degree); persons take 2D6 damage. Within a radius of 18.4 km, dry leaves ignite; persons take 1D6 damage.

Damage is not cumulative; take the highest applicable.

Even though a person may well survive the fire damage, the "nuke" will cause a firestorm of "fabrics and paper ignite" radius. If records from World War II are accurate, the chance of a person escaping or surviving a firestorm is very small. It is the responsibility of the players to specify how they will attempt to do so, and of the Referee to consider if they would succeed.

### Radiation Effects

*Electromagnetic Pulses:* EMP occur when a "nuke" is detonated. It is safest to use the "fabric and paper ignite" radius since accurate information on the effect is difficult to obtain. This EMP will severely damage or immobilise electrical or electronic equipment, though measures may be taken to avoid this at great expense. There is also a slight chance that false signals will be generated in computers, communications systems, and detectors.

*Fallout:* The materials remaining after a nuclear explosion are radioactive, and emit radiation for a long time. When they mix with earth etc. thrown up by the explosion, radioactive clouds form and create a fallout hazard for people who are downwind. Because groundbursts cause craters they throw up more dirt; so the fallout is more dangerous because there is more of it.

*Blackout:* Blackout weapons are specially designed devices which maximise the blackout effect of the detonation. The area covered by the blackout increases with the size of the device and the altitude at which it is detonated. The exact figures seem to be classified; one source suggests a blackout cloud of 100 km radius from a device of several MT at a "suitably high altitude". This cloud might endure for hours, and certainly for a few minutes at least. (The exact duration can be controlled by the attacker by careful design of his bomb, and careful choice of the number and location of the explosions.) Radar and radio systems are "blacked out" and cannot "see" through the cloud. The duration of blackout is less for devices transmitting higher frequencies; it goes approximately as the square of the radar/radio frequency. Thus UHF is out of action for perhaps 10 minutes while S-band radar is covered for only a few seconds. However, even after the radars can "see" again, their pulses are refracted. Thus substantial errors - up to tens of kilometres - in estimates of positions occur. This problem may be overcome in the absence of Window or decoys by using two frequencies which differ widely, e.g. S-band and UHF, and comparing the estimates from both. This is the reason for the substantial DM on missile fire through blackout above. Blackout is due to atmospheric ionisation in part, and thus its effect is reduced when it is used in deep space.

*Blindness:* People facing a "nuke" when it detonates may have their sight seriously damaged or destroyed. For the radius of this effect use the "ignition of fabrics and paper" radius. (This is an estimate based on little information.)

*Effect of Radiation on Characters:* After a nuclear explosion, persons in or passing through the affected area or the area below or in the fallout cloud, or an area the fallout



cloud has passed over, must "save" by throwing their endurance or less on 3D6. Failure to save indicates 1D6 of radiation damage taken. The associated DMs are:

Antiradiation suit or similar: -4.

Airburst: -3 to -1 depending on viciousness of the attack.

These are applied to the damage die roll, not the save. Each day thereafter that the character remains in such an area, he must save again. On leaving the area a final save is rolled; failure on this final save means that the victim will continue to take 1D6 damage per day until hospitalised. (The DMs above still apply.)

### A Note on the Devices

The nuclear devices considered are hydrogen bombs of standard types. It is possible by careful design to enhance any one of the three types of effect - i.e. radiation, fire or blast - at the expense of the others. In all cases, the airbursts are assumed to occur at that height which would do the most damage. Airbursts at lower altitudes cause less fire and blast damage, but more fallout. The effects of weapons of different sizes is calculated as follows: For each factor of ten times larger, multiply all radii by 2.2; each factor of ten times smaller, divide all radii by 2.2. Thus, a 10 kilotonne device, being 1,000 times smaller than a 10 MT device, affects an area with a radius  $2.2 \times 2.2 \times 2.2 = 10.648$  times smaller, i.e. a radius about 9.5% as large.

*It is recommended that "nukes" be very rare.*

## EFFECTS OF EXPLOSIVES

### Blast Radii for Chemical Explosives

Any person within the blast radius of the explosion may be hit for (1-6)D6 of damage.

The explosive needs a base of 8+ to "hit", with an armour DM as shotgun if the victim is more than half the blast radius away from it, or as assault rifle if closer.

Weight of Explosive	Blast Radius
1,000 kg	101 m
100 kg	46 m
10 kg	21 m
1 kg	9.5 m
100 grammes	4.5 m
10 grammes	2 m
1 gramme	0.9 m

To find blast radii for bombs of mass between the values listed, the blast radius increases as the cube root of the mass.

### Effect of Fragmentation Jackets

Most munitions, as opposed to explosive charges, are fragmentation weapons which on detonation throw out shrapnel. To simulate this effect, fragmentation weapons have double the blast radius indicated for their size. Normal charges can be easily converted to fragmentation weapons by closely packing them with bits of gravel, nails, etc.

### Grenades

Grenades are assumed to be 1 kg fragmentation weapons. (This makes them slightly less effective than real grenades.) Characters may throw grenades a distance equal to three times their strength in metres. (This means they will sometimes be inside the blast radius themselves!) The hit probability for a grenade is the same as for thrown daggers, i.e. 2D6 + expertise + dexterity, an 18 or higher indicating a hit. If a grenade fails to hit, where it actually lands is determined by dicing for the direction on an imaginary hex grid. Having

found this direction, the distance, in metres, by which the grenade missed is found by subtracting the modified dice roll from 18.

## ARTILLERY

### Skill Use

When using direct fire, i.e. the target is visible to the gun crew, the gunner applies his gunnery expertise to the shot, and picks up any resulting experience. If the target is out of sight a forward observer must be used, he applies his expertise to the shot and is successful acquires the experience. To hit, a score of 18 is required, with appropriate DM for expertise, and gunner's dexterity added, to a two dice roll, with an additional DM of +4 for rangefinders if used by the appropriate party, i.e. gunner for direct fire and forward observer for indirect fire. (Alternatively heavy weapons may be treated as normal gun weapons with no required dexterity, or a referee-assigned required dexterity; or as starship turret-mounted weapons.) Normally bunkers, AFV etc. require a direct hit to "kill" them, whereas men may be killed even if the 25-pounder shell misses them by several feet. Use the sections on blast radii and fragmentation above for heavy weapon fire; though the weight of the shell must be established. If the projectile misses, determine as for grenades above. The distance in metres it missed by is determined by subtracting the Gunner's/Fwd Observer's expertise level from a 3D6 roll (or by subtracting the modified "to hit" score from 18).

### Camouflage and Defences

These have an adverse effect on heavy weapon fire; after the attacker has added his expertise to the roll, the target may, if he has prepared for the shelling, subtract any expertise he holds in gunnery, tactics or forward observer from the attacker's roll, and, if the shell misses, add the same amount to the distance by which it missed (this latter is done by making dummy emplacements etc). If this subtraction is instrumental in making the shell miss, the defender should be awarded experience for it. Parties with no such expertise and no training in surface combat (i.e. not marines or army) are subject to a DM of +3 added to the gunner's attack roll.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*I spend much less time gaming now than in the late 1970s when these rules were written; to make best use of that time, I now focus on the characters, and treat starships as a way to deliver the characters to the next scenario. Similarly, I have abandoned rolling dice for random events; if the plot of the scenario requires the ship to break down, it breaks down, otherwise it carries on working.*

*Acceleration damage has been superceded by the statement that ships have internal grav fields. A rule suggested by Bob McWilliams as an alternative was that the drive rating covered both the ship's acceleration and the internal compensation - for example, a 5G drive could accelerate the ship at 3G, and compensate for 2G, leaving the crew in a 1G field; but if the drive accelerated the ship at 4G, only 1G was left for compensation, so the crew suffered 3G internally.*

*The rules for ship weaponry, artillery, nukes and explosives have now been superceded by official Traveller canon - initially Books 4 and 5, and later the MegaTraveller, New Era and 4th Edition rulebooks.*

*But, in many ways, it was more fun when we had to make up our own empires, heavy weapons, and other rules. Of course, there's nothing stopping us doing that now...*

## Expanding Universe Part 3

*Suggested Additions to Traveller Rules by Andy Slack*

*Originally published in White Dwarf 15 - © Games Workshop Limited 1979*

### CAMPAIGN LOCATION

There are several sorts of region where a campaign is "plausible". These are:

#### Globular Clusters

These clusters are distributed in a sphere about the Galactic Nucleus. Usually there are no O, B or A class stars still radiating, though they may be present as "Remnants". They are spherical in form, with a diameter up to about 150 hexes, and contain 1,000 to 100,000 stars. There are about 1-100 stellar systems per hex. (Thus they are ideal for a huge campaign - but require great patience.)

#### Open Clusters

A favourite for a campaign setting, the open clusters are distributed in the plane of the Galactic Spiral Arms. They have no consistent shape, but average about 2-20 hexes in "diameter". Stars of classes O, B, A, F, G, K and M are present. They have around 2D6-2 stellar systems per hex.

#### Associations

These comprise rough groupings of 24-500 stars, all of similar spectral type, and have open clusters as nuclei, surrounded by single star systems. They are up to 200 hexes across.

#### Spiral Arms

These contain clusters and associations, but also there are single stellar systems not in any groups. These are found in a hex not part of a cluster or association on a throw of 9 (exactly) on 2D6.

As the Galactic Nucleus contains about 2,000 systems per hex, and the space not already covered is even more sparsely populated than the spiral arms, these are in my opinion the only "reasonable" locales, always assuming you want so much detail.

### STELLAR SYSTEMS

For each star system in the hex, go through the following procedure:

#### Determination of Star System Type

Throw 2D6. A throw of 3 indicates a Remnant star; 11 or 12, a Variable star. A throw of 6 or 7 indicates the "star" in question is in fact two stars, and you should throw again to see if it is a Variable or Remnant. Large multiple systems may occur by repeated sevens.



## Determination of Spectral Type

For each star in each system, throw percentile dice:

Dice	Spectrum	Radius Factor	T <sub>eff</sub>	Colour
01-10	B	4.1	21,750	Blue-White
11-32	A	2.0	9,200	Blue-White
33-51	F	1.3	6,990	Yellow
52-65	G	1.0	5,775	Yellow
66-96	K	0.8	4,515	Orange
97-99	M	0.4	2,893	Orange-Red
00 01-25	O	5.9	40,000	Blue-White
00 26-50	N	0.4	2,500	Orange-Red
00 51-75	R	0.4	2,500	Red
00 -76-00	S	0.4	2,500	Red

(Binary and multiple systems have much nicer colours, e.g. emerald green and purple.)

### Variable Stars

If a variable star is indicated, check below to see what type it is, depending on its spectrum and the umpire's whim.

*T-Tauri Variables:* These are small stars, spinning rapidly in a dense gas cloud. They may be G or K types.

*Flare Stars:* These stars periodically "flare up", greatly increasing their output of radiation. They are marked with big red splotches on star charts saying "Don't bother" or words to that effect. They are normally M type.

*Magnetic Variables:* These are normally A type, and have a varying magnetic field of great intensity, which would probably be very dangerous to shipping.

*RR Lyrae Variables:* These are common in globular clusters - another reason for not having a campaign there. These are often A or F class, and for game purposes they count one spectral class higher when in a bad mood, i.e. A counts as B and F as A.

*Cepheid Variables:* These are of F or G type, and over a period of 2-20 days their output of radiation (and their radius) increases one spectral class, then back down again (F goes to A, and G to F).

*Mira Ceti Variables:* These have a period of  $50 \times 2D6-1$  days, with great variation of radiation output. They are M or S type.

*Semi-Regular Variables:* These are of type M or N, having a period of average length  $60 \times 1D10$  days, during which they vary their radiation output semi-randomly.

*Novae:* If a star doesn't fit standard variable categories, either rig them or call it a nova! Then dice the time left until it explodes - a  $D10 \times 40,000$  years!

In a more serious vein, stars with a radius factor greater than 1.0 go nova fairly randomly. Each such star is diced for yearly to see if it will do so; this requires 4 rolls of 00 in succession on percentile dice followed by a roll of 99 or 00. Should it happen, all planets in the system are sterilised and the spectral type becomes O, ignoring the radius increase (the new radius could be said to be that of the expanding gas cloud from the explosion, how accurate this would be is another matter).

*Supernovae:* Supernovae are more difficult to get, but worth rolling for! However, people usually have enough time to evacuate as supernovae threaten for a while first. As far as

can be made out, any star of class O, B or A is eligible: to occur, roll yearly - you need 00 5 times followed by 94-00 on percent dice. The planets are all sterilised, and 1D6 of them are destroyed - work outwards from the inmost one.

### Remnant Stars

These are very interesting objects, especially in space combat. They are the bits left after supernovae have occurred, or stars that have died in a less violent fashion.

*Whites Dwarfs (Plug!)*: White Dwarfs are left after some supernovae, or the death by old age of stars type F, G, K, M, N, R, S. They have an A spectrum and a large magnetic field. After a while, they give up completely and become black dwarfs, which are the same thing but don't shine at all. (There is a small possibility that uninformed players will mistake them for black holes, probably causing them great concern.)

*Neutron Stars*: These can be the remains of A, F or G stars or supernovae. If they rotate, they have a magnetic field that doesn't bear thinking about.

*Black Holes*: Remains of supernovae and O, B, A, F stars. These are the best player-worrying devices in the Traveller universe, and well worth reading up on.

Many Remnants are found in gas clouds.

### Densities of Objects for use in Space Combat Templates

Object Type	"K" or Density
Planets of size 0-20	3D6/10
Planets of size 21+	2D6/10
"Normal" Stars	10D6/100
Giant Stars (50% chance if G, K, M; 20% chance if A, F)	5D6/100
White Dwarf	2D6 x 10 <sup>4</sup>
Neutron Star	3D6 x 10 <sup>11</sup>
Black Hole	4D6 x 10 <sup>14</sup>

### Radii of Objects for use in Space Combat Templates, etc

Stars: Radius Factor x 432" x 3D6/10 (If giant, now multiply by 2D10).

Neutron Stars: 1/48 of an inch.

Black Holes: 1/24 of an inch (for game purposes).

White Dwarf: 5D6 inches.

## PLANETS

### Planetary Systems

Any star of classes F, G, K or M will have attendant planets unless there is a remnant in the system, or a variable star.

### Number and Type of Planets

For each planetary system diced up, there will be 2D6-2 Terrestoid planets and 1D6-1 giant planets. Arrange these in a semi-random order, note that giant planets tend to congregate towards the outside. This order is the order of the planets going outwards from the star.

### Size and Moons

Terrestoid planets have a size of 4D6-4 inches, giant ones of 5D6 + (2-12)D6 inches. (Terrestoid planets of size 0 are asteroid belts.)

Terrestoid planets have 1D3 moons, and giants 3D6 moons. Moons have a size of 1-100 x 0.002 times their parent planet's, and if big enough can be diced up as worlds in their own right. Each gas giant moon has a 5% chance of disintegrating into a ring such as encircles Saturn.

### Distance from the Primary

The distance of a planet from the sun, or a moon from its parent body, is estimated by the following formula:

$$R = 200 \times r \times B$$

Where r is the radius of the sun or parent body, R is the orbital radius, and B is a factor defined from the table below.

Planet No. (From inside outwards)	B	Planet No. (From inside outwards)	B
1	0.4	9	38.8
2	0.7	10	77.2
3	1.0	11	154.0
4	1.6	12	307.6
5	2.8	13	614.8
6	5.2	14	1229.2
7	10.0	15	2458.0
8	19.6		

### Determining the Length of Year

The length of the body's year, in Earth years, is given by the formula:

$$\text{Year} = B \times T \times r / 432$$

Where B is from the table above, r is the radius of the parent body or star, and T is taken from the table below. "Planet No." is again the order reading outwards from the primary.

Planet No.	T	Planet No.	T	Planet No.	T
1	0.5	6	2	11	6
2	1	7	3	12	6
3	1	8	4	13	7
4	1	9	4	14	8
5	2	10	5	15	8

### Determining the Length of Day

Giant planets have a day of 4D6 hours. For terrestoid planets, throw 2D6 and impose a DM of -n, where n is the number of planets closer to the star than the one in question. A score of 12 indicates a day of length equal to 1-10% of the year; any other score indicates a day 6D6 hours long.

### Determining the Surface Temperature

This is the nastiest bit. First the albedo factor A must be calculated. Roll 2D6, add the atmosphere and hydrographic percentage numbers (calculated in the normal way), subtract 12, divide by 10; finally subtract the whole lot from 1.0, and quickly amputate any minus signs because they're going to cause trouble later on. (It will be noticed that giant planets have enormous atmosphere and hydrosphere numbers. Don't worry about it as few people will land there and even fewer will lift off again.)



Now brace yourself - calculator is recommended! Look up the Teff for the star that you're worried about. (And if you're not worried about it by now you soon will be.) Square it. Square it again. Multiply it by the square of the star's radius (in inches). Divide by 4. Multiply the result by the factor A, and divide the lot by the square of the planet's orbital radius (in inches). Then square root the product, and square root it again. This chops it down to a reasonable size and provides the planet's surface temperature in Kelvin - subtract 273 for Centigrade.

Here is a formula expressing the process more concisely:

$$\text{Surface Temperature} = (0.25 \times (r/R)^2 \times (\text{Teff})^4 \times A)^{0.25}$$

A little practice reveals short cuts and reduces the horror of it all. Make a note of the temperature as it shows what the sea's made of and whether the planet may be habitable.

### Habitable Planets

Habitable planets must have a mass of at least  $M = 0.1$ , a day of length not exceeding 96 hours, and a surface temperature of between 200 and 300 Kelvin. (Water freezes at 273 K and boils at 373 K.)

### Native Life Determination

If a planet counts as "habitable", throw 2D6 to determine the Earth equivalent of the highest life form yet developed. DM: F stars -1, K stars +1, M stars +2.

Dice	Highest Life-Form
2	DNA molecules
3	Coacervates
4	Bacteria
5	Protozoa
6	Worms
7	Fish
8	Reptiles
9	Avians
10	Mammals
11	Intelligent species, Tech Level 0-2
12	Civilised species, Tech Level 3 or higher

### Determination of Orbital Velocity and its Use

The orbital velocity,  $V_o$ , is given by:

$$V_o = 0.00012 \times R/\text{Year in inches per turn.}$$

Suppose you have some Travellers who are on an interplanetary trip. They can do this in two ways:

*Minimum Fuel Orbit:* This is a lengthy process; the time taken for transfer is equal to, on average, half the difference between the lengths of years at the end-points of the trajectory. However, only as much fuel is expended as is required to generate a vector equal to the sum of the orbital velocities of the end-points, plus that required to take off and land (see Escape Velocity below). While on such an orbit count the ship as if closed-down in orbit, i.e. minimum detection range.

*Constant Acceleration Orbit:* This is shorter in time but higher in fuel cost. Assume the distance travelled is equal to one-quarter of the destination's orbit circumference, plus the difference in orbit radii. And the ship must take off, land, and match velocities with its destination. Ships on these orbits are always detectable at maximum range.

## Escape Velocity

To take off, land, leave or enter orbit, a ship must generate a vector equal to the escape velocity of the planet at the relevant altitude and direction.

To take off or land, the vector has a size of:

$$V = (2 G R)^{0.5}$$

Where G, R have the value derived in Traveller space combat.

To enter or leave orbit, use the formula below to find the vector size:

$$V = (2 G R^2 / H)^{0.5}$$

Where G and R are as before, and H is the distance from the ship in orbit to the centre of the template or body in inches.

Ships may opt to enter "forced orbits" where by constant acceleration they may traverse an orbit either at a different distance or orbital velocity than normal. Watch out for atmospheric braking at an inopportune moment though!

## ALIEN LIFE

### Basic Type

The basic type of life on each planet is determined. Use the table from Native Life Determination and common sense as necessary, together with these tables, to determine the basic type of life.

#### Basic Type/Shape of Most Animals:

1	Insectoid	4	Avian
2	Icythoid	5	Mammalian
3	Reptilian	6	Other (i.e. Ref's Special)

#### Symmetry of Most Animals:

1	Asymmetric	5	Rotational of order 2-6
2, 3, 4	Bilateral	6	Other

#### Number of Limbs:

1D6-1 pairs of limbs, but refer to the symmetry and use common sense (e.g. you can't have four legs and rotational symmetry order 3).

#### Main Sense of Most Animals:

1, 2	Vision	5	Olfactory
3	Audio	6	Other
4	Tactile		

Note for vision that it will be most acute at the predominant colour of the star; i.e. beings from a red star's planet would see into the infrared a short way but might well be blind to blue, seeing it perhaps as blackness.

Characteristics: Determine type, weaponry, size etc. as in Traveller Book 3.

### Intelligent Aliens

These are first diced for as if an ordinary animal, biasing the results slightly towards the 50-200 kg mass range and away from herbivorous types. Then characteristic DMs are diced for. All characteristic DMs are generated by 2D6-7, followed by applying common sense.

Primary characteristic DMs are applied to the UPP of a character, and consist of DMs to strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, education and social standing, therefore. Secondary and tertiary DMs are applied to 2D6 rolls for secondary and tertiary characteristics; however, provided he could have diced it, a player may always specify his own secondary characteristics.

Secondary characteristics (with apologies for plagiarism to Tony Bath) are Disposition, Morals, Generosity, Loyalty, Courage, and Ambition. The way in which they are used is as follows: The higher the score, the more socially correct and "nice" is the character's behaviour in that area. Thus, should a police officer be offered a bribe, throw 2D6 in secret; if the score is less than or equal to his Morals, he has done the socially correct thing and refused the bribe. If a beggar accosts a character whose player is not present, dice - a roll equal to or under his generosity indicates he has given alms; and so on.

Tertiary characteristics are largely individual; they start with Appearance and Activity, but then the remaining four are "held" for use in describing organ-playing ability, shoe size, etc., as is required by the individual character.

Quaternary DMs for each species should also be diced. These apply to the Population, Government, Law Level and Tech Level of planets inhabited by that species. (An example is the blanket -2 on human Populations.)

## **ROBOTS**

Dice up robots as if they were a member of the constructing species, except for the following points:

- a) Shape, Symmetry and Main Sense may be altered by the specific task envisaged for the robot.
- b) The robot's skin counts as Mesh armour.
- c) Strength, Dexterity and Endurance have an additional DM: +1D6.
- d) Intelligence has an additional DM: + Home planet Tech Level, -18.
- e) Social Standing has an additional DM: + Home planet Law Level, -18.
- f) Robots are not psionic, nor may they as player characters do anything other than make suggestions and follow orders literally, unless they are constructed at a high enough Tech Level for artificial intelligence.
- g) Robots not imbued with artificial intelligence have an ambition of 2; all other secondary characteristics are 12.

Robots have up to one expertise level (in non-combat skills only) plus one language point per Tech Level over 6; these are programmed in at the owner's choice. Robots may be reprogrammed as if computers (see Part 2, Issue 14). No robot which has not been reprogrammed can contemplate harming a living creature unless it has artificial intelligence in which case it may act with minimum necessary force in self-defence.

The cost of a robot is 20,000 Credits per expertise level.

As will be apparent, robots usually have a negative intelligence; thus on succeeding in using a skill, they lose experience rather than gain it. Just work the normal experience rules (See Part 1, Issue 13) backwards. Note that all robots have a special skill at level 6 in obeying orders; this is used whenever a robot is asked to do something unsavoury or illegal - to perform the act requested the robot must roll 8+, DM: + obeying orders expertise. The point of this is that "killer" and criminal robots eventually refuse to obey orders of this type. Killer robots should also start malfunctioning (try dicing on the C&S Mental Health charts each time a level of obey orders expertise is lost).



Androids, that is to say organic as opposed to synthetic robots, count as needing a base Tech Level 2 levels higher than normal robots; however, they are indistinguishable from "real" beings, which they in fact become at tech 19. This is useful in light of the suggestion that robots or androids, if discovered, on most planets will be destroyed by the populace with "Luddite" fervour and their owners treated as if they were psionics - check the robot's social status against the special levels in Part 4, next issue, it will almost always be under -5.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*Can you believe we used to do all this stuff with dice and calculators?*

*The astronomical data and physics I used to work these equations out are either outdated or just plain wrong in many cases. These days, I would recommend GURPS Space or one of several computer programmes available free over the Internet - Winchell Chung's website is a good place to start looking.*

## Expanding Universe Part 4

*Suggested Additions to Traveller Rules by Andy Slack*

*Originally published in White Dwarf 16 - © Games Workshop Limited 1979*

## SOCIAL STATUS

### Income

The social status score determines the character's net income in long-term situations. Thus a player getting a job as say a clerk, or any non-player in a civilian job, would have this much money left after living expenses were deducted:

Social Status	Net Income p.a.	Social Status	Net Income p.a.
Less than 0	0	9	19,683
0	1	10	59,049
1	3	11	177,047
2	9	12	531,441
3	27	13	1,594,323
4	81	14	4,782,969
5	243	15	14,348,907
6	729	16	43,046,721
7	2,187	17	129,140,160
8	6,561	18	387,420,480

This may also be used to indicate the amount offered by a patron initially - perhaps 2-12% or 20-120% of the patron's annual income, depending on the danger involved. Also it may represent the income accruing to a noble player due to his ancestral fief.

## Special Levels of Social Status

Social Status	Situation
-5 or less	Condemned to death
-2 to -4	Slave
-1	Imprisoned
0	Wanted criminal
1	Suspected criminal
2-10	Normal
11-15	Nobles
16	Prince - next in line to rule a planet
17	King - ruler of a planet
18	Emperor - ruler of more than one planet

Ancestral estates may be portions of large worlds, or small worlds in their own right. The population level of an ancestral fief is equal to the controlling noble's status less 9, so perhaps the player has a small world waiting for him when his eight older brothers drop dead!

## Social Status and Crime

When infringing the law, roll over the Law Level on 2D6 to avoid arrest. DM: + Social Status, -7. (You can get away with it, you just have to be rich!) This gives some meaning to law levels over 12.

If arrested, throw law level or under to be convicted, DMs: subtract the prosecution's law expertise, add the defence's law expertise. Forged papers etc. give additional DMs at umpire's discretion.

If convicted, penalties are in the form of losses of status. One status level will be lost for minor offences; 1D6 status levels are lost for things such as theft, fraud, forgery etc.; 2D6 levels are lost for mugging, burglary and assault; and 3D6 levels for murder, treason etc.

These penalties are most effective in reducing income and seldom result in jail unless something really nasty is done (a player in jail is an unhappy player).

Lawyers may be hired at the following costs per case:

Lawyer-1	3,000 Cr	Lawyer-4	81,000 Cr
Lawyer-2	9,000 Cr	Lawyer-5	243,000 Cr
Lawyer-3	27,000 Cr	Lawyer-6	729,000 Cr

## Incrementing Social Status Level

It is recommended that players retire characters of social status 16+, although they may still participate by being burgled, generating commissions etc.

Adventurers may increase their family's status by accumulating Status Experience Points or SEP. When a character accumulates a number of SEP equal to his current status level, his status level is increased by one and he loses all SEP so far gained.

SEP may be gained as follows:

- 1 SEP per 1,000,000 Credits amassed.
- 2 SEP per 1,000,000 Credits wasted.
- 1 SEP per level of glamorous skill acquired, e.g. Pilot, Leader.
- 1 SEP per promotion.

- 1 SEP per year served as a slave or prisoner.

## **PSIONIC SPECIAL TALENTS**

It is rare for someone to acquire only a special talent, so it is suggested that special talents enhance the other ones. Below are given some examples of additional tricks a psionic can perform if he has the stated talent and a special talent. These extras can only be used when the talisman is to hand; the talisman also confers 1D6 extra psionic strength points, but these do not in any way affect the maximum strength attainable.

### **Clairvoyance and Special Talents**

Persons with this combination may use their clairvoyant abilities through time as well as space; count one second forwards or backwards as equivalent to one metre of range. In game terms, the player may ask the umpire a number of questions equal to his clairvoyance level, which the umpire must answer truthfully "yes" or "no". (See Frank Herbert's Dune trilogy for a well-handled account of such abilities.) Due to the mechanism of the hyperspace Jump, persons with this combination, whether or not they have their talisman are likely to feel nauseous and confused for 1-6 days after such a Jump. Roll 2D6, DM -7, + endurance. If the score is lower than or equal to the psionic's clairvoyance level, he has fallen ill.

### **Telepathy and Special Talents**

This combination enables the psionic to affect reaction tests. One creature or person per level can be affected, and a DM equal in size to the number of strength points expended is added to or subtracted from the reaction test at the psionic's discretion. (This is from an idea in Larry Niven's A Gift From Earth.) Further, such combined talents may be used to penetrate telepathic Shields; when penetrating a Shield, count psionic strength and level as half normal, rounded down.

### **Telekinesis and Special Talents**

This combination gains the ability to affect temperature. Instead of telekinesis on an object in the normal manner, they may choose to raise or lower its temperature by one degree centigrade per telekinetic level per strength point expended. This can be used as a lethal weapon by raising the temperature of the brain by a few degrees - ten should be enough for death. The brain weighs one to two kilos.

### **Teleportation and Special Talents**

This combination gives the power to do two new tricks: First, to teleport another being or object instead of oneself; and second, to teleport forwards or backwards in time. Count one second as equal to one metre for range costs. As with normal teleportation, it is up to the player to specify possible hazards and how he will avoid them. This is the hardest talent to umpire, so it's just as well it's the rarest. (The idea comes from Poul Anderson's There Will Be Time, and reading that will show the best way to handle the talent.)

These persons suffer from Jumps in the same way as Clairvoyance and Special Talents.

### **Awareness and Special Talents**

Such persons may enhance dexterity on the same terms as strength. Further - and I like to think this is part of the reason for anti-psionic prejudice - instead of expending a psionic strength point to enhance one of their own characteristics, they may "drain" points from another intelligent being's strength, dexterity or endurance in order to gain an equal number of psionic strength points. However, the range cost must still be paid so this works best at close range.

And there you have it. Since starting this series, there have been new rules sets - notably Traveller Book 4: Mercenary and Starquest - which duplicate or render obsolete, in a



sense, parts of these suggested rules; however, I have lethargically not done anything about it.

It is also inevitable that I have unwittingly plagiarised the work of other umpires and rules sets; I apologise in advance for this. A lot of material has been taken from SF books. Where this has been done I have tried to credit the author and book concerned.

Finally, there are inevitably going to be mistakes in my assumptions or working out; and I will be glad to hear from anyone spotting one, but I leave you with this thought: *If I knew how starships really worked, I'd be writing to the Patents Office, not White Dwarf.*

## **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

*The social status rules still survive in a mutated form in Social Class in 2300 AD, published in Challenge magazine in the 1980s, although I didn't realise it until I converted both to be hosted on the Web; and the psionic special talents rules are unique amongst the Expanding Universe series in remaining in use in my campaign almost unchanged for over twenty years. Some time after the series was published, it was updated and reprinted in The Best of White Dwarf Articles. In hindsight, this was a mistake, and they should have been reprinted as originally written; so you will not see the updated versions on this website.*

# An Introduction to Traveller

## PART 1: PLAYERS AND CHARACTERS

BY ANDY SLACK

*Traveller* is a game in which each player takes the role of a single adventurer in a science fiction setting. This 'character' has certain skills and characteristics predetermined by dice and decisions taken by the player creating him, representing prior experience. He then, in the company of a group of heroes and heroines controlled by other players, sets out to achieve his goals by acquiring money and power. The game referee describes to the players the beings and environments their characters encounter, and based on their descriptions of their responses and the rules booklets he adjudicates what happens to the characters.

The game seems to run best with a referee and two to four players, but more are possible. There is no real winner or loser in the conventional sense; the referee's job is to mediate and maintain fair play, and to create and describe the game universe; the players choose their own aims, but regardless of whether they achieve them or not, or whether their aims are conflicting and thus result in competition between characters, the point of the game is to enjoy playing.

There are two terms which should be defined with regard to the game; scenario and campaign. A scenario is a single adventure, spread over one or more gaming sessions, in which the characters strive to attain a given objective. Typically, a powerful character controlled by the referee will approach the player-characters and offer them a reward if they will perform a task or obtain an item for him. The band or party of adventurers then attempts this, and must overcome difficulties to succeed. Success brings a reward, typically money, with which the characters can improve their game lives in whatever way appeals to them.

However, as the players grow attached to their characters, and the referee tries to minimise his own work by retaining common elements from scenario to scenario, a resulting sequence of linked scenarios develop which is referred to as a campaign.

Basically, there are three main ways of getting involved in a game.

First, ask the staff in your local gaming shop if they know of a club or any other players; they may have a notice-board for this very purpose. If not, try asking to put up your own notice.

Second, try the nearest university. Most universities have either a *D&D* or wargames club, frequently with some *Traveller* gamers attached. There are also scattered groups of players unconnected to any club, or connected to SF or fantasy clubs. Watch the notice-boards and the university paper or diary or the students' union handbook. Many secondary schools now have groups of role-playing gamers too, so you may prefer to try them instead.

Third, try the magazines. These often have a small ads page where gamers are trying to get in touch with each other; you may find a fellow player this way, or you may decide to run your own ad. Try asking around among your friends, or at school or work, and sooner or later you will find someone else who plays. Attend a convention and try to find someone there who lives reasonably near to you — Dragonmeet seems to be the best for this.

The last resort is to buy the game and recruit your family and friends. This is not the best way, obviously, as you have to start as the referee, and therefore you don't really know what it's like to be a player; your games may suffer because of that. If you already play another role-playing game, that's good enough. Much experience of playing and refereeing is transferable from game to game.

### Notes to the Player

The referee puts a lot of work into setting the game up, so be nice to him. Don't expect him to know everything or have everything already worked out; if you know better than he in a specific instance, ask him to take that into consideration, but remember always that he has the final word in terms of how the game is played. If you don't like the way he plays, go somewhere else or start your own game.

Bear in mind that the referee may well not be telling you everything that's going on. If he says something that sounds unreasonable, he may be taking something else into account that

your character couldn't observe or wouldn't know.

It's not necessary to know the rules to enjoy the game; that's what the referee is for. However, the more you know the better. You should be familiar with the effects and abilities of your skills above all, and secondly with the capabilities of your weapons and equipment. There are two main reasons for this; to know your character's limitations, so that you won't put him needlessly at risk and to know what he *can* do, which may save your game life or give you ideas as to his personality, or goals, and will certainly help you to plan your approach to problems.

You should be familiar with the combat rules, but that comes with practice; you ought to bring or borrow a pair of six-sided dice (d6) as whatever you do, in combat or otherwise, will require d6, usually in pairs (2d6). If in doubt, do whatever you feel would be reasonable for a person in that situation; a good referee will allow such things even in the areas where the rules seem to disallow them. Remember that the rules are not the important thing; they are a tool, a means to an end, a way of ensuring that everyone agrees on what is possible and what the chances of given actions succeeding are.

It is worth learning hexadecimal notation as suggested and keeping them in the standard order of the Universal Personality Profile, firstly because it makes the information instantly accessible to you and secondly because almost everyone else playing does it that way. Then there are skills; note each, with the character's level of expertise. Until you learn your way around it keep notes of what they allow you to do and what modifiers they allow on your dice rolls.

Weapons and armour — the best combination for armour is still cloth armour worn over a suit of reflex. Battle dress or combat armour are better defences, but you may not have the Vacc Suit skill required to operate them, or be able to afford them and in any case they are frequently illegal. Further, think in character; would you *really* go out for a pint at the starport bar dressed like an Imperial Stormtrooper from *Star Wars*? Would you expect to be treated like a normal human being? What about the smell and the sweaty heat inside? Cloth and reflex you can usually pass off as normal outdoor clothing for the wilderness if you have a kind referee. It may be worth buying several different kinds and writing some standing orders on your character record about what you are wearing under which circumstances.

Be organised about your weapons. Take into account the likely law and tech levels you will operate under — ask the referee while equipping yourself what limits these cause. Choose your weapon skills, and your weapons, after thinking carefully about your character's personality, and try to pick ones for which your strength or dexterity give you a bonus as well as the one which will deal the most damage. Three dice of damage is all you need, because if you time it right you will only need one shot or blow that connects to disable an opponent. It is best to pick a longarm such as a rifle, submachinegun or shotgun, a pistol, and a blade weapon of some sort. Favourites vary from player to player — if *Mercenary, Book 4* is available people favour gauss rifles and snub pistols heavily; SMGs and shotguns are often favoured for their high hit probability and usefulness in close-quarter fighting such as board actions; the blade and the cutlass are probably the best blade weapons for the average character.

Once you have the weapons, note down your bonuses or penalties to hit in normal and weakened attacks. Note what type of ammo they have, how much of it there is, how much you use in each attack mode, what damage it does, and what else you can do with them — are there telescopic sights, can it fire grenades, can you use it as a club? Note also your effectiveness in brawling and with clubs, daggers and cudgels, since these are almost always to hand. Being organised saves your time and the referee's, so that you can all get on with the game.

Equipment — if you can afford it, buy tool kits, medical kits and so on for whatever skills you have, eg if your character has Electronics, get him electronic tools. Note down what the tools let you do, what they cost and weigh, and so on. Keep track of

how much weight your character is carrying, and have some idea about which order you'll abandon it in if you need to move fast. If you expect to be travelling in space, get a vac suit. Even without the skill, it vastly improves your chances of survival.

You must also keep track of your character's finances and his current health. Successful attacks will reduce, temporarily, your character's strength, dexterity and endurance. Leave room to note these reductions, find out about the wounding rules so that you can allocate damage sensibly, and keep track of what state your character is in.

### Characterisation

First we need to generate the character. There are six characteristics; each is rolled for with 2d6 (invariably written in the *Traveller* rules as 2D since *Traveller* only uses six-siders, and therefore need not specify how many sides there are). What do they mean?

**Strength.** How much physical power you can exert — how much weight you can lift, how hard you can push; things like that. A high strength allows you to wield blade weapons easily, and batter down an enemy's defences with them; thus you get bonuses with blade weapons for a good strength roll. It is also sometimes used as a very rough measure of size and weight for the character. High strength is advantageous if you want your character's prior experience to be in space marines or space scouts. A very low strength will reduce your ability in blade or hand-to-hand combat, since you find it harder to overpower your opponent, and some of the larger weapons are just too heavy for you.

**Dexterity.** Covers hand-eye co-ordination, ability to throw accurately, agility, reaction speed, and general quickness and cleverness of hand. A high dexterity allows you to point guns accurately and follow moving targets smoothly, so it gains you bonuses on attacks with guns. Conversely, a low dexterity give penalties on such attacks — perhaps your hand shakes too much or you cannot react quickly enough to shoot at a briefly-exposed and evading target. A good dexterity is useful for those characters intending to serve in the army, but is by no means essential for any character — until the bullets start flying.

**Endurance.** Combines physical fitness and will power. Broadly speaking, if strength governs how hard you can hit someone, endurance governs how long you can keep hitting him for. Or how long you can keep running, hanging on to the crumbling cliff ledge, and so on. The main purpose of endurance is in determining how many blows your character may make in each melee; one per point of endurance, after which you are winded and consequently attack at a penalty. A high endurance is supremely important for a would-be space scout, and is useful to the space marine or the army man.

**Intelligence.** While officially intelligence corresponds to IQ — itself in a very shaky position as a measuring-stick — I tend to interpret it as a measure of ability to learn, which makes it a combination of willpower and memory. It's easier to play a character who is simply more determined and with a better memory than yourself than it is to play a genius. Intelligence is useful in every career except the army, and is of supreme importance to the budding interstellar trader.

**Education.** Indicates the highest level of schooling reached by a character. Its main function in game terms is to define whether or not a character can acquire skills of a basically academic nature, but it is often used as a way of deciding whether or not a character has previously encountered some important fact or rumour. It is most useful to the space navy man, but careers in the army or marines can also be furthered by it.

**Social Standing.** Indicates your character's position in society; very high rolls indicate nobility, while lower rolls show a lower status. If high, it is useful for those aspiring to officer ranks within the navy or marines.

The most important aspect of your character is his personality. The best advice I can give here is to refer you to the sample character, Jamieson, in *Book 1 of Traveller*. In essence, the dice rolls are used to write a short story showing who the character is, what his service history has been, and why he is adventuring.

Suppose your merchant rolls a natural 2 for promotion in one term of service. Perhaps he was blamed for a major crash in which many people died. Perhaps it was really the captain's fault, and

your character was only a scapegoat. Perhaps the wreck was never salvaged, and there are quantities of gems aboard, and your merchant seeks to recover them and revenge himself on the captain, clearing his name. Perhaps he acquired several levels of Navigation skill in later terms. Obviously, he is applying himself with a will to locating the lost ship. How did he escape, and why doesn't he know where the ship is? He was found drifting in a lifeboat having lost his memory. . . or was he drugged by pirates? Who can tell? You see, you can get quite a lot out of the dice rolls you made in generating a character. Of course, in this case or many others, you'd have to clear it with the referee; if you have been involved in great events, others will know. In the case above, the captain may still be alive. He may want to shut the character up for good. People encountered in starports may recognise this merchant as the one who ate 110 passengers while waiting for rescue (although he claims he only ate one foot), and react accordingly. If you have a good story to tell about your character, it makes your gaming more fun and the referee's task is easier too, because you supply him with non-player characters and plots that he might use, or at least ideas for them. Most importantly, it may supply you with an objective.

The crucial thing for any *Traveller* character is an *objective*. A character must have a goal to direct himself towards, or the game will quickly become boring. He must have a reason for adventuring. There are many such, for example:

**Power.** People desire power for many reasons — some just for its own sake. Perhaps you must prove yourself worthy of a potential spouse. Perhaps you just like ordering people around.

**Money.** Perhaps you have huge debts from gambling. Perhaps you like the good life, and can't live in the style to which you are accustomed on a normal wage. Or you have an expensive thionite habit. Perhaps you just like money for its own sake. Maybe you are desperately afraid of growing old, and need piles of filthy lucre to pay for the anagathic drugs that will prevent it.

**Revenge.** You need money/power/status to revenge yourself on the people who . . . railroaded you out of the service; wrongly accused you of a foul crime; killed your parents/lover/begonias/best friend or any of a number of dark deeds.

**Wanderlust.** You like to see strange new worlds, perhaps; you just can't settle down to a 9 to 5 job after all that charging around the Galaxy shooting people; you crave excitement, maybe. Perhaps you are pursued by nefarious forces because you know too much about someone. Your Aunt Minnie is dying of Foulsham's Disease, and you've heard that the cure is known to tribal shamans somewhere in this subsector.

### Helpful Hints

First, whether you are the player or referee it is useful to have a couple of pregenerated characters handy in case you, or someone else, wants to join in quickly. People are sometimes put off by the time taken to generate characters, and certainly it's no fun for everyone else just waiting around as the eighth scout you've tried to dice up getseaten by a Ravenous Bug-Blatter Beaston Traal.

Characters should choose their morals, depending on their life history so far; but they should stick to them. A black-hearted villain who has been eating the low passengers to save on life-support costs is unlikely to be kind to small children, animals or beginning characters. Good guys don't mercilessly shoot opponents for no apparent reason. Be consistent, be believable. Don't give up your life of evil to become a scout-master just because it's convenient for the next half-hour or so. Pirates will not suddenly take a liking to player-characters just because they *are* players; captured merchants will not throw in a steady job to follow a band of footloose adventurers.

A major goal for every *Traveller* is improvement of his skills. For this reason, among others, *Book 4* is popular — it has the Instruction skill allowing characters to teach each other skills they know. However, people do not adventure because taking risks will improve their skills — they adventure to achieve their goals, whatever those may be, and improve their skills in between adventures by training, in order to adventure more safely and effectively.

*Next issue — Part II: Refereeing Traveller.*



# An Introduction to Traveller

PART 2: REFEREEING

BY ANDY SLACK



A new referee will need the *Basic Set: Books 1, 2 and 3*. Don't buy dozens of books, supplements and magazines without finding out whether you really like refereeing. If you are already a player, ask your referee what he would recommend, and watch what he is using.

In addition to the *Basic Set*, buy a commercially-produced adventure so that you can get some idea of how to set up scenarios. One of the following scenarios would make a good first buy: *The Kinunir*, *Research Station Gamma*, *Twilight's Peak* or Bob McWilliams' *Sable Rose Affair* (WD17 and *Best of WD Scenarios*) which has the advantage of being cheaper, but, like *Twilight's Peak*, assumes that you have *Book 4, Mercenary*. *The Kinunir* has the advantage of presenting four scenario possibilities. Each of the *GDW* booklets mentioned also detail a subsector-sized area of space, which can be used for later scenarios.

## Organisation

The keyword for a *Traveller* referee is preparation. There is no real fallback: if the referee isn't feeling inspired, the game isn't going to work and that's that. You must have some sort of plot ready by the time the band has finished equipping itself.

Preparation means knowing the rules, at least the ones which are likely to crop up in the adventure, and knowing the scenario itself. Thoroughly. You'll find that in the recommended scenarios there's very little working out in terms of dicing up characters, animal encounters etc. This will happen in your homegrown scenarios later, but to start with at least you can concentrate on actually running the game.

As you play, you'll rapidly come to know which tables and charts are consulted frequently; copy them somehow, this will save time and also wear and tear on the books. Have ready a price-list for weapons, various items of personal equipment, armour

and devices. You can get by with just the price, but ideally also have the weight, the tech level it's first available at, and the highest law level you can carry the item at. These become less important as you and your players get to know the game mechanics.

Make copies of player-characters. It is usually enough just to have their UPP and skills noted, with possibly service and age. If any player forgets his character record, you can then give him a brief precis, enough to play with — likewise if it gets lost. Sooner or later, he'll die, and then you can recycle that character as a non-player with a ready built personality. This tactic is especially useful if you have two or more bands that you referee. It also saves you having to ask characters what their skills or UPP are when saving rolls are required or in similar circumstances — for example, if you have some event which will only be noticed by an Electronics-3 or higher, it's a bit of a giveaway to ask 'Has anyone got Electronic-3?'. This is especially useful if one player has a skill he doesn't want the others to know about, particularly psionic talents. Without doubt the best medium for these brief sketches is the 3" x 5" index card.

## Maps

One frequently-advanced method is to collect real maps or maps from other games. If you're a stickler for atmosphere, you'll want to change the names. The overall planetary map isn't really necessary though several adventures require trekking across half a world searching for something. If you know full well that the band, however lost it gets, is not going to reach the other continents on the planet, why bother having a map of them? Conversely, the closer the area is to where the plot will reach its climax, the more detailed the map should be. Most action takes place in a fairly small area, so maps of things like buildings, towns, small tracts of wilderness, ships, and so on, are a necessity, but only do 'close-ups' when it matters. Think of your adventure as being like a novel; don't make the band play through every hour of tramping through the woods; a good storyteller, which is what you are trying to be, will say something like 'The adventurers toiled for hours through the dark, damp woods in the rain.' Be atmospheric by all means, but concentrate on the important scenes of your play, be proportional to its importance.

In the case of towns and buildings, I tend to describe places that I know well but the players don't, and use those more or less regardless. This saves a lot of time and effort in drawing a map and carrying it around. If the characters have a map it just means they will go straight there (wherever 'there' is) and you can omit the street directions. This doesn't work so well in wilderness, but most adventures take place because of and around specific people, which usually means in or near a town of some sort or a similar group of dwellings. Try to avoid using places your players know for this trick; first it ruins the atmosphere, and second, they may know it better than you, and then where are you?

You *will* need a detailed scale plan of wherever the punch-up is going to be, especially if you are using miniature figures. If you are running one or two people you can live without this, but with more than two it becomes essential as everyone loses track of where everyone else is and what they can see. How you handle hidden movement is up to you; it depends on how much you trust your players. They are few who will say, 'OK, I don't think I'd know that scorposaur was around the corner, so it should surprise me.' On the other hand, the players are just your friends, whereas the characters are rough, tough space rangers with 20 years experience of doing things like this.

It is useful, if you have a few other games, to carry their maps around with you. Things like *Sniper!*, *StarSoldier*, *Starship Troopers*, *GEV* will provide a terrain map for random punch-ups or other events that you've not got a plan ready for. People will argue that it's unrealistic to keep using the same three or four maps all the time; tell them it compensates for the fact that their characters have intimate knowledge of the local area — and they will

have; characters like that are going to spend hours poring over local maps and days walking the streets before and during a scenario.

### Methods

There are a couple of ways of starting: some people like to just read the description of the initial set-up to the players straight out of the book/zine/whatever, or, to be more atmospheric, start them a few days before they run into the patron so that they get the feel of the world or city, and start worrying about running out of money. This also allows time for equipment purchase.

Since you'll probably start by using a commercial scenario, you can follow that for the most part. You will make mistakes — everyone does. Don't worry about it. As you get into the swing of things they will become fewer. They will never disappear entirely; they usually involve an argument over the rules or scenario, and one of the main arts of the referee is to be able to adjudicate these. In their basic form, they consist of a player disagreeing with you about whether something is reasonable or not. You must be firm, but fair; consider his point of view, and if it sounds reasonable, agree. But you are the ref and your word is law. Many times you will just not be able to make up a convincing answer to a question on the spot; ask the dice. Phrase your problem as one or more yes/no questions and roll, high means yes.

Don't rely on technicalities of science for a plot, an adventure, or an excuse. You are far too likely to be wrong. People often forget that our science doesn't know everything, and that its history involves many reversals of theory. As with all things, it is a matter of balance. There are two rules: 'don't put it in the scenario if you haven't got a plausible excuse for its existence', and 'think of the effect first — then explain it.'

A common mistake among players and referees is to rely on gadgetry that often serves no useful purpose, in that when the grunge rifle is neatly worked out and typed up it is either capable of devastating continents or not much better than an ordinary rifle. In the first case, if the players, poor and unorganised as they are, have these things, the Imperium and police will have them as well because they've got unlimited money and research time. In the second case, what's the point of building it in the first place? You must always leave the players a way out, if they are but smart enough to think of it; so super-weapons are out. Super-gadgetry takes the emphasis away from players too; always the question is, if the machines are so good why are people still doing the job? This illustrates the Golden Rule of *Traveller*; it's the people that matter. You need believable characterisation of non-players' personalities, and that is the single most valuable item in a ref's armoury. Don't concentrate on *how* he's shooting up the party; concentrate on *why* he's firing. It's characterisation and background that will make or break a game and their interaction which will generate your plots and scenarios.

For many players, combat is the game. The trick is not to make it gratuitous violence, because people die awfully fast in *Traveller* and the first decent shot will waste them. The fighting must mean something; you don't usually get attacked as you put a quarter credit into a dopestick machine at the Travellers' Aid Society. People attack you for a reason — usually because you have something they want or vice-versa. The combat in a *Traveller* adventure should be of two kinds; random and planned. The random kind is from attacks by bandits, carnivores etc as the band travels towards its goal. These assailants have an 'incidental' purpose — they are hungry or after loot, and the players are the first thing to come their way since last Tuesday. Well and good, they keep the action moving along and stimulate interest. Try not to kill them here.

The planned kind are attacks by people or creatures with 'primary' purposes; they defend what the players are looking for, etc. This should be the climax of the whole adventure, the toughest fight for the biggest prize. This is how the heroes die; their minions can get snuffed by pirates on the way, but a player-character should always be able to ask with his dying breath, 'Did we make it?', and on being told that the rest of the group have succeeded, or at least escaped alive, gasp 'Then it was worth it!' A player must feel his character died for a worthwhile reason.

Let the players and the referee have the benefit of the char-

acters' knowledge. If a player knows Electronics and his character doesn't then the character cannot be allowed to use the players' knowledge. If the character knows Electronics and the player doesn't, don't say 'It's a mosfet,' and grin evilly. Say, 'It's a mosfet, which you know is a fairly common component that does so-and-so. . . .' Don't penalise a player for not knowing what his character does. Likewise, you will often need to say, 'Well, I don't know how you'd use this mosfet to repair the radio, but you have Electronics-3. Whatever the best way to do it is, you'll know, if I don't, and that's what you'll do. Roll your dice.'

The game should run smoothly and enjoyably. This is more important than sticking to the rules. You are under no obligation to do things the way *GDW* or anyone else says you should, nor are you under an obligation to ignore anything that doesn't have someone's seal of approval on it as being official, nor are you obliged to accept everything that says *Traveller* on it somewhere. It is your game, and in the long run you have a veto on whatever anyone else says about how you run it, whether he be manufacturer, player, or what. But again it's a question of balance; you have to let your players help you in moulding your universe, and in any case it saves you work — just remember you have the last word.

As to how many players, the game is best with 2-4 like any role-player. The most I've ever handled with any success is 6; with more than 3, it's a fair bet someone is getting bored.

### Expansions

If you are certain you do want to referee the game on a long-term basis, you will be thinking of getting some of the various expansions and supplements. Decide whether you are going to create your own campaign or use pre-generated backgrounds supplied by manufacturers or magazines. If you want to stay with *GDW's* universe, for instance, you will be well-advised to make *Supplement 3, The Spinward Marches*, your next item. Whether you design your own campaign or not depends on how much time, money, and imagination you have. If money is not a problem, but you don't have a great deal of spare time, the best bet is to follow most other referees and stay with the *Spinward Marches*. There is still a lot you can do fleshing it out and creating scenarios, depending on how creative you are, or simply in running other people's adventures well.

In terms of rules, it depends what you want. Almost certainly you will want *Mercenary, Book 4*; it is to *Traveller* as *Greyhawk* was to original *D&D*. The expanded generation system turns out much more skilled and military-oriented characters, which the players like; there are stacks of new weapons and armour, a few scenario ideas, an abstract system for large combats, and the mighty Instruction skill which allows people to learn new skills — or rather, teach them.

*Snapshot* is also useful, though by no means necessary, presenting a more detailed close combat system, a couple of deck plans, and some scenarios. *Mayday* is less worthwhile, having a variant of the *Book 2* ship combat rules which is easy and fast in play. There are also the missile construction rules.

With *Book 5, High Guard*, you will be mainly interested in the first dozen pages or so — the expanded naval character generation system. You can have some fun finding out that the *Book 2* small craft are impossible to build using the *Book 5* small craft system, designing some new ones to player shipowners' orders, and ego-trip building million-ton deathstars you'll never be able to use in a scenario, but basically you want the character system.

Since the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* is usually out of print within weeks, you may want to subscribe. Its main advantage is the continuous stream of scenario ideas — they need a lot of work to be playable sometimes, but the idea's the thing. *The Best of the Journal*, issues 1-4, is worth getting if you like robots and asteroid miners since it covers these, as well as the famous Gazelle class, which is a very nice ship.

As to supplements, I find *Animal Encounters* helpful because I'm too lazy to roll them up myself, and *Citizens of the Imperium* for its new character types. ■

*Next issue: Part III — Scenarios.*



# An Introduction to Traveller

## PART 3: SCENARIOS

BY ANDY SLACK



A scenario in *Traveller* is the focus of a game session. It is typically opened by some powerful non-player character hiring the player-characters for a specific purpose and for a specific reward. The adventure then occurs as the players attempt to perform the task set them by the patron, and pick up whatever else they can along the way. This poses several immediate questions.

First: Why has a powerful person chosen to hire these blood-thirsty down-and-outs anyway? (Immediately followed by 'And why does he trust them?') The patron is often a person of considerable influence in government, commerce or the military; why hasn't he got minions on tap to do his dirty work? There are several reasons why someone who can afford to pay the group enough to make their efforts worthwhile should hire them.

1: He can't get hold of normal employees with the right skills. For example, if a patron needs something forging he may well not have a resident forger in his company or office. The right skills could be illegal, or otherwise hard to come by, due to a high casualty rate — there aren't any of his usual staff who will take such a dangerous job, or because the world the band are on hasn't got anyone with the right skill; for example a Tech Level 3 ruler who needs an electronic engineer to repair his communications net and has no locals suitably trained. Perhaps there was an engineer present from the company which installed this equipment, who has now been scalped by rival rulers or recalled by head office because the bills weren't paid. This may be more sophisticated; an Imperial base commander would normally have some pilots attached to his organisation, but if accidentally they are in hospital, on a course in another system, drunk, in jail, or performing other vital duties while the free trader *Cerberus* is falling into the sun with disabled drives, he may well hire or commandeer the players to drive a rescue mission.

2: The patron's normal employees can't be trusted. The commission is perhaps illegal, and if his usual staff were ordered to do it they would turn the patron in to the local cops. Again, if the patron's men are being watched he may try to recruit someone whom the watchers will not suspect or connect with him. Locals are perhaps 'out to get' the patron, and he feels that the group will be safe by virtue of their foreign origins — they will be uninvolved in local politics or unsympathetic to it. The commission need not be illegal; it could be just distasteful, like evicting crippled grannies at Christmas. It could be neither; a mega-corporation surveying a new region for minerals, aware that its rival monitors its own prospecting teams.

3: In this case, the players are to be a sacrificial decoy; another group is performing the actual mission in secret, and the players are there as a scapegoat and diversion. For example, a spy or assassin about to knock over a prominent politician could well hire the players, ostensibly to do the hit, and at the last minute betray them to the police so that his own attempt has fewer obstacles, the police being occupied with the players. A variant on this is the blackmailed patsy; in this case, the players are threatened with even more dire consequences if they don't undertake the suicide run. Another variant is the case where the patron secretly expects the players to be caught doing something illegal, and wants to be able to deny his involvement — difficult if he used his own minions.

Of course, there are many more possibilities, such as being hired by peasants to do a remake of *Seven Samurai*, finding rumours, lost documents and so on. Why should the patron trust the

players? Again, there are several possibilities.

1: Reputation. The players may be well-enough established that the patron has heard of their competence and fair play. This is only possible if the players don't move around too much; but perhaps the patron or a friend of his has used this band before and been satisfied, or perhaps their service records are exemplary. Note that this works both ways — a referee could modify the chances of a commission turning up depending on how the previous ones were handled. For example, 'Big Luigi says you guys are good with safes, so I came looking for you', or alternatively, 'Thinks: This bunch are all thumbs — no way am I hiring them after that fiasco at the Altair State Bank.'

2: Blackmail. The patron has something on the band, possibly details of previous capers, and threatens to make it public unless the group performs his commission; alternatively, the players can be framed by police or other agencies and told that charges might be dropped if they could see their way to doing this little job... or some friend or relative of the players may be held hostage.

3: Lack of opportunity for betrayal. The patron has some more trustworthy operatives watching or working with the band and so expects to be able to detect and forestall any treachery.

4: Lack of motive for betrayal. This occurs when the commission is so seemingly innocuous that the band have nothing to gain by betraying their patron. This is usually the set-up when the apparent commission is only incidental to the main flow of the adventure, as for example when the group is to uncover some sinister plot or treasure 'accidentally' during the course of their work. Alternatively, though this is not recommended, the commission if handled honestly could be so lucrative as to tempt not even the greediest and nastiest character.

Naturally, if the scenario is set in motion not by a patron hiring the band, but by 'accidentally' finding some item or data, or by an attack on them, the above motives are not necessary.

The second question is, what is the task the band are to perform? Here the range of possibilities is so large as to be practically infinite, but in practice there are two broad types of mission; acquisition and defence. This is an over-simplification, but basically the band can be hired to obtain some item, person or information, or to make sure that someone else doesn't. Exactly what the object or target is is variable; rare objets d'art, high-ranking nobleman's children, information about a manufacturing process or a particular place, and so on.

In *WD30's Starbase* Bob McWilliams made an important point — essentially when you see or read anything that inspires you, take a brief note of the plot and major characters. Details will need to be changed so that the plotline fits into your own campaign background, and so that the players don't recognise it and thus immediately leap to the right conclusion. Don't neglect actual history, either; even some other FRP games can provide good ideas.

It saves a great deal of time and effort if you only note down the bare bones of your plot, in the style of *Supplement 6's* commissions. A scenario only needs great detail if you want someone else to be able to run it, for example if you intend to publish it. If you are primarily interested in having an enjoyable game for a few hours with some friends, you won't need all that detail — much of it will already be in your background notes (these are often mental) for the campaign or subsector of space you are currently running. And the longer you have been running a



particular universe, the briefer your notes will become, as you and your players will remember some of it from previous games, such as the political situation fuelling the current crisis they have become involved in, or the local alien life's habits.

This improvisational style, only generating the details as necessary using logic or dice rolls, is difficult at first, but improves with practice, and especially if you remember or note down these details as they appear in response to the player's questions, it gradually becomes easier. There is a stage after a few dozen hours play where the whole set-up becomes self-sustaining, and previous happenings more or less dictate what the details must be.

After you have been running your universe for a few scenarios, you will find ideas for later ones starting to appear. You'll put yourself momentarily in the shoes of major non-player characters, and ask yourself: 'Shouldn't he really want to do something about such-and-such?' Hire the party, for instance? Or attack them in revenge for their theft of his prize orgone accumulator? Here is where the true homegrown commissions come from — the interaction of your background and your non-player patrons. The more detailed these become, the more scenarios they will produce. The characters' own activities help, too; they may decide to aim for some common goal, such as stealing a starship or finding a psionics institute; and your scenario will practically write itself from then on.

An article called *Instant Adventures* in Volume V, No 10 of *The Dragon*, by Michael Kelly is a very useful piece, listing a couple of dozen basic plots for scenarios, and in each case giving notes on what preparation the referee has to make for the scenario and how long this will take.

The next question is that of reward. What should the player characters get if they are successful? Reward covers many things; most frequently it will be cash, but it could also be in terms of useful knowledge (location of the psionics institute, perhaps), favours from those in high places, improvement of skills or psionic talents (though this must not be overdone, and such improvement is best purchased by training between adventures), the dropping of charges against the group, or something simple like not

having their arms and legs removed without anaesthetic.

Reward depends on how much your players already have, how long they have to wait between jobs, and how important success is to the patron. The patron's own wealth is also a major consideration. There is more opportunity for unbalancing the game through giving players too much as a reward for success than in any other way. As a rough guide, it helps to think of a Credit (the *Traveller* monetary unit) as being worth about 50p; this is also useful when asked by a player for the price of something not listed in the rules.

The average traveller will live comfortably for a couple of months on a thousand or so Credits, and this should be your minimum reward for each adventurer so long as they only have themselves and their personal equipment to support. The maximum reward should be a couple of tens of thousands of Credits; enough to live well for a while and travel on to the next world, and buy some useful equipment. This is the level to start players at if you can; it minimises work in designing planets and the affairs of worlds.

Some players start with starships, or eventually obtain them. The minimum reward for anyone who has enough money (or big enough debts) that the above rewards are no longer tempting should be tens of thousands, the maximum hundreds of thousands. By now the player has several minions to support and a vehicle or two; he is nearing the end of the rise to power started when he was satisfied with Cr1,000 for a job.

There is a natural progression towards greater wealth and power among player characters. The wealthier they become, the more equipment and minions they will acquire; thus the more easily they can succeed in simple commissions. Fortunately, these simple commissions then no longer pay enough to satisfy; so larger-scale plots are required, which because of their greater scope are rarer, more difficult, and with greater rewards attached. After perhaps several years of play, some groups will have accumulated enough wealth to design a ship for themselves; this is generally a break-point — from that moment on the group must search out its own tasks, invent its own commissions as it were, since they have become patrons in their own right.

An alternative to this pattern of 'one-off' scenarios is the service adventure, which can take several forms but essentially, the players are hired as troubleshooters on a long-term basis by some patron or other. This has advantages, in that the players have an overall goal. Here, they need simply obey orders until the time comes when their character is developed enough to have its own aim in life. These orders, by the way, like all orders from patrons and commissions, should be broad outlines, with actual tactical objectives and methods left to the group's discretion. Otherwise, if the patron offers guidance and gives orders at every step, there is no need for any players, and they certainly have no sense of influencing events, which is important to the feel of the game.

A second advantage is that powerful equipment necessary for a particular scenario can be more easily loaned to the characters, then repossessed after the trip so as not to make them too powerful for the next mission.

The disadvantage is that players may feel stifled by being part of an organisation; they may want to do something different, turn the task down and so on. They can always leave the service; but in fact, since the referee rarely has more than one or two scenarios which are ready to run, the players' choice isn't really that much more limited.

This approach gives the referee more control over the players, who may be organised into a chain of command with one player having actual authority over the others, usually by virtue of rank or social standing. Also, it eases the referee's tasks in preparing adventures for the group by reducing his options; and paradoxically, it is sometimes easier to create a scenario if your initial possibilities are limited. It is useful to find out what sort of services the players would like to be in if this is the way you're going; they might not have mustered out of the military yet. Other potential employers worthy of note are megacorporations requiring security guards or explorers to search for new markets and products in an unmapped sector, mercenary companies, intelligence moguls, pirates or bandits of any kind, and bounty hunters. ■

Next issue — Part IV: Campaigns.



Gael Magee

# An Introduction to Traveller

## PART 4: CAMPAIGNS

BY ANDY SLACK

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*In this issue's Introduction to Traveller Andy Slack looks at the ways referees can go about setting up their own campaign universes and where to get and how to use interesting ideas and plots for adventures to run.*

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The decision to run a campaign can occur any time during your exposure to the game; sometimes people become referees solely in order to start a campaign, at other times a campaign will grow almost by itself out of a linked list of scenarios. So how to go about it?

The question is, what kind of adventures do you want to referee? That's to say, are the players going to be revolutionaries, spies, would-be merchant princes, mercenaries, serving Imperial personnel, criminals? The key point is that too many referees start by designing their universe, and only then asking what the players can do in it. Start by deciding what kind of adventures to run, and create a campaign background which will give suitable opportunities.

Second important decision: How much of your campaign will be homegrown, and how much borrowed from published games, scenarios, novels, films and so on? There are several factors bearing on your choice. First and pragmatically, how much time, effort and money are you prepared to sink into your campaign? Which do you have more of to spare? If money is no object, but you have practically no spare time to design in, you will probably wind up running a *Spinward Marches* variant campaign from published material. The important thing to bear in mind is that it will be a variant; any published sector is necessarily vague, and since we are all individuals as soon as we start filling in the details those details will diverge from the designer's idea of how the universe works. Be prepared to remind your players gently from time to time that you are under no obligation to include *Supplement 47's* ideas on grunge rifles into your campaign, just because they happen to be waving it under your nose.

Using published materials, especially the *Spinward Marches*, has another advantage besides being quick; if you move around a lot, or meet a lot of new players who will be in the group only temporarily, you will have a lot less explaining to do since most of them will already be familiar with the background. Also, if you use a reasonably high-quality product, you can be certain of it being fairly believable - important if you haven't run or played in too many campaigns previously.

The second alternative for a campaign demands both a reasonable amount of cash and quite a bit of effort. This kind of campaign is based on a novel, film, or game. In this, you get the novel, film script, game, whatever you're using, and go through it notebook in hand, taking notes on the background, worlds, governments, technology, races, and so on. Then you sit down with the notes and the rules and translate everything into *Traveller* terms. Again, both you and your players must expect the campaign to slowly diverge from the source. This method has advantages and disadvantages as do they all; some of your players will know the source, and so you'll have less explaining to do; some of them will know it better than you, and ask Awkward Questions. Care must be taken as to which source you use, but this is a matter of personal taste. For novels and series, I'd recommend the *Dominic Flandry* and *Polesotechnic League* stories, both by Poul Anderson; E C Tubb's *Dumarest* saga; Jerry Pournelle's *Future History* (including the *Mote in God's Eye*); H Beam Piper's *Federation and Empire* stories; Frank Herbert's *Dune*. And, of course the *Star Wars* films. Most TV series and SF films are a bit unbelievable for my own taste.

The third major method is to do it all yourself. Obviously, this is at once the cheapest and most time-consuming, and it also has to be explained to your players in detail - though not necessarily all at once. However, it will be exactly what you want, and have exactly what you want in it.

What follows is perhaps less relevant to a campaign based on published sources or novels, but is essential to the do-it-yourself

variety.

It consists of writing an overview of your background. This needs to cover both the history and geography of the campaign area - perhaps astrography would be a better word. You need a rough sketch-map of campaign space; this has to show the location and extent of the major power blocs and governments. Do you see the future as a mass of system-states, a vast all-encompassing Empire, or a myriad tiny states of a few to a few dozen planets each?

In trying to 'predict' the future for our games, it's helpful to look to the past. Throughout history there have been pressures for unification of small communities like the Greek city-states; the unification has usually happened, and by conquest or colonisation. Once unified, states are usually held together by loyalty to a leader or dynasty, which is usually supported by the priesthood. So whatever they call themselves, we will likely have a state religion and leaders.

In the *Traveller* universe, the area governed by an interstellar state - assuming one would rise out of the 'inevitable' pressure to unify - is large, and communication across it is slow. The government must have two attributes then; emotional ties to keep its subjects loyal, and stability. A hereditary aristocracy has both these, and while not inevitable, has the advantages of being believable and having a lot of opportunity for scenarios. The ancient Persians are a good place to start looking for ideas on how to run your Empire.

Now, assuming you have a fair-sized Empire, as most referees do, there is one thing you must keep in mind; the Emperor is likely to be more worried about one of his provincial governors revolting and trying to seize the throne or become independent than anything else short of a really major interstellar war. How is he going to ensure it doesn't happen? Again, the Persians had some good ideas. These include independent inspectors wandering around, spies everywhere, the best communications you can manage, and being related to all the provincial rulers. A common step is to separate military and civil rule, so that the armed forces are controlled by independent admirals/generals.

How big is your main state going to be? That is, the state your players live in. Probably it will grow to the maximum size its communications will allow; if we assume that the state will build the best possible courier ships and is prepared to cope with a lag of, say, two years between sending an order and getting an acknowledgment of its receipt - about the biggest lag humans have ever managed - then you have the answer straight away; depending on the rules in use, your Empire will have jump-5 or jump-6 couriers, so at most it will be 52 weeks x jump-6 in radius, or about 300 parsecs from frontier to capital. A little smaller wouldn't hurt, as it's now too big for comfortable comprehension. Using the unadulterated *Book 3* rules, that gives the Empire about 3,500 subsectors and almost 150,000 worlds. More than you'll ever need.

The other states must include several roughly comparable in size to the main one - its main rivals; and many smaller ones.

You're probably panicking by now! Calm down. You will never need more than a dozen or so subsectors to play in; the rest need only be very roughly sketched in on a master map the players will likely never see. When you pick the locale for your campaign, choose a frontier region since this gives the adventurers the most scope. The police are too powerful nearer the centre of government. So, you have a sketch map maybe the size of a *WD* page with major states blocked out on it, and have picked an area of a few subsectors in size to be the main theatre of action.

On to history. Simply put, this must tell how the state the





players are citizens of got to its present position. Again, real history can be shamelessly stolen. Major historical events, such as wars, the invention of jump drive, brief history of the rulers and possibly the state religion, are sketched out on a sheet or two of paper. The players' characters are useful here, especially in the expanded *Mercenary* and *High Guard* systems; their prior service die rolls and assignments fill in detail of the last few decades. If a marine was involved in a battle 4 years ago, there must have been one around then for him to fight in; check your map and decide with whom he fought. How long has the main state had a presence in the region? Why did it come? Was anyone there before then, and how did they feel about it?

The history should also touch briefly on alien races, if any. Alien races are essentially chrome; they look nice and give a nice feel to the game, but usually not necessary. Most adventures can get by very well with only humans involved, the same as most science fiction games. Whenever you introduce one, think - could I achieve the same effect with humans or human states? Most players will request aliens for one of two reasons: (a) to give them something horrible to shoot at with the full approval of their government and other non-player characters; (b) to get hold of a superhuman

character for themselves. The classic examples of (a) and (b) respectively are Bugs (from *Starship Troopers*) and either Vulcans or Wookies for the second. In either case, humans are quite sufficient for game purposes. Nonetheless, most referees will want alien races to help the 'feel' of the game - and rightly so! But make sure they *are* alien, and moderately believable; make sure their motives and approach to problems are different from the established human norm of your campaign. Limit them to about one new race per subsector at most.

You've selected a region of the master sketch map and given it an interesting mention in your historical overview. Now, you choose a subsector arbitrarily and work through it in reasonable detail, dicing up the worlds and assigning its worlds to one or another, or none, of the local states and races. No more than the subsector map, names and statistics or worlds are required yet. If you know exactly what kind of worlds you want there, don't dice them; design them deliberately.

Now choose one of your worlds and flesh it out in detail. Bearing in mind everything you've decided so far, you now create the world the adventurers will start on. It may not need fleshing out; you may have pinched one from a published source. You need, in addition to the stats, a couple of pages on the society, government, and mores of the locals, and a few NPC personages worked out in some detail - note that the more powerful the NPC, the less need you have of his characteristics and skills; attitudes and motives are far more important, and increasingly so at higher social levels.

I recommend an essentially earthlike world to start with; this minimises the shock of adjusting for both referee and players. A low-grade starport will help you keep the players on-planet until you're ready for them to move on; size, atmosphere and water percentage similar to our own mean you can stop worrying about them and get on with the adventure; a balkanised world with several governments allows for plenty of action on one world, and average to low law and tech levels help the fun. Population should be fairly low, though, at around levels 5-8, to give a pleasant frontier atmosphere.

Animal encounter tables - well, I usually use *Supplement 2*. It's a lot of hassle dicing up endless animals most of which will be only peripheral details on the game's progress, mere background detail of an unimportant kind. What is important to the game is the creature's appearance and habits, for background and often the animals will hardly enter into an adventure at all. Only if you expect your group to be heavily involved with animals in their adventures on the planet should you bother working them out or detailing them. If you do, I recommend a look at Dougal Dixon's book *After Man* and David Attenborough's *Life on Earth*, both of which will show that creatures can be weird and still believable. An interesting technique is used by Dixon, which referees could well adopt; take an ordinary animal, say a rat or penguin, and stuff it into the wrong ecological niche. Leave for 25 million years to evolve, and see what you come up with. Dixon's penguins which have tried to do a whale's job, or rats hired as polar bears through lack of other suitable applicants, have a marvellous feel to them and would enhance any role-player. Such animals are believable and consistent, but at the same time novel. That's what you need.

The struggle - I'll be brief here as I've already covered this theme in *Backdrop of Stars* [WD24]. Until your players find their feet and invent their own goals in your universe, you must provide them with a struggle to generate commissions. A war or revolution perhaps, culled from your background - that is essentially what it is for, to generate moderate-to-large scale plots in which the players may become immersed. Do the players think they are good guys or wearing black hats? Are they freedom fighters or terrorists in their own eyes? And what do the locals, the government, think of them? It's more fun if the viewpoints aren't in agreement; as for example when the players see themselves as neutrals out for a quick buck, the locals see them as daring Robin Hood types, and the government sees them as terrorists...

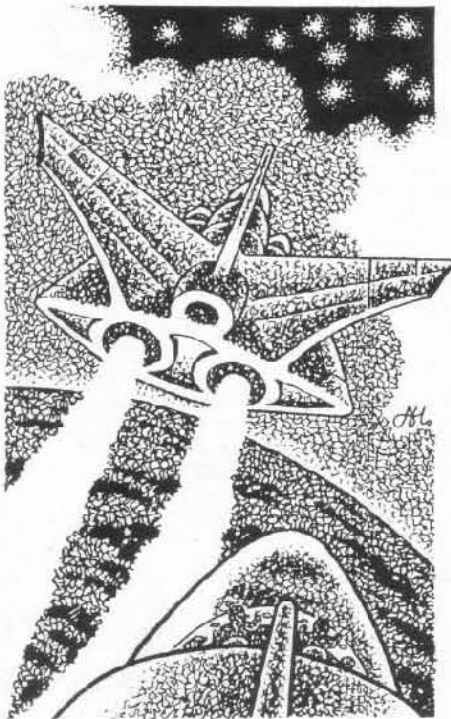
Essentially, this is the overall plot of your series of adventures. Each scenario along the way is part of a grander design - a coup d'etat is a nice one to aim at. The struggle is tricky, though; you must try to stop the players from getting so powerful that they have no further need to adventure, while not making them feel that whatever they do makes no difference to the flow of games' events. □



# STAND BY TO REPEL BOARDERS

Starship Security in Traveller  
by Andrew Miller

Starbase is a regular Traveller department edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, starship security in Traveller - standing orders for piracy.

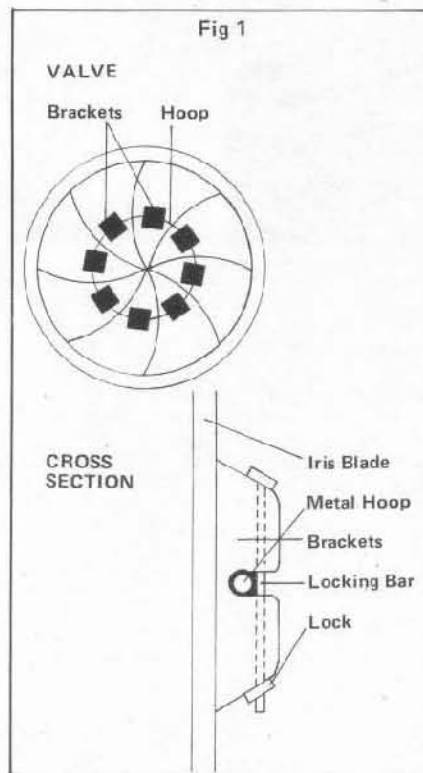


## Portals

Iris valves are not indestructible and can only take as much damage as a bulkhead. To positively lock an iris valve brackets are fitted to each blade so that a metal hoop can be passed through and locked into all of them (see fig 1).

Hatches open into areas which defenders will probably be able to hold and are fitted with a locking bar on that side. Important portals are usually fitted with weapon detectors hooked up to the bridge. Crew are issued with tags sewn into their clothing (only they know where) which negate the detectors.

Fig 1



## Interior Conditions

These are always controlled from the bridge. Pressure is very useful in defence. Defending areas are put up to two atmospheres and attacking areas are depressurized or filled with a low

pressure opaque gas. Defenders should stay affixed to walls away from the entrance so when the entrance is finally forced open (despite the locking bar and two atmospheres pressure) they are not half killed by the rush of air and debris. Sadistic defenders scatter small razor sharp fragments around to slash up enemy vacc suits (count as shotgun).

Light and gravity can also be used to help the defence. Switching off the gravity gives three dimensions to move in and increases the area an enemy must scan or shoot up. Lack of light can slow up enemies, especially if they are trying to move heavy cutting gear along narrow corridors. Alternatively, darkness will hide defenders while red light is used to show up attackers.

## Design

All too often I have seen air locks which open into bridges or maintenance hatches that lead through the avionics into the bridge. The bridge is the nerve centre and must be protected; if this area falls, all the ship will. It is preferable to mount it centrally with the only access a single, fairly long, straight corridor. The power plant should be fitted with the bridge as loss of this means loss of communications, energy weapons (including crew lasers), iris valves, main lighting, detection systems and air pumps. Also the computer, security room, armoury, ship's locker and some avionics can be fitted with the bridge. This measure also helps stop battle damage to these vital systems.

Corridors can be protected by fitting armoured shields, which swing down garage door style, to block them at intervals. They can be fitted with gunports and take as much damage as bulkheads. They are fitted only in crew-only areas to avoid panicking passengers.

Always handle NPCs intelligently and make use of standard fittings. For instance, steel discs and a rapid setting concrete-like foam are used to seal the hull in emergencies; the foam can be used to seal hatches as well. Fire sprinklers can be used to help disperse some smoke and gases. 'Use your head' is the main message. □

*As a Traveller starship designer, I feel I should add a few comments of my own. Any ship is bound to be a compromise between conflicting requirements, and for the sake of interest each should be different. These criteria mean that ideal arrangements will not and should not be very common. Who wants to hi-jack an impregnable ship? This does not mean that the crew shouldn't have a fighting chance - in that Andrew is correct.*

*Regarding some specific points, it seems to me that the primary requirement for the power plant is to be as close as practicable to the manoeuvre and jump drives, partly to reduce energy transfer loss, partly to simplify engineering access. Huge amounts of power are involved and it does not seem wise to have cables running the length of the ship to transfer this energy. Remember also that the power plant is usually a fusion reactor, and radiation is not the best neighbour for delicate electronic equipment. -BM*

## Weaponry

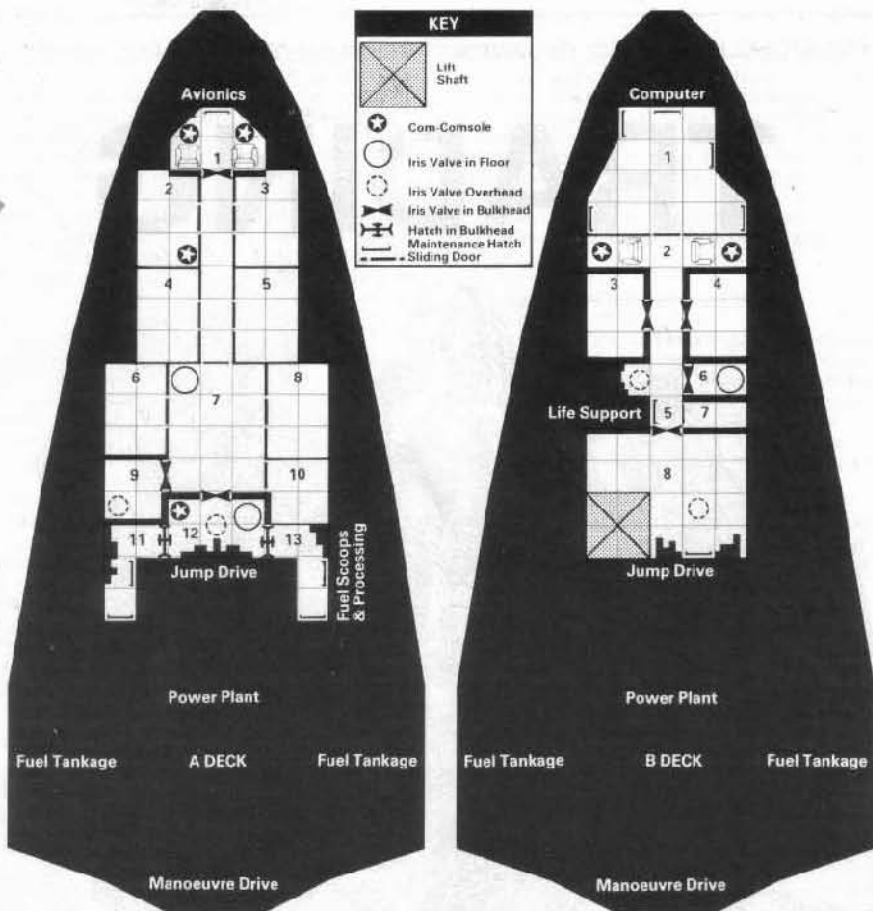
Most starship crews are heavily vetted and carry armaments while in flight. For corridor personnel the standard armament is snub pistols and flak jackets, while personnel likely to come into contact with passengers would carry a concealed body pistol at most. Large ships have security personnel, armed with assault rifles or shotguns.

In the event of a boarding all crew will don vacc suits, and change to laser weapons which are racked at frequent intervals in crew-only areas. To prevent the use of these weapons by boarders, no power packs are provided; they plug into power outlets, set into the walls, and controlled from the bridge. Passengers are disarmed before they embark and their weapons are stored in the ship's locker until after arrival.

# ASSIGNMENT SURVEY!



Dorsal Turret



## Explorer Class Scoutships in Traveller by Andy Slack

The familiar Type S scout/courier fulfils vital needs within the Imperium by its exploratory and courier work; in survey missions beyond the Imperium borders, it is carried aboard vessels of cruiser displacement, and thus its performance need not be great, since it will either be within known space or near a base ship with considerable facilities. However, megacorporations also conduct exploratory missions, and rarely wish to construct specialist scout cruisers; yet the type S has neither the size nor the range to be used alone.

For this reason, in 941 the Red Giant Corporation issued a specification to Solstice Yards of Fodor for a long-range, heavy scout vessel for use by its trade pioneer teams in their planned survey of the volume of space near Alpha Scorpii, beyond the boundaries of the Terran Empire. The *Explorer* class was the final product.

During the proving trials, ITSS and naval procurement officials became interested in the class; and while the original purpose of the class was as a transport for commercial pioneers seeking new markets and sources of products for their sponsoring corporation, the craft are now to be found in government service; the navy uses them for courier and reconnaissance duties, while the ITSS vessels perform these functions and 'First-In' survey missions in addition.

### SPECIFICATIONS

Tonnage:	300 tons standard, 4200 cubic metres.
Crew:	5.
Dimensions in Metres:	42L x 19.5W x 10H.
Acceleration:	2g constant.
Jump:	5.
Powerplant:	5.
Engineering:	One Malvatnikov 27F fusion power plant driving one NovZem Motors Q4 impulse manoeuvre drive and one TCS Drives type 15 Mk II series Jump drive.
Gravities:	Variable floor fields, 0-2g, and inertial compensators.
Electronics:	One RSM Computronics Mk V series 17 computer with integral fire control and AstroScan sensor package.
Range:	Unlimited manoeuvre, one Jump-5 (165 tons fuel tankage). 30 days standard supply consumption.
Armament:	Variable, depending on mission and owner. Typically one beam laser with facilities for ladar sensing and commo duty, and one missile rack modified to launch sensor probes and message torpedoes as well as dogfight missiles.
Screens:	None.
Configuration:	Wedge. Unarmoured. Fully streamlined.
Capacity:	One passenger, 11 tons of cargo (usually trade samples and/or data storage modules).
Ship's Vehicles:	Two standard air/rafts.
Special Features:	Fuel scoops and purifiers. Crew escape pods. Observation platform. 'Evil Eye' sights.

### CREW ROSTER

Ranks are given for the Merchant Service to represent trade pioneer teams, for the Navy to represent fleet couriers, and for the ITSS [See *Star Patrol*, WD20] to represent scout service First-In teams.

The medic is usually required to man the

dorsal turret in combat. If extra crew seem necessary, staterooms may be used in the double occupancy mode, allowing at most 12 persons aboard - however, even in double occupancy it is rare to carry more than 10 persons, as this would require dismantling and storing the medical apparatus in A6.

Position	Merchant	Navy	Scout	Stateroom	Duty Station	Battle Station
Pilot	Captain	Sub-Lt	G4	A2	A1	A1
Navigator	1st Off	CPO	G3	A3	A1	A1
1st Eng	2nd Off	PO 3rd	G3	A4	A12	A12
2nd Eng	4th Off	Able SH	G2	A5	A12	A12
Medic	4th Off	Able SH	G2	A8	A6	Dorsal turret

**DECK PLAN LOCATION KEY**

Dorsal Turret. Floor iris valve to A12.  
Doubles as astrogation blister.

**A Deck.**

1. Bridge. Positions for pilot and navigator; one collapsible 'jump seat' for visitors. Command override of engineering functions in the event that the drive room is disabled.
- 2-5. Crew staterooms.
6. Passenger stateroom. In non-courier service, this is usually outfitted as a sick bay; the equipment may be removed and stored in the hold to allow extra accommodation.
7. Crew common area. Floor iris valve to B5. Includes cooking and recreational facilities.
8. Crew stateroom.
9. Main airlock. Ceiling iris valve to exterior dorsal surface.
10. Ship's locker.
11. Port drive access crawlway. This cramped passage slants up from the deck and curves aft; it is less than half a metre high at the best, and partially obstructed by protruding pieces of equipment. It allows in-flight maintenance of the drives, and some limited repair work on commonly-failing components.
12. Drive room. Positions for two engineers; one collapsible 'jump seat' for visitors. Iris valves to B8 and dorsal turret.
13. Starboard drive access crawlway. Similar to A11, but allows access to the fuel purifier and flight recorders.

**B Deck.**

1. Payload bay. In service, this carries various specialist sensor or data storage gear as appropriate to the mission; if encountered on detached duty or in private hands, may have been converted to a store room, recreation area, etc.
2. Circulation space. To port and starboard are remote control gunnery positions for ventral turrets.
3. Port air/raft bay. In service, often used as a specimen or data store, or as extra cargo space (4 tons), omitting the air/raft. Floor swings down and port to serve as a bay door.
4. Starboard air/raft bay. Normally the air/raft carried here is left in place, as without it the craft is slightly unstable and rolls to port in rough weather (-2 to any handling rolls made while in this condition). Floor swings down and starboard to serve as a bay door.
5. Circulation space. Ceiling iris valve to A7.
6. Emergency airlock. Auxiliary hand-crank mechanism to open iris valve to exterior ventral surface in case of power failure, by crank alone from inside or by crank and key from outside. The crashed ship usually rests on its ventral turret blisters.
7. Fresher.
8. Cargo hold. Ceiling iris valve to A12. Lift platform descends through exterior ventral surface on hydraulic 'legs', one at each corner, to ease loading.

**SHIP'S VEHICLES**

Two standard air/rafts are fitted for excursions on world surfaces.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

**Crew Escape Pods:** The bridge (A1) and the drive room (A12) are fitted with small solid fuel rocket motors, ablative shielding, and paraglider assemblies as well as very basic survival kits. In dire emergencies, either or both can be blown free of the main hull by small explosive charges, carrying the occupants clear of the wreck. The pods have automatic circuits which may be overridden from within the pod, but otherwise will take the following action: (a) if near a world with an atmosphere of 5 or greater, the pod will re-enter and land (roll 4- for success, DM -1 per person aboard in excess of 3. If this roll is failed, roll 1d6; if the result is odd, the pod has 'bounced off' the atmosphere and drifts helplessly off into space; if the result is even, the pod has burned up on re-entry. The pod has oxygen for 6 man-days. (b) if near a gas giant, or world with atmosphere 4 or less - which would render landing impossible, as the pod depends on atmospheric braking - the pod will attempt to achieve a stable orbit and transmit distress signals; (c) if in deep space, the pod will do nothing but transmit distress signals. A pod may only be launched by initiating the correct control sequence from within it. Limited manoeuvre is possible in, for example, docking at an orbital station. If either pod is

*941: The Red Giant Corporation commissioned the Solstice yards of Fodor for a heavy duty long range scout survey vessel. The Explorer class scoutship was born.*

launched, the ship's streamlining is ruined. If the drive room is launched, the bridge may take control of the drives, but not vice versa. When launching the drive room pod there is a slight delay as the dorsal turret must be explosively jettisoned first.

**Observation Platform:** The lift in B8 may be extended to the 'full down' position and locked there for use as an observation platform while in flight, provided the craft's speed does not exceed Mach 0.25 while in atmosphere. Slot-in safety rails are provided, along with lugs for attaching safety harnesses and recorders.

**Evil Eye Sight:** In the event that insufficient personnel are available to man all turrets, crew headsets on the bridge (A1) have a sensor mechanism enabling the turrets to be slaved singly or severally to the crew's head movements; thus, whatever the designated crew member is looking at, the turrets point at. This restricts weapons to a forward arc of fire, and targets that the designated crew being can actually see - range is thus restricted. Further, a DM of -1 is imposed on the roll to hit, and no DMs for skill are allowed. In some vessels, the weaponry may be placed in a fully automatic mode, in which any vessel within range

is automatically engaged so long as it continues to fire or manoeuvre. If several targets are present, the closest is engaged first. Such fire is at -2 to hit, and no skill DMs are allowed.

**BUILD DETAILS**

The majority of vessels constructed at Solstice Yards, Fodor, but some few unlicensed copies constructed beyond the jurisdiction of the Earth Police. In excess of 700 craft in use by various organisations, notably Red Giant Corporation's Trade Pioneer Division (250), Imperial Terran Scout Service (200 ordered and delivered, but some now being paid off), and Imperial Terran Space Navy (150 in service, but plans to phase these out as more modern units become available). Construction commenced in 948, and still continues on an intermittent basis. Vessels are typically named for famous explorers - Marco Polo, Shackleton, Afanasiy Nikitin, Gagarin, Armstrong etc.

**SECOND EDITION HIGH GUARD**

This vessel has been designed under 2nd edition *High Guard* rules. Its profile is as follows:

SH-3252551-000000-00000-0  
MCR 255.328 300 tons Crew 5 TL 14  
Passengers 1. Low 0. Cargo 11. Fuel 165.  
EP 15. Agility 2. Marines 0. Fuel scoops  
and purifiers. One double turret and two  
hardpoints.

**STANDARD COMPUTER PROGRAMMES**

The *Explorer* class is furnished with an RSM Computronics 5C basic software package when first purchased, which contains the following programmes: Manoeuvre; Jump 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5; Navigate; Target; Auto/Evade; Return Fire; Anti-Hijack; Library.

**USE IN ADVENTURES**

The referee may use this starship in a variety of ways. It may be used as a non-standard encounter; the above descriptions will allow the player to interact with it in the normal ways, from exchanging gossip to boarding. The mission the craft is engaged on when encountered will be obvious once its owner is determined.

It was designed, however, as a ship to be loaned to a group of players by a powerful patron for a long-term commission, much in the manner of *Adventure 4, Leviathan*; typically, the band will be approached by an executive of a mega-corporation and offered a contract as trade pioneers, to explore new worlds in search of markets and profits for the company, but the ship may also be used for deep penetration spy missions by obscure scout service agencies such as the Covert Survey Bureau [see next issue]. In such a ship, the band will be able to hold its own against most randomly encountered shipping short of naval units, and have considerable freedom of action, but will still be under the referee's control as he, in the guise of the shipowner, may still order the group.

Alternatively, any *Star Patrol* scout (or group of scouts) who can acquire three 'ship' benefits on mustering out may be granted constructive possession of one of these craft, on the usual terms. Next issue's scenario features this new ship. □



Starbase is a bi-monthly department devoted to readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, a new Imperial organization, also for use with this issue's scenario.



# The Covert Survey Bureau

An Imperial Intelligence Agency by Andy Slack

There are certain tasks which any government must perform, but to which it can never publicly admit; the secret and darker side of diplomacy, also called espionage. The Terran Empire is no exception, and it, too, has an instrument which performs distasteful tasks for the good of the state. This is the Covert Survey Bureau, usually referred to as the CSB; an obscure corner of the Imperial Terran Scout Service whose openly-acknowledged brief is the survey of a

newly-discovered cultures to assess the desirability and likely results of more formal contact, and the optimum methods of contacting the culture.

In addition to its stated task, the Bureau also sifts reports by serving and detached scout personnel; monitors and intercepts messages within and beyond the Imperial borders; creates and breaks codes and ciphers; prevents espionage by foreign powers against the Imperium; supports revolutionary, terrorist and

pirate organisations whose actions further the state's ends; and conducts espionage operations beyond the Imperium borders. The CSB has a controlling interest in several medium-sized companies, including a merchant shipping line, to aid its operations.

Actual structure is fluid, but in four layers. At the top of the pyramid are administrators, responsible for overall strategy and policy.

The second layer is composed of case officers or directors, local commanders who control and pay agents on a day-to-day basis. These are rarely involved in any dirty work, and normally have a legitimate cover as, for example, an embassy official.

The third layer is that of the agents or operatives, who perform actual operations as directed by a case officer. Their main activity is developing contacts who can pass them useful information, typically by bribery, blackmail, seduction or threats. If sabotage or assassinations are required, these persons carry it out. Agents are normally native to the world of their employment, and frequently believe themselves to be working for someone other than their true employer. Agents are at the full mercy of the local authorities if caught, unlike the case officer, who will either have diplomatic immunity or work from the relative safety of the starport's extraterritoriality. Therefore, agents are told only what they need to know.

The lowest layer consists of contacts, couriers and cut-outs who obtain and transfer information, orders and so on for agents. These are invariably natives and often innocent of any treasonous intent, believing their tasks are legal and for respected citizens; either that, or they don't care who they work for, or think they are working for someone supporting their own ideological position.

Player character agents of the CSB will be to two kinds; the potential case officer and the roving paramilitary troubleshooter. Normally recruited from Imperial service in their thirties, player agents are trained for one year at the Covert Survey School [see *Star Patrol*, *White Dwarf 20*]; each year thereafter, there is a 1 in 6 chance that they will be recalled for further training, being groomed for promotion. Agents are paid a monthly retainer according to ability - Cr250 for each point that the sum of their intelligence and education exceeds 16, plus a further Cr1,000 for each assignment to Covert Survey, Covert Survey School, or Intelligence School.

The CSB only hires freelance adventurers in the following cases: Where a sacrificial decoy is needed, if risks are too great for their own men, if there is no suitable CSB agent available, or if the Bureau cannot afford to be linked to the operation in question.

Inter-service rivalry between the CSB and the naval intelligence units is great, leading to much intrigue as the services try to discredit each other - this is mainly because they compete for appropriations for a limited budget.

Because of the sheer size of the Empire and the Bureau, different departments often work at cross-purposes; the secretive nature of their work compounds this. □



# THE SNOWBIRD MYSTERY

by Andy Slack

## A Traveller Scenario using the Traveller Basic Set and Book 4. by Andy Slack

### Referee Only Module 1: Introduction

This is a *Traveller* scenario for 2-4 players, who are agents of the elite Covert Survey Bureau (see Module 8); and should all be run through one year's training before the scenario commences. In this, each has a one-third chance of acquiring a skill

level in each of the following skills: Forgery, Bribery, Interrogation, Streetwise, Admin, Recon, Combat Engineering, and the weapon skill of their choice.

*Mercenary, Book 4* will be a distinct advantage as will *The Best of the Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*, issues 1-4, though a capable referee could manage without them. If *Book 4* is not available,

ignore all Recon or Combat Engineering skills, and refer to Module 12 for the use of Interrogation skill. In addition, the following materials (while not necessary) will save the referee's time: *Supplement 2, Animal Encounters; Supplement 1, 1001 Characters*. The players should have access to Modules 3-7 inclusive both before and during play.

### Referee Only Module 2: Background

The main problem facing an interstellar Emperor is that of revolt in the more distant of his provinces. There are several measures which can be taken to counteract this; splitting up the provinces into small units to ensure that it is as difficult as possible for a rebel lord to control the whole sector, keeping the masses happy so that they don't feel like revolting, separating military and civil rule, and so on. The Terran Empire does all these, and amongst other measures, the Emperor has control of the Imperial Inspectorate, a body of picked high-ranking officials who travel widely with their own armed forces and pay periodic surprise visits to the provinces to check up on the sector dukes and sector admirals.

Of course, 'surprise' is a loose term when applied to a visit by several thousand tons of shipping with a half-dozen marine battalions on board; the alert sector duke keeps his eyes open, and can spot such an unexpected audit several weeks away by means

of high-Jump couriers and intelligence estimates. Similar methods inform most of the other officials with their hands in the cookie jar in time for their activities to be covered up, unless they are plotting something really major, like a revolt, in which case the mobilisation of troops and ships would be difficult to conceal, and the only hope would be to destroy the visiting Inspector and his men.

Yelov Salash, Sector Head of the Covert Survey Bureau for Sector Antares, has read the computer compilations and siftings of reports from detached duty scouts and other sources, and realises that an Imperial Inspector is on the way to audit the sector and can be expected to arrive in a few weeks. This gives him some cause for despair, as he has been augmenting his private fortune by the somewhat illegal method of using CSB shipping to smuggle the contraband narcotic hyperdexamine, popularly known as 'yag', and an addictive form of combat

drug. This would be bad enough, but could be covered up in the normal way of things. However, the latest shipment of yag has gone missing; the ship carrying it had filed a flight plan in accordance with normal procedures, and by collating the various sources of data at his disposal, Salash estimates that the ship disappeared in the Shangrila system. He realises to his horror that Shangrila is one of the stops for the Inspector, according to his computer's predictions from earlier checks. Quickly he transmits the necessary orders; a group of agents are to be assembled from nearby systems at Shangrila and search for the missing vessel and its load of yag, using the cover of asteroid miners searching for a strike in the system's outer moons and planets. The agents won't, of course, be aware of the fact they are searching for yag.

### Players Module 3: Briefing - Commit and Destroy

As you may or may not be aware, the Bureau maintains interest in Transtellar Lines, a minor space lane carrier in the sector, to facilitate infiltration, exfiltration and supply of agents in the field, and to carry orders and reports.

The line owns several 'Explorer' class scout craft which are largely used for document transfers and as a sideline collect intelligence by monitoring communications encountered in their travels. One such vessel is the MXV-90658 *Snowbird*, which is now some weeks overdue on a routine courier mission.

The team will equip itself and members will make their way aboard normal scheduled flights to the Shangrila system (details attached) where, posing

as asteroid miners searching for valuable minerals in the outer system, they will recover from the *Snowbird* the crates of documents in the hold, which are confidential accounts and operational records of CSB actions beyond the Imperial border. The team is not to examine these records or open them, since the records should be known to as few people as possible for security reasons. Of secondary importance is the discovery of the reason for the *Snowbird's* delay and the fate of her crew.

The Bureau has arranged for prospecting licences and a suitably-modified cutter to be available to the team. The exact techniques employed are at the team's discretion; however, the records are of paramount importance and the team is authorised to take any necessary steps to retrieve them. If retrieval is impossible, the records are to be destroyed. It is

also vital that the Bureau should remain unconnected with the entire operation to avoid compromising our agents and our involvement with Transtellar.

In addition to normal pay for the operation at standard rates, the team will be entitled to a cash bonus of Cr10,000 each on successful completion of their task. A draft of Cr100,000 is available for the team to equip itself, but any remaining monies and equipment must be returned to the Bureau after the mission. This draft is also to be used for operating expenses.

#### Enclosures:

1. Shangrila system (Module 6).
2. Explorer class scoutships (Module 7).
3. Navigational analysis of most likely locations of the *Snowbird*.
4. Personnel records of the *Snowbird's* crew (Module 5).

### Players Module 4: The Cutter

The Bureau's agent-in-place on Shangrila has managed to acquire a set of papers allowing the team to prospect in the system, and in his cover identity as a factor for a large trading concern he has been able to hire a modified cutter for the team's use. He is responsible for its upkeep, and will pay the rental fees for the team.

The cutter is a 50-ton small craft capable of 4G acceleration, with two tons of fuel, and a crew of two, pilot and rider. It mounts a pulse laser (firing at -1 to hit in combat) for mining purposes, and its 30-ton payload space, normally committed to one of a variety of detachable modules, now holds an asteroid mining module worth perhaps Cr2,000,000, while the cutter itself is worth Cr28,000,000. It has 1.5 tons of space available for carrying whatever supplies the team feel are necessary, while within the module are six rather cramped cabins, facilities

for skimming fuel from gas giants or other wilderness sources, a 10-ton hold for samples of ore, a small laboratory for analysing the ores, and an additional 4 tons of fuel tankage, allowing the cutter to

go 12 weeks between refuelling under normal circumstances. One ton of supplies will cost Cr50,000 and last for 285 man-weeks.

The mining module is second-hand and obsolescent, as is the cutter; this is perfectly in character for a group of penurious asteroid miners.

### Players Module 5: Snowbird Crew Records

1. Norton Fitzwarren: Command Pilot	66B8AA	Age 26	2 terms	(Scout)
Pilot-2, Computer-1				
2. Tollen Cobbech: Navigator	7CB899	Age 38	5 terms	(Merchant: final rank 3rd Officer)
Medic-1, Navigation-1, Mechanical-1, Jack of Trades-1, Electronic-1, Body Pistol-1				
3. Nikolai Malvatnikov: Chief Engineer	88A788	Age 30	3 terms	(Scout)
Pilot-1, Engineering-3, Jack of Trades-1				
4. Addison Wesley: Second Engineer	483589	Age 30	3 terms	(Merchant: final rank 4th Officer)
Engineering-2, Electronics-1, Gunnery-1, Steward-1				
5. Mirrila Vigrasse: Medic	78C784	Age 26	2 terms	(Other)
Medical-2, Small Water Craft-1				

The Command Pilot and Chief Engineer are both CSB agents; other crew members are not, and believe themselves to be working for a normal courier firm. Team members should bear this in mind when dealing with them.

### Players Module 6: Shangrila

Shangrila (C668547-6, Agricultural, Non-Industrial; green travel zone, Imperial alignment) is a planet of little importance. Taxes are paid to the Empire in return for protection of an unobtrusive nature, since Shangrila is near the frontier of Imperial space. As part of the price for this, the Empire maintains a small port facility to service its naval and scout ships, which is also available to civilians for normal fees.

The port facility has reasonable repair workshops, but refined fuel is hard to come by and costs double the normal rates to civilian buyers.

The world has an equatorial diameter of slightly

over 9,650km and being of normal density, a surface gravity of approximately 0.8 standard G. The atmosphere is normal in composition and pressure, and breathable by humans without assistance. Some 80% of the world's surface is covered with oceans, dotted with chains of islands supporting fishing communities and a thriving light industry producing excellent mid-tech speedboats with which the locals are often adept. Despite the law level of 7, it is relatively easy to obtain licences for tech 6 weapons. There is a general ban on all items of tech level 7+ outside the starport, except for medical gear.

Shangrila is the second world out from its G7 primary, and the climate is temperate at best, becoming quite cold in winter or at high latitudes. There are four other worlds of a terrestrial size and two gas giants; the gas giants are the fourth and seventh worlds from the star, the fourth being the larger at approximately jovian size, with 14 known moons and occasional claims for more. This is the main site for the asteroid mining which occurs on an irregular basis, usually by offworlders who believe that without local competition there is more chance of a lucky strike.



**Players**  
**Module 7: Explorer Class Scoutship**

**Deck Plan Location Key**

Dorsal Turret. Floor is iris valve to A12. Doubles as astroglation blister.

**A Deck**

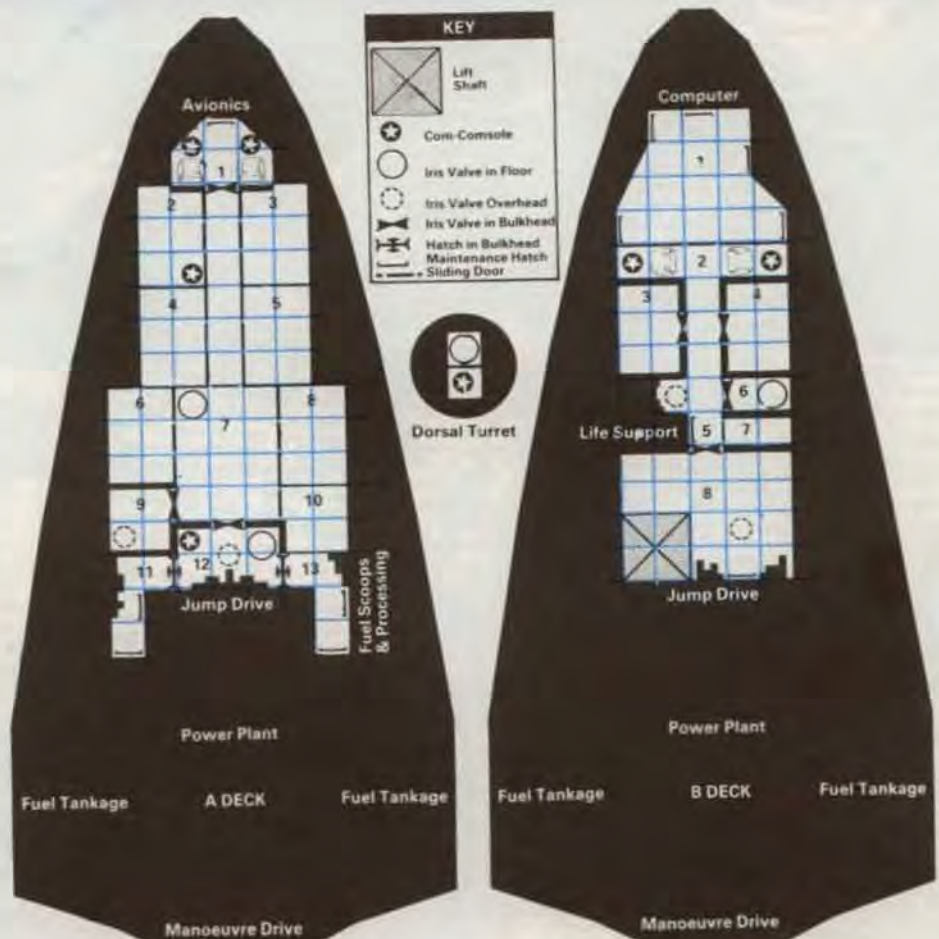
1. Bridge. Positions for pilot and navigator; one collapsible 'jump seat' for visitors. Command override of engineering functions in the event that the drive room is disabled.
- 2-5. Crew staterooms.
6. Passenger stateroom. In non-courier service, this is usually outfitted as a sick bay; the equipment may be removed and stored in the hold to allow extra accommodation.
7. Crew common area. Floor iris valve to B5.
8. Crew stateroom.
9. Main Airlock. Ceiling iris valve to exterior dorsal surface.
10. Ship's locker.
11. Port drive access crawlway. This cramped passage slants up from the deck and curves at; it is less than half a metre high at the best, and partially obstructed by protruding pieces of equipment. It allows in-flight maintenance of the drives, and some limited repair work on commonly-failing components.
12. Drive room. Positions for two engineers; one collapsible 'jump seat' for visitors. Iris valves to B8 and dorsal turret.
13. Starboard drive access crawlway. Similar to A11, but allows access to the fuel purifiers and flight recorders.

**B Deck**

1. Payload bay. In service, this carries various specialist sensor or data storage gear as appropriate to the mission; if encountered on detached duty or in private hands, may have been converted to a store room, recreation area, etc.
2. Circulation space. To port and starboard are remote control gunnery positions for ventral turrets.
3. Port air/raft bay. In service, often used as a specimen or data store, or as extra cargo space (4 tons), omitting the air/raft. Floor swings down and port to serve as a bay door.
4. Starboard air/raft bay. Normally the air/raft carried here is left in place, as without it the craft is slightly unstable and rolls to port in rough weather (-2 to any handling rolls made in this condition). Floor swings down and starboard to serve as a bay door.
5. Circulation space. Ceiling iris valve to A7.
6. Emergency airlock. Auxiliary hand-crank mechanism to open iris valve to exterior ventral surface in case of power failure, by crank and key from outside.
7. Fresher.
8. Cargo hold. Ceiling iris valve to A12.

**Special Features**

**Crew Escape Pods:** The bridge (A1) and the drive room (A12) are fitted with small solid fuel rocket motors, ablative shielding, and paraglider assemblies as well as very basic survival kits. In dire emergencies, either or both can be blown free of the main hull by small explosive charges, carrying the occupants clear of the wreck. The pods have automatic circuits which may be overridden from within the pod, but otherwise will take the following action: (a) if near a world with an atmosphere of 5 or greater, the pod will re-enter and land (roll 4- for success, DM -1 per person aboard in excess of 3. If this roll is failed, roll 1d6; if the result is odd, the pod has 'bounced off' the atmosphere and drifts helplessly off into space; if the result is even, the pod has burned up on re-entry. The pod has oxygen for 6 man-days. (b) if near a gas giant, or world with atmosphere 4 or less - which would render landing impossible, as the pod depends on atmospheric braking - the pod will attempt to achieve a stable orbit and transmit distress signals; (c) if in deep space, the pod will do nothing but transmit distress signals. A pod may only be launched by initiating the correct control sequence from within it. Limited manoeuvre is possible in, for example, docking at an orbital station. If either pod is launched, the ship's streamlining is ruined. If the drive room is launched, the bridge may take control of the drives, but not vice versa. When launching the drive room pod there is a slight delay as the dorsal turret must be explosively jettisoned first.



**Specifications**

- Tonnage: 300 tons standard, 4200 cubic metres.
- Crew: 5.
- Dimensions in Metres: 42L x 19.5W x 10H.
- Acceleration: 2g constant.
- Jump: 5.
- Powerplant: 5.
- Engineering: One Malvatnikov 27F fusion power plant driving one NovZem Motors Q4 impulse manoeuvre drive and one TCS Drives type 15 Mk II series Jump drive. Variable floor fields, 0-2g, and inertial compensators. One RSM Computronics Mk V series 17 computer with integral fire control and AstroScan sensor package. Unlimited manoeuvre, one Jump-5 (165 tons fuel tankage). 30 days standard supply consumption.
- Gravities: Variable, depending on mission and owner. Typically one beam laser with facilities for ladar sensing and commo duty, and one missile rack modified to launch sensor probes and message torpedoes as well as dogfight missiles.
- Electronics: None.
- Range: 30 days standard supply consumption.
- Armament: Variable, depending on mission and owner. Typically one beam laser with facilities for ladar sensing and commo duty, and one missile rack modified to launch sensor probes and message torpedoes as well as dogfight missiles.
- Screens: None.
- Configuration: Wedge. Unarmoured. Fully streamlined.
- Capacity: One passenger, 11 tons of cargo (usually trade samples and/or data storage modules).
- Ship's Vehicles: Two standard air/rafts.
- Special Features: Fuel scoops and purifiers. Crew escape pods. Observation platform. 'Evil Eye' sights.
- Programmes: The Explorer class is furnished with an RSM Computronics 5C basic software package when first purchased, which contains the following programmes: Manoeuvre; Jump 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5; Navigate; Target; Auto/Evade; Return Fire; Anti-Hijack; Library.

**Players and Referees**  
**Module 8: The Covert Survey Bureau**

There are certain tasks which any government must perform, but to which it can never publicly admit; the secret and darker side of diplomacy, also called espionage. The Imperium is no exception, and it, too, has an instrument which performs distasteful tasks for the mood of the state. This is the Covert Survey Bureau, usually referred to as the CSB, an obscure corner of the Scout Service.

The Bureau sifts reports by serving and detached scout personnel; monitors and intercepts messages within and beyond the Imperial borders; creates and breaks codes and ciphers; prevents espionage by foreign powers against the Imperium; supports revolutionary, terrorist and pirate organisations whose actions further the state's ends; and conducts espionage operations beyond the Imperium borders. The CSB has a controlling

interest in several medium-sized companies, including a merchant shipping line, to aid its operations.

The CSB only hires freelance adventurers in the following cases: where a sacrificial decoy is needed, if risks are too great for their own men, if there is no suitable CSB agent available, or if the Bureau cannot afford to be linked to the operation in question.

Inter-service rivalry between the CSB and the naval intelligence units is great, leading to much intrigue as the services try to discredit each other - this is mainly because they compete for appropriations for a limited budget.

Because of the sheer size of the Empire and the Bureau, different departments often work at cross-purposes: the secretive nature of their work compounds this.



Module 9: The Missing Ship

**Important Note:** All deck locations and description (A2, B8, Dorsal Turret etc) are references to the deck plans listed in Module 7.

Having arrived at Shangri-la, equipped, and set off after the missing ship, the players will take several weeks to find it.

While no maps of the system are enclosed, the characters do have a navigational analysis of the Snowbird's probable path, which allows them to start looking in roughly the right place - the region of the secondary gas giant's moons, which will take about a week to reach; the cutter could do the trip in less time, but excessive speed would look suspicious.

Once per week of searching in the region indicated by their navigational analysis, the referee should roll 2d6 and add the highest level of Navigation skill available to the party. In addition, DMs may be allowed for exceptionally bright or stupid ideas on the part of the band.

A modified score of 12+ indicates that weak distress signals have been picked up. During the search, the referee should also roll weekly on the encounter table of Module 8.

The distress signal mentions only the name and registry of the missing vessel, and the fact that the ship has suffered a major manoeuvre drive failure, thus rendering it unable to move. The voice is anxious, but controlled.

Approaching the source of the signals, the players observe the ship slowly tumbling end to end.

Lacking manoeuvre capability, the crew have not been able to restabilise their craft, or aim their laser accurately enough to send a message by it to Shangri-la; hence their resorting to the comparatively inefficient method of radio signals.

There is the merest glow of navigation lights on the vessel, and no internal lighting; instruments aboard the player's craft, if they use them to check, will reveal that the ship's power plant is still func-

tioning but at the lowest possible level. There is no sign of life.

The players will probably decide to board the stricken vessel. This requires an approach using vacc suits and backpack thrusters; characters must make the usual roll to avoid mishaps. The main airlock (A9) does not respond to attempts to open it in the normal way; a character of Electronics-3 can bypass the circuits after removing the maintenance panels. Failing that, a character of Mechanical-3 may be able to gain access via the emergency airlock (B6) by fiddling with the handcrank mechanism after removing maintenance panels. The players may decide to make an external survey of the vessel before entering; all seems in order on the outside of the ship. The interior can be seen at two points; first, through the windows of the bridge (A1), and second through the port of the dorsal turret.

A character clambering to these locations must make an additional Vacc Suit skill roll to avoid mishap (probably losing his grip and falling off). Once there, he may shine a torch into them. The dorsal turret is empty, and unlit - not even instrument lights are lit up. On the bridge, the figures of the pilot and navigator can be seen strapped into their acceleration couches. They look perfectly at peace, having removed their headsets, and very dead. There is no evidence of decomposition if the players think to ask. They should be allowed to confer since they will undoubtedly be in radio contact. Anyone with experience of working as part of a ship's crew - naval, marine, scout or merchant characters, for example - may, if he asks, be told the function of the half-dozen instruments which are lit up, providing the only illumination on the bridge. They show that the power plant and life support systems are active; everything else is shut down, and the activity of these two systems is minimal.

If the players have taken more than 15 weeks to find the ship, then the lights will be dimly red; other-

wise, they will be green and fairly bright.

Players who specify making an unusually close scrutiny of the crewmen should be told that they appear to be wearing cold weather clothing, their eyes are closed, and on the console between them is an empty pill-bottle, with a plastic bottle of the kind used to hold water. From the way things are floating around, it will be clear to anyone looking in that the ship's internal gravity has been turned off.

Once aboard, the players will search the ship. Below follows a description of what they will find; each location is taken in turn. Descriptions have two parts; the first paragraph, in italics, should be read to the players as they enter the area, and the second paragraph, in normal type, is for the referee. Aboard, all lights except for those stated are off, as is the cabin gravity. The air is cold, but breathable; not quite cold enough to show condensation from the player's breathing. If anyone tries it though, the lights and gravity can be switched on; the lights by the usual studs, in the area concerned, and the gravity from the bridge or engineering by anyone with ship's crew experience, ie those who have served on ships before. The heating can also be restored from these two locations (A1 or A12). However, if by chance the players have taken more than 15 weeks to find the ship no systems can be activated - the power plant will have run out of fuel and stopped working.

If the adventurers have not found the ship by the time the power plant runs out of fuel, then the following modifications apply: First, the crew will all be dead of cold. Second, the air on board, while not actually liquefied, will be far too cold to breathe (say about -150° C) and slightly tainted with waste products from the crew's breathing. Third, there will be no power to run the lights, grav plates etc and only the bridge lights and the distress call will be functioning - batteries and solar cells provide enough power to run these. Fourth, because of the extreme cold there will be very little decomposition of the bodies.

**A1: Bridge**

*Two human males in cold weather clothing are seated in the acceleration couches. They look dead, but perfectly composed, and relaxed, as if they'd died in their sleep. Some lights are glowing on the low console between these couches, and on it are an empty pill-bottle and a water bottle of flexible plastic. All the other consoles are apparently dead. Floating near the crewmen in the left-hand couch is a notepad with a pencil attached. Neither man is wearing his headset.*

Obviously, if the gravity is turned back on the notepad will fall. It is covered with deliberate calculations in a firm hand, which are clearly estimates of how long the crew can survive under various regimes of emergency measures. Near the bottom, the answer to the final calculation is '20 weeks'; this is underlined several times, heavily. If other pages of the notepad are examined, they contain the identification of the man in the left seat; he is the pilot. Also present are his will, a brief log of the time since they were marooned by drive failure, and instructions for the finder to deliver two letters which are to be found in his pockets. The log is fairly straightforward, and will tell the players little that they don't already know, but near the front in large letters is an announcement that the crew have taken fast drug to eke out their supplies of oxygen and food, and that provided they are found by such-and-such a date (given as 15 weeks after the players started their search) they can be revived. The crew will actually be awake and active for a few hours halfway through the 6th week, but don't let the players find them moving about! The whole log only covers about four days.

The pill-bottle bears numerous formulae, trade names, and so on which will allow any character with Medical skill to deduce that it contained fast drug.

The letters in the pilot's pockets are addressed to his girlfriend (content fairly predictable and harrowing) and to the Manager of Transstellar Lines Courier Division. This second letter is a report of circumstances leading up to the crew's death and the cause of the disaster, namely unexpected and irreparable manoeuvre drive failure. Recommendations as to how to prevent the recurrence of the mishap are given, as are details of everything the crew tried to repair the motor.

Characters examining the bodies should realise that something is wrong; they are in no way decomposed, and are even slightly warm. They are the pilot and navigator.

**A2: Pilot's Stateroom**

*This is a fairly normal-looking stateroom. It's been left neat and tidy, and the only things that stand out are a large 3-D hologram of a young girl and a metal strongbox on the desk.*

The stateroom contains about what you'd expect; a remote terminal for the ship's computer, a rack of technical manuals describing pilot's procedures for the ship, spare uniforms, and an emergency vacc suit on a wall frame in case the ship is decompressed while the occupant is asleep (all staterooms have this). In the desk drawers is a bundle of love-letters from the pilot's girlfriend, and a collection of excellent quality tapes for the entertainment system. The hologram is in the form of a cube about 10cm on a side, with a stud near the bottom at the back. If pressed, this causes the image of the girl to go through a short period of movement and action (always the same loop) in which she smiles and

says endearing things, obviously meant to cheer the pilot up and assure him of her affection.

The strongbox bears the crest of the Covert Survey Bureau and contains course tapes different from those presented to the players in several major aspects. A character of Electronics-3 or better may attempt to open it; on a roll of 9+ on 2d6 he succeeds, otherwise he fails. If he fails, or anyone else tries to open it without the proper key, acid spills onto the tapes inside, destroying them and causing a foul grey smoke to spurt from the box. If opened, the box's tapes present an opportunity for the referee to continue the scenario into other adventures; they detail the location and characteristics of the unexplored and deserted world where the Bureau's resources are being diverted to manufacturing hyperdexamine (see Module 10) for Yelov Salash, together with reports from his manager at the plant which make it clear what Salash's underhand scheme is. The two CSB agents in the crew are unaware of the contents and have no key to open the strongbox.

**A3: Navigator's Stateroom**

*An unremarkable stateroom. There is a sealed letter plainly visible on the desk, but all else has been packed away neatly.*

The contents of the stateroom are fairly standard except for the letter. It has been handwritten, and is addressed to a family which the players will know from their briefing includes the navigator's parents. If opened, its contents are again predictable, except for one passage in which the navigator urges his parents not to dig too deeply into the circumstances of his death, for their own good; he advises them patriotically that he died in the service of the Empire, but no-one can ever tell them exactly why for security reasons. He states that he was aware of the risks, and considered the tasks worthwhile.

**A4: Chief Engineer's Stateroom**

*This stateroom is the worst pigsty you've ever seen aboard a ship - things are carelessly strewn about, which is rare on a ship, where a sudden acceleration could hurl loose objects dangerously about. There are erotic posters on the walls and numerous empty beer cans dumped hastily on the unmade bed. The desk, as well as the papers on it, are very much the worse for wear and covered in hastily-scrawled calculations. Drawers and cupboards hang open revealing clothing carelessly stuffed inside them, and in one corner a mysterious apparatus is half-built, surrounded by tools, parts and bits of what appears to be charcoal, among other things.*

The calculations are useless to the players - the engineer has been using his desk as a scratch-pad for years, and the figures refer to everything from his losses at diamondback to the ship's maximum power output to his beer expenses.

The mysterious apparatus will be recognised as a makeshift air purifier by anyone with Medical-2 or Engineering-2; the CE has been spending his brief periods of activity building it to give the crew a few extra hours when all other sources of oxygen have been exhausted.

**A5: Second Engineer's Stateroom**

*A neat and orderly stateroom which has been tidied as if its occupants were leaving it for a long period. There is a dartboard opposite the door at head height, and below it a box of six darts securely fastened in. There is nothing of special noteworthiness here.*

**A6: Sick Bay**

*This room can obviously serve as a stateroom or sick bay to taste. At the moment it is set up as a sick bay.*

There is only normal medical equipment to be found, though obviously stateroom facilities are present in a stowed form - bed folded up into the wall, and so on.



**A7: Crew Common Area**

*A deserted common area with all the cooking and recreational facilities stowed away. There are numerous posters of emergency and safety procedures on the walls in prominent places.*

A careful search of this room will reveal nothing, except for about two Credits in loose change which have fallen down behind the seat cushions.

**A8: Medic's Stateroom**

*A spotlessly clean stateroom with a large rack of journals and text tapes along one wall, and a tape viewer on the desk. Posters cover the far wall, and are concerned with first-aid procedures for the most part, although there are some pictures of high performance small water craft.*

The journals and texts are mostly concerned with medicine, but about one-quarter of them have titles such as 'Antarean Power Boat News', or 'Handling Speedboats on Low Gravity Worlds'. It should be obvious that the medic's hobby is powerboating. A search of the desk drawers will reveal several certificates attesting to her skill, and membership cards for several boat clubs, some of which could conceivably be used by the players to gain access to the club premises in future adventures. A character collecting and studying the instructional manuals for six months, provided he has some practice as well, will acquire one level of expertise in Small Water Craft skill, provided he saves vs intelligence on 2d6 at the end of that time. A further attempt is permitted, but the manuals are of a simplified nature, and a character of Small Water Craft-2 or better can gain no benefit from them.



**A9: Main Airlock**

This is an ordinary airlock, containing safety lines and umbilicals, facilities for their attachment, and other EVA stores such as lights, overshoes, and so on. There are half-a-dozen vacc suits present.

A thorough check of the airlock will reveal that all the air tanks on the vacc suits have been emptied and are exhausted of air. The crew have used them to eke out the shipboard lifesupport by bleeding their contents into the atmosphere aboard.

**A10: Ship's Locker**

This room is about half-full of survival stores. There are a few blades and rifles, preserved rations, water cans, life rafts, and similar items.

The referee should feel free to add appropriate items to the above list as the characters search; however, note that all types of filter mask or respirator are missing (the chief engineer has cannibalised them for the mysterious apparatus in A4), as are the suits of cold weather clothing, which the crew are wearing, having turned down the heating to conserve power. Some of the packs of rations have been broken into, and some individuals' packets are missing, having been eaten by the crew.

**A11: Port Drive Access Crawlway**

This passage obviously allows access to the drive machinery for repairs. All the internal plates for access to the drives have been removed, and there are clear attempts to jury-rig some kind of emer-

gency system to the drives. An open tool kit is in the crawlway, as are several maintenance manuals and an empty beer can.

All this should be self-evident as to purpose. A character with Engineer skill can determine from a brief inspection that the manoeuvre drives are hopelessly damaged by some sort of internal explosion, possibly a component failure of an unusual type, and can only be replaced.

**A12: Drive Room**

This room contains controls for the engines of the ship, and instruments to monitor them. There are two couches before the consoles, both occupied; the people in them are both human, one male and one female, and are holding hands across one of the monitors between them. They seem to have died in their sleep, and on the control board before them are a small empty pill-bottle and a flexible plastic water bottle. Pinned against the rear wall by the ship's rotation is one of the scruffiest individuals you have ever seen, with his hands in his pockets and a baseball cap pulled down over his eyes. All three are wearing cold weather clothing, and there is a box in one corner of the room. The floor iris valve has been disabled, there are wires protruding from an open panel near it which have clearly been cut.

The people here are in much the same condition as those on the bridge; the same notes apply to it, and to the pill-bottle. The girl is the ship's medic, the seated man its second engineer; the pinned figure

is the chief engineer. A check of the controls and instruments by someone with Engineering skill will reveal that the power plant is operating (if less than 15 weeks were required to find the ship, otherwise it is not - and side effects will be that nothing in the ship works and the air is unbreathable), at the minimum possible level, to conserve fuel, but both it and the jump drive are in perfect condition. If the searchers think to check the fuel gauges, they will see that the tanks are practically dry, with no fuel left for another jump, which can mean one of two things; either the ship jumped a lot further than its flight plan indicates (this is in fact the truth), or it was in a great hurry and had to make two or three jumps without stopping to refuel.

The chief engineer wrecked the iris valve in the floor to seal off the cargo hold. More of this later...

**A13: Starboard Drive Access Crawlway**

This crawlway allows access to the drives for maintenance. All the inspection panels have been removed, and there are signs of attempts at repairs.

The only thing worthy of note here, which a thorough check against their deck plans and a search will reveal, is that the flight recorder has been disconnected, apparently accidentally and some years ago. This instrument's normal purpose is to log the ship's movements and 'vital signs' so that if it crashes, the flight recorder may give some clue as to what went wrong. The fact that it is disconnected may raise some suspicions.

**B1: Payload Bay**

This room is occupied by racks of extremely complex looking electronic equipment, whose control boards have been locked shut. Mostly sensors and recorders.

If the characters were not already CSB men, this would make them suspicious; no normal courier vessel would have such expensive arrays of high-powered sensors and recording gear. These instruments are used to gather intelligence during 'innocent' courier runs. Due to their training by the Bureau, the characters can quickly find the hidden keys to the covers of the control boards, hidden in one of the inspection plates. However, following Bureau doctrine, the crew have wiped clean the electronic memories as soon as it became obvious that their position was desperate, to avoid the information contained in them becoming public - or worse, falling into enemy hands.

**B2: Circulation Space**

An empty corridor. To either side are small alcoves with couches in them, obviously control positions for the two ventral turrets.

The ventral turrets are remotely controlled from here, and are currently fitted with sensors of various kinds.

**B3; B4: Air Raft Bays**

Both these rooms contain a standard air/raft and facilities for their launch and maintenance.

There is nothing of particular interest here.

**B5: Circulation Space**

An empty corridor. The nearby inspection plates have been removed and someone has obviously been modifying the life-support gear behind them.

The engineers and medic have been working here to stretch out their oxygen supplies by tampering with the recycler.

**B6: Emergency Air Lock**

A cramped chamber containing a single vacc suit and a small first aid kit.

The air bottles of the suit are empty - see A9 for the reason.

**B7: Fresher**

A small room containing sanitary and washing facilities, apparently adaptable for zero-gravity use.

Nothing of interest.

**B8: Cargo Hold**

The iris valve leading into the hold seems to have been deliberately wrecked, and quite thoroughly. A notice attached to the door on headed notepaper of Transtellar Lines announces that the contents are confidential personnel records of the company, and under Imperial law the crew are within their rights to maintain its confidentiality by any means available to them. The finders are requested to inform Transtellar of the ship's location.

The players will doubtless eventually find a way to burn or blow their way in; an Electronics-3 character could jury-rig a bypass circuit to allow the door to be opened, and energy weapons or explosives could also be used. As a last resort, entry might be gained by vandalising the cargo lift from the outside.

When they do enter the hold, they will find half-a-dozen small crates labelled *Transtellar Lines: Confidential Personnel Records: Fragile* and well-braced by assorted packing materials and ropes against accidental movement. Nonetheless, perhaps as a result of violence by the players in entering the area, perhaps due to a sudden lurch when the manoeuvre drives failed, one crate has come loose and burst open, spilling recording modules everywhere; small oblong objects about the size and shape of tape cassettes. And something else; a couple of larger containers marked *Erasable Recording Modules: Do Not Expose to Light* and with a notice explaining that the most confidential records are kept on modules which, as a security precaution, are erased if exposed to light unless certain measures are taken to prevent this. Investigation of the other crates reveals two similar containers in each. Players being a curious lot, they will likely open one to see if there is any profit to be made; they will find, not recording modules, but carefully-packed plastic bags of small white pills. These are hyperdexamine or 'yag'; see Module 10 for further details. Note only a Streetwise-2 character can recognise this substance. However, it will now be clear to the players that all is not what it seems. The recording modules are blank.

**Dorsal Turret**

This turret has controls for the beam laser and missile rack fitted to the ship. All its systems are turned off.

There is also an octant in a glass case for use in emergency navigation in the case that the computer malfunctions; it is possible to plot jumps manually, but exceedingly difficult and time-consuming and with a great chance of error. The octant and its accompanying manual are there more for reasons of morale than practicality.

**Referee Only****Module 10: Naval Counter-Intelligence**

Naval Counter-Intelligence, or NCI as it is usually called, is responsible for security and counter-espionage within the Imperial borders. This includes counter-terrorist work and occasional simple police tasks; where crime is of a scale too large for individual worlds to combat effectively, yet too small in scope to attract the attention of the Inspectorate, it falls to NCI to track down and apprehend its perpetrators. In practice, this usually means piracy and smuggling fall into NCI's province.

NCI is a great rival of the CSB, and the two agencies will do anything short of actual violence to damage each other's operations and reputations. In this case, while tracking down large-scale hyperdexamine smuggling in the Fodor subsector, NCI have come across clues to CSB involvement. Nothing that will stand up in court; but the higher-level agents in each organisation know how each other's 'handwriting' - subtle differences in the tradecraft, ways of doing things peculiar to certain agents - and are suspicious; they have recognised typical CSB techniques in the smuggling. The exact

world which is the source of the 'yag' and the method of transferring it to Fodor are unknown, but they have a rough idea of which areas to search. Hence the potential for encountering them.

NCI agents are all naval officers who have been assigned to Intelligence School. Any naval officer character is usable in this role if the referee has any at hand; in the case that they have not actually been assigned to Intelligence School at any stage, the referee should roll 1d6 for each of the following skills: Forgery, Bribery, Streetwise, Gun Combat, Interrogation, with 1-2 signifying one level of expertise in the skill, 3-4 two levels and 5-6 no expertise. Interrogation skill is defined in *Books 4* and *5*; if these are not available, use the following simplification to represent their use. Once each week, the character interrogated rolls two dice and the interrogators add the sum of their skill levels to the result; a score greater than the victim's intelligence shows that he has 'broken' and revealed his knowledge. Victims with Interrogation skill may use its level as a DM in their favour, subtracting it from the roll.

Gun combat skills will most likely be in Auto Pistol or Body Pistol, but other weapons are possible. In a firefight a typical NCI tactic is for one agent to feign a serious wound or death at an early stage, and lie doggo until such time as his sudden recovery may help his comrades, for example by attacking the players from the rear after they have passed by him, carrying back a report if all the others are slain, and so on. To use this tactic, NCI men must outnumber their opponents and there must be at least three of them to start with.

NCI who find that the players are (a) CSB men and (b) in possession of yag will offer amnesty and rewards to those who will betray their organisation in this affair.

The NCI in general is a fairly efficient and gentlemanly organisation, and the players have little to fear in terms of torture or doublecross.

There is a chance (roll 10+ on 2d6) that a patrol vessel carrying an NCI team will find the *Snowbird* while the players are aboard. Subsequent events must be adjudicated by the referee using Modules

you a lot  
of the wonderful times we



Referee Only

Module 11: Encounters in the Shangri-la System

Each week that the players spend in space, the referee should roll two dice and consult the encounter table below:

Dice	Encounter
2-6	None
7	Type M
8	Decathlon class
9	Type M
10	Type T - naval
11	Hugin class
12	Type T - Inspectorate

This table differs from the standard encounter matrix for C class starports in introducing two new types of vessel, which are detailed below.

**Type M Merchant:** (Book 2) A standard subsidised merchant. Encounters with Type M ships are with innocent, peaceful traders carrying passengers and freight to and from Shangri-la. The players arrived on one such ship, and will leave on one after completing their mission, hopefully with the cargo of the *Snowbird* and possibly with her rescued crew.

**Decathlon Class:** Using a 400 ton hull, the Decathlon class represents a step up from the standard free trader, purchased by successful captains and medium-sized interstellar trading companies. Its main advantage is the powerful jump drive F, rendering it capable of jump-3 and making most worlds accessible. Also fitted are Manoeuvre Drive Band and Power Plant F, making the craft capable of 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage of 150 tons supports the power plant for four weeks and allows one jump-3. A model/3 computer is fitted adjacent to the bridge. There are 14 staterooms and 20 low berths. Four hardpoints are fitted, and four tons of fire control space are held in reserve, but no weaponry is initially fitted. A special compartment holds an air/raft for surface excursions, and there is a cargo hold of 96 tons. The hull is streamlined.

A standard design, the Decathlon class costs MCr169.56 and takes 14 months to build at a Tech Level 10 shipyard. A crew of six is required; pilot, navigator, two engineers, medic and steward.

Decathlon class vessels encountered by the party will be ships of the Red Giant Corporation's Beverage and Spices Division, purchasing and shipping Amurr leaves (like tea) and other agricultural produce to other worlds.

**Type T:** The Type T patrol cruiser is found in the deluxe *Travellerset*, but could easily be replaced by the *Gazelle Close Escort* or even a Type C cruiser.

Naval vessels will mostly be on routine patrols aimed at showing the flag, spotting trouble and

dealing with it, and trade protection. However, there is a chance (1 in 6) that the vessel carries a team from Naval Counter-Intelligence who suspect the true nature of the *Snowbird's* cargo and are seeking proof with which to discredit and embarrass the CSB (see Module 9, Naval Counter-Intelligence) having uncovered traces of CSB handiwork in their investigations of hyperdexamine smuggling. In either case the naval personnel will attempt to board their players' vessel to make a routine check - the NCI will be more likely to spot anything amiss, of course - and the players would do well not to arouse their suspicions. Should the players get into trouble and try to get out of it by revealing their true identities, the naval crew will treat them with all possible contempt, harassment and hostility short of actual violence - the navy doesn't like the scouts, and it especially doesn't like their spy boys. NCI agents will behave likewise, but may possibly imprison or assault the players. Harmless asteroid miners, of course, while not of high status, are law-abiding citizens - when anyone's looking, that is. They are known to indulge in smuggling, which the naval officials will be looking for; if they find hyperdexamine on board, the group will be locked up and the key thrown away.

Whatever happens when a naval vessel is encountered, the referee should contrive during normal conversation or interrogation for one of the naval personnel to mention to the band, or to be overheard commenting to another crewman, that there is considerable drug-smuggling activity in the area which the navy is especially interested in stopping, before the Imperial Inspectorate arrives to check up on how they are handling the crime in the region.

Inspectorate vessels represent advance units of Imperial Inspector's forces, sneaking ahead of the main body to check things out. Also known as the Earth Police, the Inspectorate is very much in favour of rough justice. Like naval crews, Inspectorate vessels will stop the players, board their craft, and check it out. If they find nothing incriminating, they will be pleasant enough, if a trifle self-assured. If they discover the players' true identity, or find anything suspicious, they will separate the players instantly and question them separately one at a time (Referee: ask the players to describe their cover stories to you individually, without allowing them to confer or overhear each other), with any discrepancy being regarded as sufficient grounds to impound the cutter and imprison the players. The Inspectorate are not quite a secret police; if the players can convince them of innocence, they will be released. However, any suspicions of the group

being involved with illegality - eg hyperdexamine smuggling - will result in incarceration. If the Inspectorate discover that the players are CSB men involved in hyperdexamine smuggling, the band will be offered a deal; charges will be dropped against them if they will testify before the Sector Court about Salash's involvement.

Inspectorate vessels should provide the adventurers with the following information, which the referee should contrive to insert into the conversations with their crews; first, the nature and purpose of the Inspectorate (see Module 2: Background) and second, that the Inspectorate suspects some of the high-ranking Imperial personnel in the sector are misusing their powers to line their own pockets.

**Hugin Class:** The Hugin class scoutship is a larger, more expensive, and more flexible ship than the normal Type S. Using a 200-ton hull, it has Jump Drive C, Manoeuvre Drive C, and Power Plant C giving a performance of jump-3 and 3G acceleration. Fuel tankage of 90 tons allows one jump-3 and supports the power plant for four weeks. Adjacent to its bridge is a model/3 computer. There are 8 staterooms and 8 low berths. Two hardpoints each mount a triple turret sporting beam laser, missile rack and sandcaster. A special compartment carries a standard Air-Raft, and there is a cargo hold for 10 tons. The hull is streamlined.

A standard design, the Hugin class costs MCr106.44 and takes 14 months to build at a Tech Level 9 shipyard. A crew of 5 is required; pilot, engineer, medic and two gunners. Hugin class vessels encountered will most likely be of scout service registry, though a few may have other owners - roll one die, with 1-4 signifying scout service ownership, 5 naval registry, and 6 commercial ownership. Scout service vessels may be carrying non-urgent messages or updating star charts; the Hugin class is not much used for exploration because it requires refined fuel for safe travel on a long-term basis, and does not have the sophisticated sensors required. They are common carriers for mail, proclamations, and news, though. Naval vessels are normally outriders for task forces or fleets, which may be passing through a few weeks later on exercises; so if a naval Hugin class ship appears, treat the next encounter as a naval Type T ship without actually rolling for the encounter. There will be 2-12 other naval vessels of varying sizes with this Type T when it appears. Commercially-owned Hugins have the same general purposes as scout vessels, but may also be transferring new trading factors to this or another system, or trying to negotiate favourable trade deals with the locals.

Referee Only

Module 12: Hyperdexamine

If the containers in the hold are opened, against orders, by the players, any character with Streetwise-2 or better will recognise the contents as hyperdexamine, and should be allowed access to this module - in private if possible, since he may not want to tell the others. Each container holds 200 pills of hyperdexamine.

Hyperdexamine is a fairly new drug, an addictive variant of normal combat drug. Like combat drug, when ingested (it comes in pill form) it increases the swallower's strength and endurance by two each. The effect phases in over the 30 seconds after ingestion, and lasts for about an hour - much longer than normal combat drug. It also provides in the user a feeling of euphoria, and he becomes convinced that he has become invincibly strong and powerful - anyone taking it without recognising it for what it is should be told that his strength and endurance have increased by four each to simulate this, although all attacks etc are resolved as if he was but two points

stronger and more enduring. When the effect wears off, the user takes 1d in wounds.

Hyperdexamine has an insidious effect, however, in that a habitual user develops a tolerance to the drug, as well as a craving for it. How the referee simulates the craving is up to him - players will probably take it for use in combat, and if the referee is subtle they will not discover that they have inflated view of its worth. To simulate the tolerance, for each five uses of the drug the number of pills needed to obtain the effect is increased by one. Thus, for the first five uses the effect is obtained by taking one pill; the sixth through tenth uses require two pills, and so on. Each pill, of course, causes 1d of wounds - so on his 12th use of yag (the slang name for the drug) an addict is taking three pills, and will take 3d of damage when the effect wears off.

It is suggested that each week after starting to take the drug, a character must make a saving roll to avoid having to take more yag; roll 2d6, and if the result is over the character's intelligence, he must

go on a hyperdexamine binge. A DM is applied to the dice of +1 per pill required to bring on the effects; +3 for our 12-time user above. Any friends with Medic skill may use their skill level as a + and DM on this roll, at their discretion. If a character can avoid taking yag for six months, he has kicked the habit. Most users, of course, are eventually slain by the after-effects.

Characters with Streetwise-2 or better can sell yag in the right quarters for Cr100 x law level of the world where the sale is made per pill, thus higher law level planets yield a higher return - the supplies of yag are harder to come by. Contrariwise, on low law level worlds no-one makes a particular effort to stop yag smuggling, and it is more plentiful and prices are lower. Characters of Streetwise-1, if they are told that the stuff is yag, can get half this price for it - they get burned because they are not familiar with the market.

Anyone caught selling yag is in serious trouble; 2-12 years imprisonment.

Referee Only

Module 13: Referee's Notes

1. Instruments of Destruction

The players are all too likely to overequip themselves with weapons and armour. The referee should remind them that vast amounts of arms and armour will arouse suspicion; they are supposed to be asteroid miners, not mercenaries. If they go ahead and outfit themselves for the Third Interstellar War, well, they were warned, Interstellar and Interplanetary space within the Terran Empire is considered to be at Law Level 3 for purposes of deciding which weapons are legal; while there is no need to roll for police harassment on a daily basis in space, any boarding party which finds weapons contravening the limits of Law Level 3 will automatically suspect the group of foul play. Specifically, combat armour, battle dress, explosives, poisons, lasers, energy weapons, and body pistols will be sufficient grounds for imprisonment. Clearly non-military explosives will be allowable, since the group are supposed to be miners.

Referees should bear in mind that even with the power off, Iris valves can still be forced open (or closed) on a throw of 9+ on 2d6, with DMs of +1 if character has strength 10+, +2 if dexterity 10+, -3 if wearing vacc suit. It may be necessary to drop gentle

hints about this possibility to the party.

2. The Crew

If rescued, the crew will be properly grateful and the players will have several people who owe them a favour - a more subtle reward than cash, but always useful. The pilot and chief engineer, being CSB men, will be anxious to get their cargo moved on to the proper hands - there are of course certain code introductions by which the players can assure them of their true identities if they so wish, and it would be wise for at least one to do so since otherwise the rescued agents are likely to try a doublecross to speed their cargo on its way. The rescued agents are unaware of the true nature of their cargo, believing the same cover story as that told to the players. Once they discover that there are CSB agents in the rescuing party they will confide in them, saying that they are somewhat suspicious of their orders; these specify disconnecting the flight recorders and filing false flight plans with both traffic control and the CSB. This is highly irregular, and they believe something underhand is going on - possibly one of the high-ranking administrators is a double agent, so that he must be fed false data.

3. Timing

When the players arrive on Shangri-la, it is three weeks since the *Snowbird* was expected to report in. They will have 1-2 weeks cooling their heels in Port Royal before the cutter is ready, an indeterminate time before they find the ship; it will then take them 1-3 weeks to return and await the arrival of a ship out of the system. Normal encounters should be rolled using Book 3 on the ground and Module 11 for incoming ships.

4. After the Adventure

Once the scenario has been played through, it still provides some useful things for the referees. The CSB, the NCI and their rivalry can provide future plots, and employment - apart from the obvious ones, the referee may like to consider that in the case of total success by the group, Salash may decide they know too much and try to remove them. There are several new ship types and a planet to use in later games.

The Explorer class ship in particular was designed to be loaned to a group of adventures by a powerful patron for a long-term commission, much in the manner of *Adventure 4, Leviathan*. □





# ...to catch a thief...

**Crime Prevention, Perpetration and Detection in Traveller**  
by Graham Staplehurst

## ANTI-INTRUDER ALARMS

**Wire.** TL5. Windows and doors may be 'wired' so that an alarm goes off if they are broken or opened and a flow of current interrupted. Alarm, control boxes and wires are easily bypassed.

**Statel Screens.** TL8. This is a screen of static electricity programmed either to give an alarm if the screen is broken (ie pierced) or to give stunning shocks to anyone or anything touching it. These two types are low-current and high current respectively. They may be bypassed with an expanding microfilament mesh and static electricity generator (hand-held models available). At higher tech levels, screens get larger and more finely tuned. At TL11, a cyclic screen is developed, needing careful use of a magnetic quasi-material projector as well as a statel generator to be able to pierce the screen without interrupting it.

**Pressureplate.** TL6. A pressure plate is an electronic resistance pad which alters a flow of current when pressure is applied. They are usually well camouflaged. Higher tech level pressure plates are more sensitive and harder to electronically tamper with. Anti-gravity is the best way around them!

**Sonar/Radar.** TL7. Short-ranged indoor sonar and radar traps work in a fan shape of up to 180° of arc and 80cm thick. Anything moving in this field will trigger the alarm. Sonar absorption fields are developed around TL8/9 and material capable of being worn and absorbing sonar and radar can be obtained (very expensively) from TL10.

**Particle-Count Detectors.** TL12. Any person or large piece of material gives off some radiation and these detectors can pick this up and analyse it, giving the alarm. Totally-enclosed suits lined with certain heavy metals and processed in a polarising chamber can channel this extraneous radiation away.

**Lasercell.** TL8. These operate like photocells but carry very narrow beams that are also directional to prevent beam-substitution. Often the only way around them is to get at the mechanism. However, at TL11, polarising laser mirrors may help in interfering with these devices.

**LIST.** TL9. LIST is an acronym for Light-Intensifier Scanner/Tracker. It works in complete darkness on any material's natural (if very low) luminescence. These devices either function as alarms (scanner) or direct fire from stun-beams or other weapons (tracker). Usually several will be mounted to give a fully covered area. Specially treated totally-enclosing suits will protect an intruder, and special aerosols are obtainable which confuse LISTs but do not interrupt lasercells, photocells or heat sensors.

**Photo-Electric Cell.** TL6. The photocell produces current while light shines on it, the alarm is sounded if the light beam is interrupted. These are easily tampered with, or a different light source may be used to keep the current flowing in the alarm system whilst the main beam is broken. At higher tech levels, non-visible beams (eg ultra-violet) are used as well as narrow-frequency colour coding. Some may change colour according to present complex patterns, but even these are overcome with rapid computer analysis of the pattern-code.

**Heat Sensors.** TL9. Heat sensors are sensitive to heat output from animals of ½kg weight or more and sophisticated enough to distinguish draughts etc. The various heat-camouflage suits used for evading IR detection listed in *Book 4* will also be effective against these heat sensors.

**Varigrav Plates.** TL11. These plates generally surround the protected area and continually alter the force and direction of gravity (0-6G). Grav belts etc are no protection against these plates normally, as they are limited to about 3G maximum and are uni-directional. Special anti-gravity modules can be obtained to hold steady under fluctuating conditions such as these, providing the changes are predictable - this may mean computer analysis.

**Radio-Link.** TL7. General alarm devices can be linked by radio signals instead of wires to prevent tampering. However, radio signals can be duplicated or jammed. At higher tech levels, radio beams are tighter and pulse-coded and these need specialised radio detection equipment and computer code analysis to crack.

*Slowly, Hugh Jorgen leant into the dark opening. Carefully, he reached for his can of Listlose and liberally sprayed the room. He wasn't taking any chances! Unclipping his shoulder pack, he withdrew the Dasschön Cap. Next - the brainmap!*

## LOCKS

**Credit-Card.** TL7. The 'key' is a plastic card containing an impregnated magnetic strip and the card is inserted into a slot by a key-pad on which the user types personal identification. These are easily duplicated or made up if the key-code is known. The code can be read off the magnetic strip with the proper equipment.

**Voiceprint.** TL8. The locking device matches the user's pronunciation of the current password with a pre-recorded sound pattern. Obviously, these can be tricked by very good mimics or tape-recorded speech of a user. Some devices are sophisticated enough to be able to 'hear' tape-recorders however.

**Palmprint.** TL9. The user's hand is pressed face-down on a plate next to the lock and the print is matched with those in its files. At TL10 molecular gloves cast from a user's hand can be worn by impostors.

**Retinaprint.** TL10. The user's eye is pressed up against a socket and the pattern of blood vessels on the retina are compared with the patterns held by the lock-computer. Impostors may be able to get away with contact lenses etched in the pattern of a real user's retinaprint.

**Brainmap.** TL12. An x-ray device automatically descends over any user's head and maps the convolutions of the cerebral hemispheres, checking this brainmap against those stored in its memory. A Dasschön cap linked to a micro-computer simulator can give a false reading to a brainmapper.



## IDENTIFICATION

**Biomap.** TL9. This is a complete biophysiological identification of a body. It notes all internal organs and surface features, getting more detailed at higher tech levels. A biomap is much too extensive to be able to deceive even by major surgery. The best thing to do is to make sure that no biomaps taken survive for very long! Note that biomaps cannot be made before age 18 and are useless (legally) after 5 years or so. A full biomap takes about 1 hour, but specialised biomaps (eg a brainmap) are faster. The simplest biomap is height, weight and blood group (TL6). Biomaps are used with MIRors.

**Retinaprints.** TL8. Retinaprints are first used for police identification at TL8 but are too complex to be used on machines until TL10. Permanent discs like the contact lenses mentioned above may be 'invisibly' inserted under the cornea (TL11).

**Fingerprints.** TL4. You all know what fingerprints are. As mentioned above, gloves may be worn to falsify identification. At TL11 and above, skin grafts to permanently replace fingerprints can be done with very little in the way of detectable scars.

## WITNESSES & EVIDENCE COLLECTION

**Hypnotism.** TL7. Note: this is outlawed on many planets and is rarely accepted as evidence in any trial. Hypnotism may be used on either witnesses to get better statements or on the subconscious of the accused, which is supposedly unable to lie. Hypnotism is generally easy to resist. Truth Drug is a hypnotic inducer, TL8.

**Metal Detectors.** TL7. Metal detectors are used for personal searches, scanning floors etc. At higher tech levels they get increasingly more sensitive, smaller and can be tuned to 'pick up' materials of specific densities only. At TL9 the first 'evaders' are developed to trick these detectors, but are large and so can only be used to 'hide' large items. By TL11 evaders are personal items.

**Biochemical Tests.** TL7. Biochemical tests are used to analyse hair, skin dust etc dropped at the scene of a crime and identify the person it belonged to. It needs a comparison to work. Obvious ways of frustrating these tests include total personal encapsulation or scattering material from other people.

**MIRor.** TL11. Molecular Image Restoration. This device operates only within enclosed areas and cannot be used if the area has been subject to more than 10 mins of disturbance by other people. It samples the atmosphere, dust etc and builds up an approximate biomap of the last person(s) in the room/area. This can then be compared with existing biomaps on file.

**REMemBRE.** TL12. Recent Experience Memory-Bank Repeater. This is used on witnesses, in whom it stimulates the memory of a particular time and place. The machine analyses the stimulated brain waves and projects a 3D image which is recorded by holography. The memory can only have been within the last 7 days, although higher technology machines can recall experiences from as far back as 1 year (TL15).

**Sniffer Dogs.** TL6. Various animals (not only dogs) can be trained to track people, drugs, explosives etc. At TL10 or so, electronic sniffers are useful in situations not conducive to animals.

## PERSONAL PROTECTION

**Armour.** TL7. Personal armour is well detailed in *Books 1 & 4*. At TL8 mesh can be worn less obtrusively beneath other clothing, and at higher tech levels it gets progressively less bulky and more flexible. Cloth armour makes the average human look like an unpleasantly fat Venerian.

**Pocket Chimes.** TL8. This device fits into the lining of a pocket with a packet of electronics about as big as a cigarette packet. It is controlled by a concealed switch that looks like a button or buckle. When a hand intrudes into a protected pocket, it chimes (as loudly as wanted), unless the control switch deactivates it first. The control switch is necessary so that the wearer can use his/her own pockets. An observant pickpocket will be on the lookout for people fumbling with controls when they take their wallet out and will unobtrusively switch it off before picking a pocket!

**Tracker.** TL8. Often disguised as a credit card, a tracker is a micro-miniaturised radio sender that can be tracked within 10km. The tracker is usually activated by a coded radio signal and will send for about 7 days.

**Personal Alarm.** TL8. These devices commonly known as 'shriekers' are always disguised - as a watch, piece of jewellery, etc. When pressed they give off a loud piercing noise and wide-band radio SOS to alert police.

**Stun Jacket.** TL9. This jacket will give protection equal to jack-1 (unless this +1 makes it better than mesh). Additionally, when a control (placed somewhere handy eg on a cuff) is activated, several thousand volts are instantaneously put through wires hidden in the fabric on the outside of the jacket, stunning any attackers for 2d rounds. It is thus very useful if caught in a brawl or set upon by muggers. After use, the jacket must be refitted at ¼ the cost.

**Anti-Tranq Pills.** TL9. When hit by tranquilizing darts or gasses, characters may get time to use these pills if they keep them somewhere readily accessible, and they roll under their DEX on 3d (or 5d if surprised). After taking them, the user will merely feel groggy, fighting with DM-1 to hit. Others firing/striking the character get a DM+1.

Characters may take anti-tranq pills before such an attack if they think that it is likely. They will suffer from a slight blurring of sight however and will fire guns with a DM of -1. This may also cause a reduction by 1 level of any vehicle/piloting skill. One dose is effective for about 10 minutes.

**Fake Lasblade.** TL10. These harmless objects function in the same way as laser swords or foils and look identical. They sure frighten people off though! □



## Introduction

The Starport is an extremely important part of the game and the background for many adventures. Every character passes through one at some time or other, whether he is a Starship Captain or is travelling Low. Despite the article on Champa Interstellar Starport in *The Journal* (No 7) I feel that this is an area in the game where the general outline has been fixed but some important details have been missed.

In nearly all cases the overall design of a Starport is going to be governed by one thing - money. Unless the Starport is on a world considered vital to the Imperium and thus the facilities are heavily subsidised, it will have to pay its own way. It should be rare indeed to find an A class Starport on a Poor world.

## Landing Grounds

Or, how to save 4500 Credits each time you land... Most of the different types of landing areas depend on the Starship landing vertically in order for them to work, eg the 'Blast Pit' or 'Landing Pad'. While this is reasonable in low gravity or airless worlds, it is a waste of fuel on a planet with any sort of atmosphere. In order for a ship to make a planetary landing on a world with an atmosphere the ship has to be streamlined. As this is the case, why waste fuel landing vertically, when you can land like a TL7/8 Space Shuttle and glide in for free? All you need is a large runway.

The amount of fuel required to land vertically is going to be at least equal to that required to take off, and probably quite a bit more as the ships final speed is rather important... (And despite the fact that the ship is now a few tons lighter from the fuel used.) Taking the ratio between take off and landing vertically to be equal, for ease of calculation and allowing for at least halfway-decent computers, the following can be deduced:

1. Using the example of a Scout/Courier with a total fuel tankage of 40 tons, after a Jump-2 the amount of fuel remaining is 20 tons. The amount of fuel used during the week of the actual jump, can be taken as part of that used to perform the jump.

2. The amount of fuel required to manoeuvre to back from 100 planetary diameters is small compared to that required to lift the ship. In order to ease the burden of calculation it can be taken as one tenth of the fuel remaining, that is 2 tons. This leaves 18 tons to take off/land vertically, or 9 tons for each.

3. Therefore by gliding in like a TL7/8 Space Shuttle using no fuel, you can save 9 tons of fuel (at 500 Credits a ton...). All the above assumes that all goes well of course, and depends a lot on the pilots skill. Not all Spaceports however will have the space for a 5km landing runway; for example Champa Interstellar Starport is built on an offshore island. These Spaceports will be less expensive to build initially, but cargo prices will be slightly higher. It is therefore reasonable to assume that a Landing Ground consisting of a runway 5km long (and perhaps 1km wide) is a preferred part of any commercial Spaceport. Naval facilities with no worries about fuel consumption would probably not require Landing

# Happy Landings!

## Starport Design in Traveller by Thomas M Price

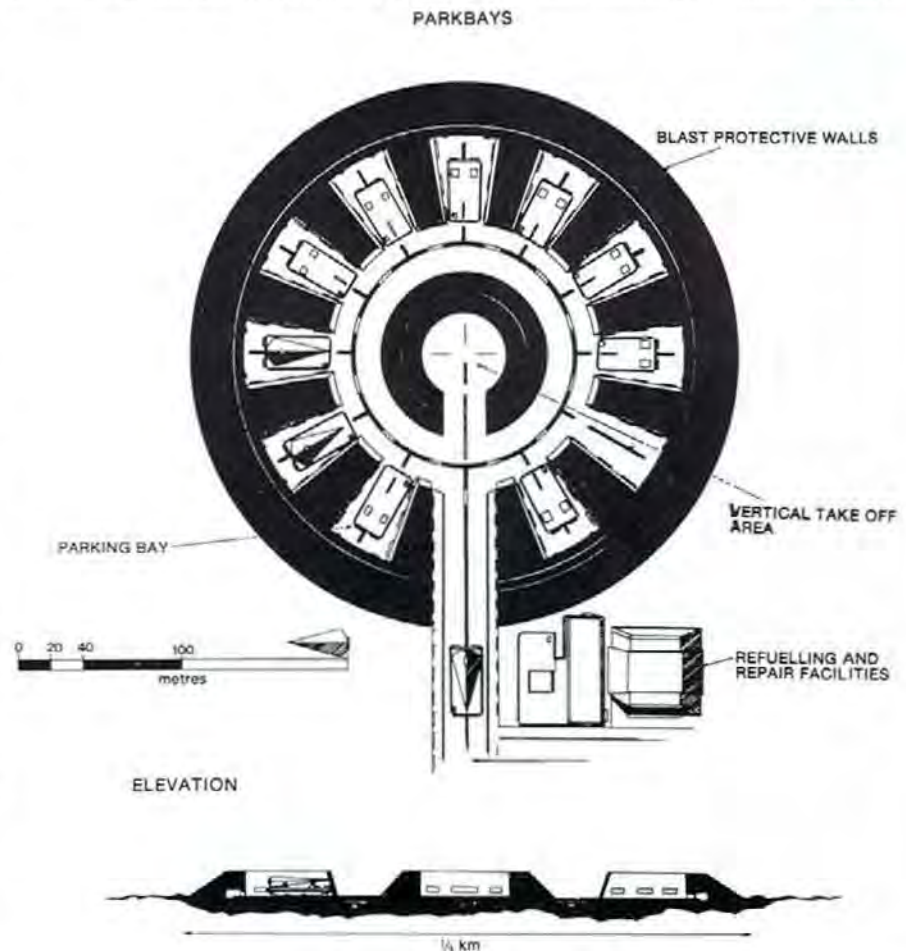
Grounds. (The Space Shuttle requires only 9000 feet to stop, and can do it in much less.)

## Parkbays

Having landed, the ship wouldn't be left out in the middle of the field, a long way from any facilities and a menace to other ships. The ship must move (or in an emergency, be moved) to somewhere near the Starport facilities. This leads to a problem as a Starship makes quite a powerful bomb, and who wants to leave a lot of potentially dangerous ships out in the open, near the Starport buildings. There is also the owners concern with security (and with most of the players I know, I don't blame them!). Army depots have buildings housing the ammunition separated by Traversing (cal-

led elsewhere Bunds or Blast Protection Berms). The Traversing is basically a blast wall designed to direct the force of the blast upwards. Similarly, individual ships could be housed in bays separated by blast walls. Each bay would have its own small accommodation building attached, with its own kitchen and security office. These would come as part of the landing fee, for the ships guards to use during the stay in port.

A number of bays would be grouped together for the best use of space and materials, and would have a central Vertical Take Off pit. Just outside the protection wall would be a Starport refuelling/minor repair building and transportation for crew and cargos [see plans]. A group of bays and take off pit, together with its attendant facilities is called a *Parkbay*.





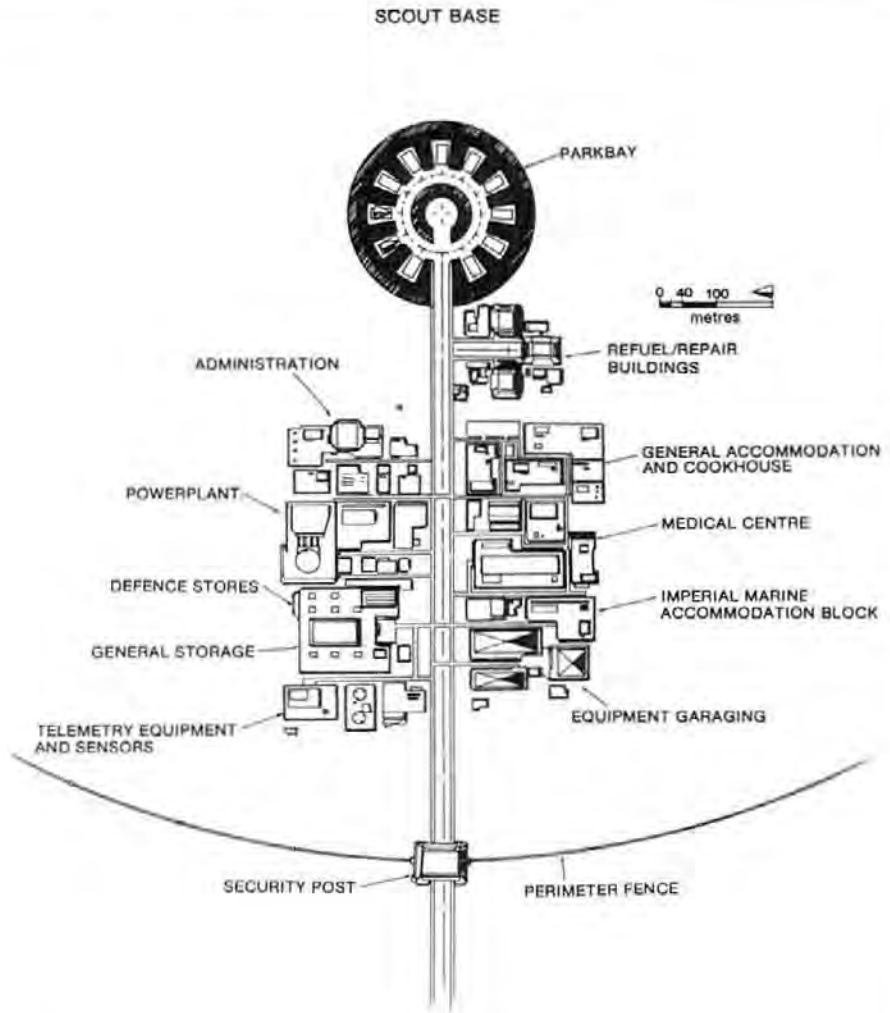
The Parkbays themselves would be grouped around central points in large Starports (C or greater). The blast protection Traversing will not offer complete protection from the meltdown of a starship engine, but it will prevent the ships in neighbouring bays melting down as well.

**Naval Facilities**

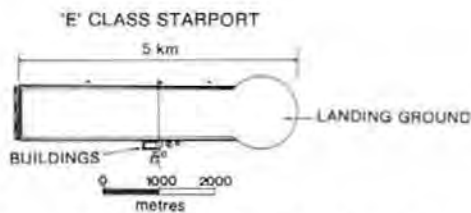
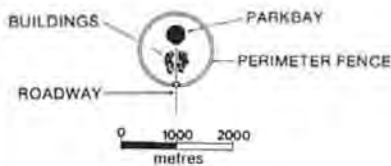
**Scout Bases.** The Scout Base would not be a large affair in most cases, as it usually only caters for scout/courier ships. There is no requirements for a Landing Ground as there are no fuel restrictions, so one Parkbay would normally be sufficient. The associated buildings would be few, an Admin block and equipment store, and an accommodation block housing the Marine Unit. The fuel store would be underground. The normal Parkbay Repair facilities would be enlarged allowing complete overhauls to be carried out. The orbital facilities of the Scout Base would be larger containing all the supportive equipment for the X-boat network in that system.

Due to the large number of Scout Bases throughout the Imperium the design would be standardised [see plans].

Any Customs or Immigration regulations would be carried out at the ship, at the time of landing. Regulations would be kept to Imperial Standards with any local Planetary regulations enforced on leaving the Spaceport boundary. Cargo transactions would take place at the Parkbay. The sale would be agreed either over the commlinks or by agent, a truck and Material Handling Equipment (MHE) would arrive and unload the cargo and take it away there and then.

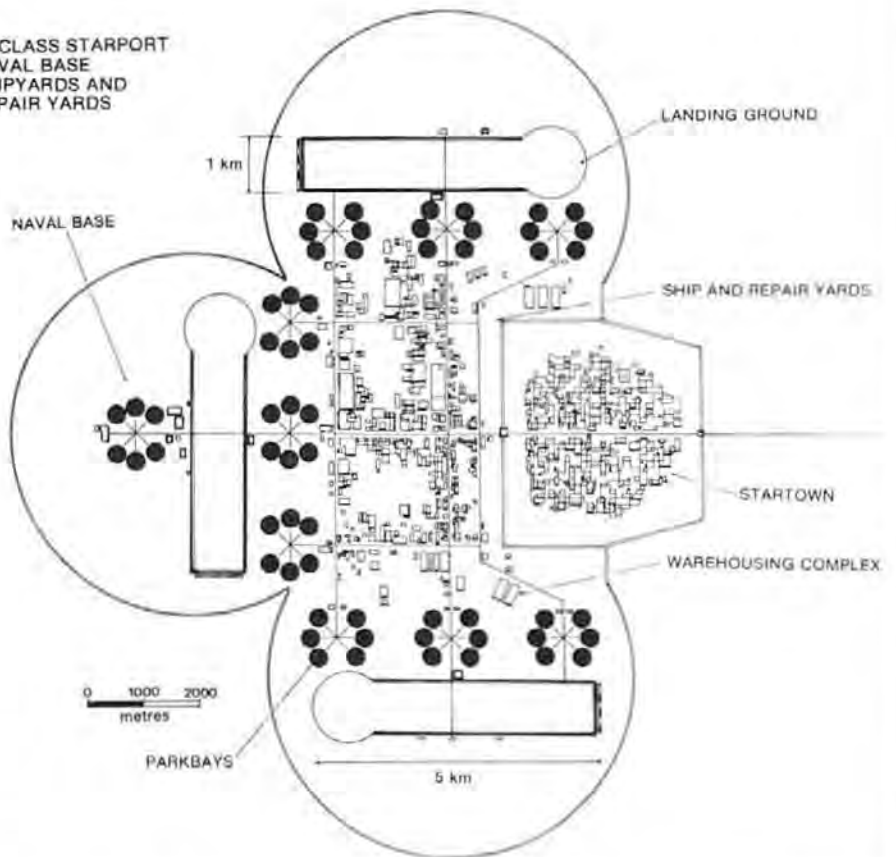


SCOUT BASE



**Naval Bases.** Naval Bases are much larger affairs both in orbit and on the ground and would vary greatly from place to place. There would usually be no requirement for a Landing Ground but some of the larger bases may well have one. There would be several Parkbays and more buildings. A good number of the facilities would be underground in 'Hardened' silos. The headquarters of the Marine Garrison would be in the Naval Base. There may well be a Naval Shipyard for the repair and construction of Military Vessels. The orbital facilities of a Naval Base would include all the functions of a Scout Base so there would not be a separate station except in the most unusual of situations.

'A' CLASS STARPORT  
NAVAL BASE  
SHIPYARDS AND  
REPAIR YARDS



**Startown**

The Starport's income comes from a number of sources. The sale of fuel/equipment, repair fees, warehousing fees and a percentage from cargo sales being the principal money makers. However, these alone are clearly not enough to support the expense of running a large Starport.

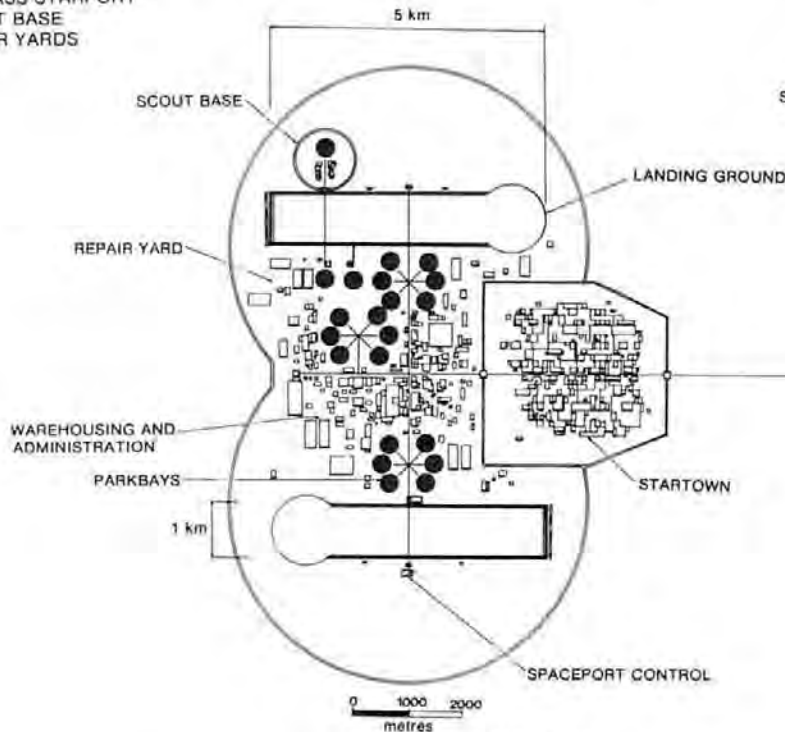
It does not seem reasonable to me that most of the plans I have seen of Starports, show the Startown *outside* the Extrality Fence. In order to support the

running of the Starport, recreational facilities and accommodation is required in abundance *inside* the Extrality Fence. As the Starport is Imperial Territory, it is not subject to the same rules as the host planet, so it can run all the operations that are illegal (and immoral) on the planet generally. (And all tax-free...) Thus by having the Startown *inside* the Extrality Fence you can provide for the needs of crews on R&R, and make a handy profit for the Starport. Whether the Starport Authorities run the

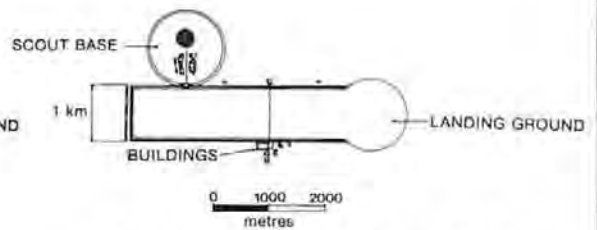
operations directly or lease them to enterprising locals will vary from Sector to Sector.

While there is much crime in a Startown it is not as bad as its reputation. Like any City it has its 'bad' areas, the better areas will be regularly patrolled by the Imperial Marines and the Starport Police. There will also be Licenced Police to protect specific building complexes, for example, The Travellers Aid Society. It is probably most useful to think of Startown as 'Las Vegas', where you can get

'B' CLASS STARPORT  
SCOUT BASE  
REPAIR YARDS



'E' CLASS STARPORT  
SCOUT BASE



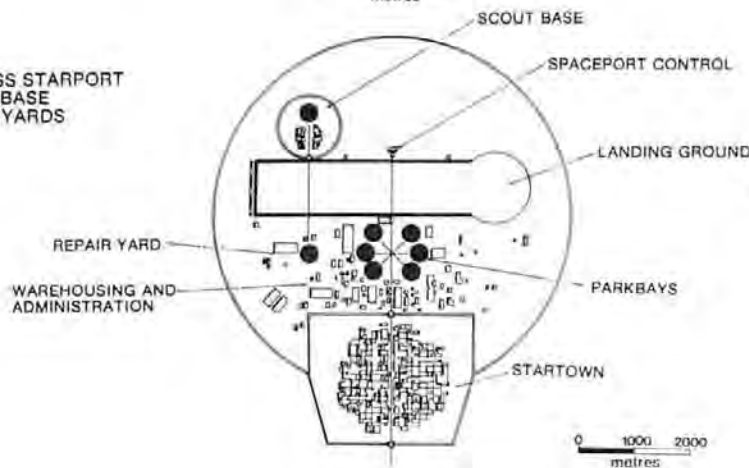
anything for money but you won't be surprised if you get ripped off.

There will, of course, be an interior fence between the Startown and the rest of the Starport and strict controls on access. The Starport Authorities don't mind reaping the profits of Startown but won't allow it to interfere with the running of the Spaceport. In a number of Starports the income from the Startown far exceeds that gained in normal trade.

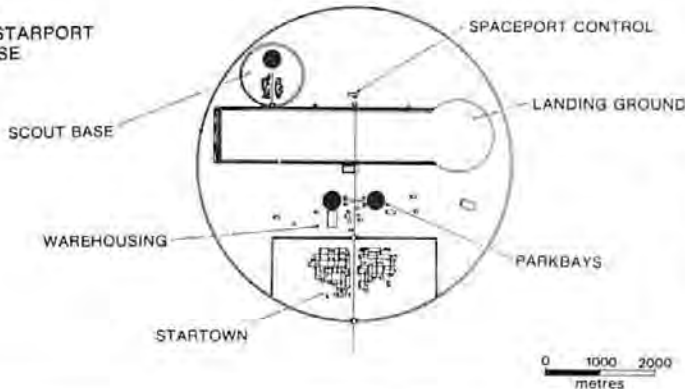
**Conclusions**

The size of a Class A Starport is going to be a lot bigger than most people realise. The size of the Landing Ground and the Startown have to be taken into account. So, don't think big, think *huge*...□

'C' CLASS STARPORT  
SCOUT BASE  
REPAIR YARDS



'D' CLASS STARPORT  
SCOUT BASE





Most referees use *Mercenary* as well as the basic set, and many also have *Striker!* But there are many groups and scenarios where the emphasis is away from open military action, and many referees have neither the time nor the inclination to design *Striker!* vehicles for these. The following system is a fast and easy method of representing ground vehicles in combat where the scenario is run using *Books 1-4*.

### Specifications

Wheeled, tracked or gray vehicles will have performances equivalent to those of the ATV or Air/Raft as appropriate, unless otherwise indicated by *Mercenary*. In combat, vehicles not trying to flee will move cautiously – rarely more than 5 range bands (125m) in a combat round.

There are three classes of vehicle armour; softskins are all civilian vehicles and military vehicles such as supply trucks, staff cars and so on; light armour covers quasi-military vehicles such as the *Book 3* AFV and ATV, and also military ones such as Armoured Personnel Carriers and Self-Propelled Artillery; heavy armour is mainly used on Main Battle Tanks.

The cost and mass of vehicles is determined by comparing them to items in *Book 3* and *4*; as an added guide, a military vehicle must mass and cost at least ten times as much as its major weapon system.

### Vehicles in Combat

Vehicles attacking personnel will use the normal rules; they will normally fire HE rounds from the main weapon, using the *Mercenary* section for Field Artillery as a guide, or attack with support weapons such as machineguns in co-axial or pintel mounts.

Personnel attacking vehicles also use the standard rules, at least to determine a hit. Softskins count as Mesh armour; light armour counts as Combat Armour with an additional DM of -1 per tech level over 5; heavy armour counts as Combat Armour with additional DM of -3 per tech level over 5.

Artillery, ship's weapons, tac missiles, tank main guns, and so on attacking vehicles must roll 8+ to hit regardless of range; the firer's expertise in the weapon is a positive DM; if the target's driver is evading, his skill level is a negative DM; and in addition, the difference between the tech levels of the firer and the target is used as a DM in favour of the higher tech level unit.

Any successful hit, regardless of the weapon used, allows the firer to roll 2d6. DM +2 if the target is lightly armoured, +4 if the target is a softskin; again the difference in the tech levels is applied as a DM in favour of the more sophisticated unit. If the modified roll is 8+, the vehicle is disabled; if the roll is 11+, the vehicle is destroyed.

Disabled vehicles may be repaired. Roll 8+, with DMs for appropriate skills, when the damage is first inspected; success indicates that the damage can be repaired in 1-6 hours, failure that the damage will require a workshop and 1-6 days to repair. The mechanic will know roughly how long the repairs will take before he starts work.

Destroyed vehicles may not be repair-

*Starbase is a bi-monthly column devoted to Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.*

## Vehicle Combat

by Andy Slack



ed. Occupants take 1-6d6 damage and escape the wreck with their armour, life support gear if any, and one weapon or personal item of their choice.

### Special Rules and Notes

Military vehicles will normally be guided, even in combat, by the vehicle commander exposing his head and upper body out of a hatch. He may be attacked using the normal rules for shooting characters, but counts as evading. If he is hit, or fails a morale roll, he will 'close up' the vehicle; it must then roll its tech level or less to spot any character near it on foot.

Personnel inside vehicles may be attacked directly; if so, they may count either their personal armour or the vehicle's armour at their discretion against the attack. Further, unless surprised they count as evading.

Vehicle platoons normally contain 3-5 vehicles. If expecting trouble, they will advance by turns covering each other as they move and with infantry in support. The vehicles assigned to cover their fellows will watch for attackers, and if any are seen will pour fire onto their location while the target dodges for cover.

Referees must be prepared to improvise impromptu DMs and rulings as always.

### Example

Scout Arrek Salvor (589929, Gunnery-1) is sitting in the turret of a Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicle of tech 7. This vehicle has a crew of 2, we shall say, and carries a 9-man infantry squad. It is tracked and its turret carries a 73mm light field gun, a tech 7 tac missile, and two light machineguns – one mounted coaxially with the 73mm and one on a pintel mount for anti-aircraft fire. The vehicle's main weapon is obviously a light field gun; assuming it is for infantry

support it is probably a howitzer which we find masses 1.0 ton and costs Cr5,000. Using the ten-times rules, therefore, the MICV will mass to 10 tons and cost Cr50,000. This looks reasonable compared to an ATV, so the referee lets it stand, having decided that the MICV is basically an armed and armoured ATV and thus should mass and cost at least as much as its civilian counterpart. Its performance will equal that of an ATV, and its armour will count as Combat -2 vs infantry weapons.

Facing Arrek's MICV is a tech 7 Main Battle Tank, fully tracked with a crew of four. The MBT will be armed with a field gun (twice the mass and cost of a howitzer because of its higher muzzle velocity – see *Mercenary* p48) which masses 3.6 tons and costs Cr20,000. So the tank will mass 36 tons and cost Cr200,000 – this is actually a bit low in both cases, but close enough to be playable as the mass will only be used for freighting the thing around in starships and the cost only when players buy one or two – which won't happen often, or if it does you are probably already using *Striker!*

The MBT's performance will again approximate that of an ATV. Its heavy armour counts as Combat -6 against infantry weapons. The tank will also probably have at least two machineguns.

Shouting to the driver to evade, Arrek fires the 73mm at the oncoming tank. He has a +1 DM for his gunnery skill; the target is not evading (why worry about a little thing like that?) so there is no DM for evasion, and the vehicles are of equal tech level, so no DM for that. The referee decides that since the normal anti-tank gun of this tech level is probably a 105mm or a 120mm, the MICV should suffer a further -1 to hit – he justifies this by pointing out that weapons of this size were in service as tank guns at the previous tech level, and so should count as tech 6. Total DM: +0. Arrek rolls a 9 – a hit; he then rolls an 8 for damage on 2d6, and the referee decides to subtract one pip from this as he has already decided the 73mm is a tech 6 weapon. Result thus becomes 7 – no effect. Deciding that this is getting too close for comfort, the tank fires back, also achieving a hit. The MBT rolls a 9 for damage; Arrek's player claims that although his gun may be tech 6, the MICV armour is tech 7, and the referee allows this. Thus only the +2 DM for being lightly armoured is added, for a total of 11 – a kill. The MICV is destroyed; Arrek takes 2d6 damage and bails out with his cloth armour and rifle, having rolled a 2 to see how much this hurt him personally.

The rifle would suffer a total DM of -4 (armour) -6 (tech level) -1 (long range) +1 (dexterity) = -10 if Arrek fired at the tank itself, so he aims at the commander who is conning his tank from the turret hatch. DM +3 (no armour – after all he's usually in a tank!) -1 (long range) -4 (evading) +1 (dexterity) = -1, a much better bet. Arrek rolls a 10, -1 = 9, a hit. He then rolls 11 for damage on 3d6 (rifle vs character) which will knock out the commander. The rest of the crew haul him inside and close the hatch; the tank must now roll 7 or less on 2d6 to spot Arrek as it trundles past him shooting up the MICV infantry. It rolls an 8 and Arrek lives to fight another day. □



## Interstellar Charter Enterprises

### An Organisation for Traveller Scenarios and Campaigns by Marcus L Rowland

#### Players Information

Outside the armed forces and megacorporations, there are few jobs available for qualified starship crews. Those positions offered tend to be poorly paid, dangerous, or both. Accordingly, when a group of unemployed adventurers see a job advertised in their morning news-fax their interest is aroused:

*Wanted - Pilots/Navigators/Computer Operators/Engineers/Gunners. Go-ahead company needs skilled personnel for small ship charter work in central Solomani Rim subsectors. Scale salaries plus 5% per annum incremented bonus, training, stock option plan, etc. Contact Interstellar Charter Enterprises, Commo ICE 324324 ex6.*

On applying, the team are given the company's local address and instructions to report for medical examinations, aptitude tests, and interviews. These include several psychological evaluations and are as tough as anything used by the Navy or Scouts. Amazingly, all the team manage to complete them and are eventually ushered into the office of the local director. After several minutes of innocuous conversation he reaches into a drawer and pulls out a small ampoule of clear liquid. 'This' he says, 'is a dose of Booster. How would you react if we wanted to include a few thousand of these in your cargo?'

#### Referees Information

ICE carry out all normal spacecraft rentals, but their main business is the provision of ships for any form of illicit activity, from smuggling to piracy and small-scale mercenary operations. This is made possible by the lack of co-operation between the regions governments, which makes it difficult for any single policing organisation to keep track of their activities. In fact, all the regions governments have used ICE's services in their own intelligence operations, and on a roll of 5+ (2d6) will ignore any allegation of illegal activities which do not threaten them.

If the players react badly to the 'drug' (actually distilled water) the manager will say that he was simply testing their reactions, since ICE would never employ smugglers. They will be offered jobs on widely separated ships and bases and, if the jobs are accepted, will be discharged for some real or invented dereliction of duty after 3-12 months. They will be carefully kept away from any illegal activities.

If the team show a less hostile reaction, indicating a willingness to discuss the possibility of acting outside the law

given suitable incentives, they will be given a little information (but no evidence) about ICE's activities and offered a job as a ship's crew.

Unlike most criminal organisations, ICE works only for hire and rarely initiates projects. The company charges standard fees for legal work but up to 500% more for illegal projects. However, there are few complaints about these fees since they include forged documentation, bribes to customs and other officials, and miscellaneous extras.

*'This,' he says, 'is a dose of Booster. How would you react if we wanted to include a few thousand of these in your cargo?'*

ICE own fifty-eight ships, all of which have at least 1% of their hull volume devoted to concealed storage compartments. These hidden spaces (usually inside the pressurised hull) are well disguised and will only be found on a roll of 11+ (DM +1 per level of Engineering skill) in a routine search, 8+ in a customs strip search or major repair. They are screened against most forms of detections. All ICE ships are frequently serviced and kept in tune for maximum performance. All but the smallest vessels have abnormally powerful computers and maximum armaments for the hull configuration. Trusted captains are issued with a false ship identity transponder, false papers, and appropriate identification symbols and paint for another shipping line or independent vessel. Most of the company's ships are standard designs including type J Seekers, type S Scout/Couriers, type A, A1, and A2 Free Traders, and Freight Tractor Vessels. All these ships can be researched in *Supplement 7 (Traders and Gunboats)* except Freight Tractor Vessels, which may be found in *Games Workshop's ISS Ship Files*. ICE also own several unregistered ships which are illegal or too radically modified to withstand any inspection. These include:

*Type S Scout/Courier.* 3-ton bomb bay, triple turret mounting laser/sand/missile launcher, ECM jammer system, and external disguise and identification as a type J Seeker.

*Type A2 Far Trader.* Modified by addition of hatches for four G Carriers [Book

2], triple turrets as above plus dorsal twin fusion gun turret (usp code 4), 48 low berths (including some in hold). The dorsal fusion gun is mounted on an added hard point.

*Gazelle Class Close Escort.* Salvaged without Imperial knowledge and outfitted as a privateer. Liquid hydrogen tanks are not available, nor are particle accelerators, and the hull is thus fitted with two triple laser turrets and two sandcaster/missile turrets.

These unregistered craft are based on uninhabited worlds or in deserted areas of populated worlds.

The benefits offered in the recruiting advertisement are genuine, since ICE prefer to employ highly qualified personnel, and if a crew are not needed for a voyage they will be assigned to a training scheme. Such courses last a month and utilise advanced techniques including hypnopaedia, drug enhancement, and computer simulations. On a roll of 5+ (DM +1 Int 10+, +1 Dex 9+) such courses will give their subjects one skill level in the area covered, but whether or not the course is passed pupils will be exhausted for the next 1-2 weeks and their Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance will be temporarily reduced by 1-2 points (if initially more than 4). The stock option scheme is also genuine, and employees may buy shares worth up to Cr5000 per year but may not sell them without the company's permission. Such shares pay dividends of 3d6% per annum.

A new crew must undertake 2-7 legitimate charters before being trusted with an illegal mission. During this period ICE may put a container of nerve gas in the ships purifier system, with a timer to trigger it if the team are late back from an assignment. Such containers will be found in a normal search on a roll of 9+, in an intensive search or major maintenance on a roll of 7+. They are usually set to release gas two weeks after the scheduled end of the mission. These devices will only be used if ICE have some particular reason to suspect the crew, such as pilferage or unlikely 'accidents' on the previous flight. Once the probationary period is ended missions should be assigned from the following table, which shows a 2d6 die roll, the assignment produced, any pay increase involved, and a modifier on the roll for the next assignment:

Die Roll	Assignment	Pay Increase	Modifier
under 3	High hazard mission (mercenary transport/drug running/organlegging/etc)	+20%	+2
4-5	Illegal mission (smuggling/gun running/illegal immigrants/etc)	+10%	+1
6-9	Legal assignment (charter flight)	-	0
10-11	Training [see below]	-	-1
12+	Vacation/Layoff [see below]	-/-15%	-2



Referees should design their own assignments bearing in mind the circumstances of their own campaigns. It should be remembered that there may be hazards even in legal flights, training, or on leave. Training assignments should be rolled for each team member on the table following, roll d6:

- 1-2: Specialty (eg pilot trained in additional Pilot skill).
- 3: Crew training (eg pilot trained in Navigation skill).
- 4: Weapons training (roll d6, 1-4: Small arms, 5-6: Gunnery).
- 5-6: Miscellaneous (roll d6: 1: Vocab skill, 2: Medical, 3: Jack-o-T, 4: Forgery and Bribery (roll for each skill), 5: Steward, 6: Vehicle (see Book 1).

If the result obtained would mean a skill being increased above level 3, or if the world concerned can not offer the course indicated, reroll the result. A roll of vacation/layoff indicates a break from all duties. If following a legal assignment or training, a layoff result is assumed, with

no work immediately available (for 1-6 weeks) and pay docked. If this result follows an illegal or high hazard mission the team are assigned a vacation for 2-4 weeks, plus one week if the mission was a high hazard assignment. Vacations are on full pay.

If referees do not wish player characters to work for ICE this company may be used in several roles. Player characters with backgrounds in crime or intelligence might be aware of ICE's clandestine role, but will know no exact details. On a roll of 10+ characters with this background will be aware of ICE's existence. Since ICE frequently use identification copied from other lines and independent carriers the players' ship might be mistakenly identified as a criminal craft. Characters with work in law enforcement might be assigned to identify the secret owners of the company (actually a consortium of banks plus five directors elected from the lines managers) or to find an individual or crew

working for the company. Mercenaries might be given a short-term contract by the company.

If referees wish to use a company of this type in other areas they should do so, but it should be remembered that ICE is based in an advanced and wealthy region which can support an organisation of such a size and which contains several separate political blocs. If used in another area (for example, the Spinward Marches before the 6th Frontier War) a smaller line with more long-distance craft might be needed. A completely unified region could probably not support an organisation, except as a legitimate charter firm.

The following are scenario outlines based on ICE or a similar organisation in the style of *Traveler Supplement #1: 76 Ferraris*. Those listing ICE as patron assume that player characters are employees, the other assumes that player characters are at least partially ignorant of ICE and its activities.

### 1. Patron: Crime boss.

**Required Skill:** Forgery, Streetwise, Recruiting.

**Required Equipment:** None.

**Player Information:** The team are hired to spearhead a currency forging operation. They are to take the necessary equipment to Agidda (Sol 0204) and supervise its installation and the recruitment of a distribution network. The group and equipment will be transported to Agidda by a freighter belonging to Interstellar Charter Enterprises, who sometimes transport dubious cargoes for a suitable fee, with the equipment disguised as computer parts and the team carrying ID as electrical engineers.

**Referee Information:** The crime boss has arranged for the rental of suitable workshops and for a supply of raw materials on Agidda. Team members will receive 40% of all profits.

1-2: The freighter crew will co-operate with the team to the best of their abilities.

3: ICE have been contracted by Imperial Intelligence officers, and paid to divert the team and equipment to meet a 'reception committee' on one of Agidda's moons.

4: A rival criminal group is aware of the project, and have put 1-2 agents on board as 'travelling salesman'. They will attempt to hijack the ship, the crew will not co-operate.

5: As 4, but ICE have been paid to co-operate with the second gang.

6: As 3, but the ships crew are not aware of the plan and the ship will be diverted to its raw destination by signals from the local ICE agents on Agidda.



### 2. Patron: ICE

**Required Skills:** Ships officers and crew.

**Required Equipment:** None.

**Player Information:** ICE own an illegally salvaged Gazelle class-class escort, based on an asteroid in the Sirius belt (Dingir 0809) and occasionally use it for piracy and other clandestine activities. The ship is a risk and financial burden, and ICE's directors have decided to sell it to a private group based on Apishal (Dingir 0802). The team are to take the ship to Apishal and collect a freight tractor vessel which is the final payment for the sale which is the final payment for the escort. The team will be paid at high hazard rates with a Cr25000 bonus for complete success.

**Referee Information:** The dictatorial government of Cuchulain are disposing of political prisoners via the organ banks, in some cases in the form of live victims kept in low storage until needed. Most of the cargo has been stolen from such a bank, and it includes four living prisoners, stored in various freezer modules. The Cuchulain police have discovered the theft and traced the shipment, and will attempt to intercept the team's ship and destroy this embarrassing evidence of their crimes. For each week of the trip roll one die.

1-2: The module holding one of the prisoners is faulty, and will start to thaw out after 1-36 days. The occupant will require normal medical attention to survive.

**Referee Information:** The route advised by ICE involves two J4 stages with 10000 refueling in the Meshan system (Dingir 0709) which holds Naval and Scout bases. The clients are actually a Solomani rebel group, financing their terrorism by piracy, and the freighter they 'own' is a stolen vessel with forged (level 2) papers.

1-2: Provided the team make no silly mistakes all will proceed smoothly.

3: An SDB will be refueling at the Meshan gas giant when the team start the second run.

4: The rebels have decided to ambush the team and take both ships.

5: As 1-2, but the freighter is badly maintained and will malfunction.

6: As 5, but the jump drive will then be reduced to J1 capability.

### 3. Patron: ICE

**Required Skills:** Ships officers and crew, Medical.

**Required Equipment:** None.

**Player Information:** The team are to transport a shipment of illegal medical supplies (mostly stolen organs but also anaesthetics, addictive drugs, and plonic stimulants) from Cuchulain (Esperance 0306) to Nuaku (Sol 0207). Any safe route may be used, within the limits of a Far Trader vessel. The supplies require meticulous monitoring (minimum Medical-2 skill), most will be stored in freeze containers but some are in nutrient solutions needing daily care. The team will be paid at high hazard rates.

3: One of the nutrient vats will go wrong and its contents decay, filling the hold with an almost intolerable smell.

4: A freeze container which does not hold a prisoner will malfunction.

5-6: No event.

For each stage of the journey the referee should decide the actions of the two Cuchulain navy vessels assigned to the pursuit (equivalent to J4 close escort) then establish the team's intentions. The team may be able to bluff their way out of any encounter if they change the ship's appearance after leaving Cuchulain. If the ship takes damage an additional week's event roll should be made. The team must also deal with the customs and other authorities of all the worlds visited en route.





*I hope occasionally to include in Starbase a few cameos – not complete adventures but small scenes or themes that could be fitted into an ongoing campaign. In each case I will assume a background to help the narrative along which can of course be changed to suit your own needs. The first of these cameos follows – a rare alternative form of interplanetary travel for about six characters.*

It is assumed the players have arrived on the planet Tsyn in a well-equipped TL12 trade/exploration ship, far beyond human space in the old, ruined Dyrwan empire. Our intrepid explorers have discovered a Gate – an interplanetary transport mechanism long known to have been used by the Dyrwan but not discovered in operative condition. Until now.

The blue shimmering surface beckoned. Deep blue, a blue of the night. The Gate frame showed few signs of age – some small pitting and fine scoring. Of course there was no question about the group going through – the Gate was operating, which meant a receiving Gate and a way back. The Dyrwan inscription, translated, proved surprisingly mundane:

*Compose yourselves*

*Move forward purposefully, all will be well.*

*Do not exceed normal walking speed. Maximum load: Ten persons/1000kg. One load per four hours.*

#### Referee

The players have no trouble recognising the Gate nor in knowing that return is possible. Enough ruined Gates have been found to determine their general characteristics though not how to repair or duplicate them. The Gate load allowance is absolute. For the purposes of working out what players may take, calculate a character's weight as Strength x 10kg. This will use up probably 600-800kg. Any remaining weight may be used for equipment and weapons,

*Starbase is a bi-monthly department devoted to readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.*

## Gateway to Adventure

### An Introduction to Traveller Scenarios

*Jamison adjusted his vacc-suit and gingerly stepped through the Gate. He paused, squinting in the glare of the unknown sun. 'What's that by the 'tree' – a Dyrwan? Is it hostile!?'*

bearing in mind the usual encumbrance rules. The actual Gate aperture is 2.5m high by 1.2 wide, about the size of a normal door, so only man-portable equipment may be taken. Characters proceed through the Gate one after the other. The operation requires enormous energy, hence the load restriction and re-powering delay. The Gate has safety interlocks so that objects (or persons) trying to pass through at speed bounce back off the Gate face (the Gate must scan all objects passing through and needs time to do it), and will also reject in entirety any object or person that exceeds the load restriction (for example seven people pass through with a total load of 960kg. A person with a total body and equipment weight of 110kg attempts to pass through. He is rejected – the Gate is solid to him. In other words the Gate would not take 70kg of the person!). The re-powering delay applies to both send-

ing and receiving Gates – in other words you can't come back before four hours have passed.

Two types of Gate have been found – the Branch or Fixed Gate with only one destination, and the Main or Choice Gate with between three and six destinations controlled by a simple dial. The Tsyn Gate is a Branch Gate.

Characters may be equipped with anything from Books 1 and 3 (within reason) up to a total of Cr2500 per character (some or all of which may be pooled with other characters for particular items), plus one TL12 vacc suit (weighs 2kg, costs Cr10000 inclusive of short range comms and six hours oxygen). No item higher than TL12 may be chosen. The referee may, if he wishes, modify these limits (for example to include items from FASA's *FCI Consumer Guide* and low-mid tech weapons from *Book 4*) bearing in mind the overall load limit and the personal encumbrance rules, but should not allow such trickery as fitting a grav belt on a security robot so it weighs nothing! The Gate load restriction is a restriction on mass, not apparent weight – any items with gravitic aid 'weigh' their full normal weight in the Gate. Lastly, once the players have double-checked everything bearing in mind they will spend four hours beyond the Gate (perhaps more if the air is breathable), the referee should ask for the order of the characters through the Gate. This could be important depending on what is encountered beyond the Gate. Make sure the players have a note of what each character is carrying. At all times hereafter, the onus is on the player to prove his or her character has a certain item if it is to be used.

What will they find beyond the Gate? Well, that is up to you – an advanced race, the ruins of a once-great city, the last degenerate survivors of the Dyrwan, etc. There is one point to bear in mind; if you feel there should be some reward beyond the Gate, make sure it's something portable! □



# Worldly Power

## Additional Government Types for Traveller by Phil Masters

As anyone with a nodding acquaintance with political theory will be aware, the standard *Traveller* government determination system is rather simplistic and one dimensional. Nonetheless, the standard system works, despite a few peculiarities – why should only high-population worlds be lumbered with religious dictatorships? – and I'm not offering any functioning alternatives (yet). What *is* worth doing, however, is looking at a few variant government types, from both history and the pages of SF, and using them in *Traveller*, if only for the odd 'ref's special'.

For these purposes, a system of government has three important characteristics, each with a numerical value. The *Bureaucracy Level* (BL) is a measure of the extent to which government agencies intervene in day-to-day affairs, and is also the saving throw against officialdom taking an intrusive interest in characters' affairs. The *Law Modifier* (LM) is the DM applied (in place of the usual government number) to a random throw determining the society's Law Level. The *Technological Modifier* (TM) is the DM applied to the random throw that determines a society's Tech Level.

**Non-Technological Feudalism:** Code N, BL 5, LM 7, TM -5. Probably the standard for many tech-1 worlds. Under Non-Technological Feudalism, areas of land are ruled by a small elite, almost certainly hereditary, and the population owes allegiance to the ruler of their area. The demands made by feudal lords on their subjects are for services or goods more often than they are for cash – indeed, cash may be quite rare, or even unknown. Central authority tends to be weak, as lords can always demand military service of their subjects and attack anyone trying to assert authority. Laws are determined by the area's ruler, and by agreements between such lords; thus, the main characteristic of such laws is that they defend the interests of the aristocracy, and favour the *status quo*. Because relationships centre on control and use of land, merchants and city dwellers are in an ambiguous, and often difficult, position. This is why this type of government is virtually unknown at tech levels beyond 3, except on a very few *highly* mechanised worlds, where industry can be left to the robots.

Although feudal worlds tend to be violent, the fear of peasant revolt tends to

make their rulers restrictive about weaponry, except in 'proper' (ie loyal) hands. In particular, missile weaponry is often carefully controlled, as it can be too much of an equaliser between the wealthy, well-armed lord and the unloved peasant. This is related to a certain dislike of technological development generally.

**Demarchy:** Code R, BL 1, LM 1, TM +2. A variant form of participant democracy, with many of the traits of an anarchy. In fact, Demarchy may be the *only* form of participant democracy possible to some very populous, or geographically dispersed, cultures. Instead of the usual participant system of meetings in a particular place, a Demarchy uses the most sophisticated two-way communications media available to allow mass discussion and voting on almost every issue. Because of the speed and frequency of debates, the result is virtually mob rule, with skilled speakers and self-publicists given a considerable advantage. Such a system can only survive if bureaucrats and officials, who will always seek to centralise political power, are severely restrained, and this may only be possible if such individuals are generally held in very low esteem. A Demarchy can represent a very dangerous society for outsiders, and especially for those who oppose popular sentiment. Laws tend to be vague, but penalties for infringement may be heavy.

*Example:* The name and idea of a Demarchy seems to have been invented by SF writer Joan Vinge in her novel, *The Outcasts of Heaven Belt*. Although the mechanisms of the system have often been discussed in SF, I know of no other work which examines the subject so fully.

**Technological Theocracy:** Code T, BL 6, LM 4, TM +2. A rare and exotic system, Technological Theocracy is characterised by a rather simplistic division between rulers and ruled. The latter are deliberately kept in ignorance by the former, and the apparent tech level for much of the world involved is rarely more than 1 or 2. However, the aristocracy/priesthood has access to technology several levels beyond that of their subjects, and uses it to awe and cow the masses. Such rulers may assume the role of priests, granted miraculous power by the gods, or even of actual gods and demi-gods. If the aristocracy

actually has commercial access to interstellar technology, so much the better for them. Although the rulers will keep a careful eye on the populous, they will tend to feel that they have little to fear, and so government/divine intervention will be limited – except when technological change is threatened.

*Example:* Although priests have, on occasion, used technical tricks to impress gullible worshippers, this form of government has never actually occurred in human history. It is, however, quite commonly depicted in the pages of science fiction; Harry Harrison has used it more than once. The classic novels using the theme are Fritz Leiber's *Gather, Darkness!*, and – more or less definitively – Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light*, which introduces the interesting twist that the pseudo-divinities are also master psionicists. Other Zelazny works are also relevant here, notably *Creatures of Light and Darkness*.

**Abstract Supreme Authority:** Code S, BL 8, LM 10, TM +1. A world governed by an Abstract Supreme Authority will generally appear to be Balkanized, although other structures might be visible instead. Actually, supreme power resides in the hands of a small, rather detached elite, who permit the more visible structure to persist as a convenient means of detailed minor administration. Selection for the elite is subtle and discrete, usually based on the rulers' determination to maintain power. The elite take care to remain dispassionate; although they may enjoy their position, they claim – quite sincerely for the most part – that their detachment, experience, and intellectual ability allows them to enforce the genuine greatest good for the greatest number. They may have access to more sophisticated technology than the mass of the population.

*Example:* Despite all claims to the contrary, no government in human history has actually functioned as an Abstract Supreme Authority. Science Fiction writers have frequently toyed with similar ideas; there is a hint of such ideas in Larry Niven's *Beowulf Shaeffer* stories, and Ursula LeGuin's *Ekumen* is a highly relevant concept. It is also arguable that the *Traveller* Imperium represents exactly this sort of government. The classic example, however, is Cordwainer Smith's *Instrumentality*, which appears in nearly all of Smith's works, which are highly recommended.

**Sample Scenarios Using Non-Standard Governments.** Three scenarios are presented here, each centred on a world government of one of the types described in the first part of this article. Each is in the *76 Patrons* format, with patron, required skills (if any) for the job, and alternative backgrounds for the referee to choose or roll for.

1108: THE MASTER'S POLITICAL SURVEY MISSION RETURNED FROM ITS SELECTED INTERSTELLAR TOUR. CERTAIN EXTRACTS FROM THE EXPEDITION'S JOURNAL REVEAL SOME NEW POLITICAL SYSTEMS DISCOVERED ON THE SURVEY.



1 • SURVEY MISSION •• PATRON: INDUSTRIALIST, UPP 697BDA, AGE 51 •• REQUIRED SKILLS: MECHANICAL, ELECTRONIC



**Referee's Notes:** The offer of work comes from an accredited agent of a minor interstellar mining corporation. A small team is required to perform a quick but careful survey of the

planet Noth (C7864R4-D), as there are reasons to believe that mineral wealth could be present there. Basic skills required to operate the survey equipment are Mechanical-1 and Electronic-1. Prospecting skill would also be of use. Expenses, middle passage, and Cr15,000 per head are offered to the party as all of the company's regular prospectors are otherwise engaged at present. The patron wants the work done quickly, before the rumour reaches any larger organizations; freelance professional surveyors are all too often paid by the 'big boys' to pass back news of interesting commissions from rivals.

Noth was inhabited by a small farming community that has grown fabulously rich on its automated farms' output of Nothi Cumin, a superb spice that will only grow successfully in the soil and solar radiation pattern of Noth. The farmers control their government by voting on all major issues, including criminal trials, via a videoc-conferencing system. If a debate occurs involving the party, the referee must assess the rhetorical skills applied, the mood of the populace, and any other relevant factors.

Basetime to perform the survey is 30 days; -5 if any Prospecting skill is available, -1 per level of such skill over 1; +1d6 for each item of equipment subject to malicious damage.

1: All is straightforward. The party can obtain permission to perform a survey without much difficulty, and should be able to avoid infringing local customs with a modicum of tact and care.

2,3: The Nothian farmers are suspicious of any threat to their stable, self-indulgent society. Blanket permission to survey is not available; permission to survey specific areas must be obtained in the face of attitudes ranging from affable but businesslike neutrality to outright hostility.

4,5: As 2-3, but the general attitude is hostile, and 1d+1 acts of disruption (petty sabotage, assault, etc) will occur in the course of the mission.

6: As 4-5, but at least one of the farmers has been secretly bribed by an agent of one of the patron's rivals to disrupt events, and after 2d6 days, a group of young local thugs - similarly hired - will begin watching the party for a chance to cause trouble.

2 • HIGH LORDS •• PATRON: NOBLE, UPP 8599AC, AGE 40 •• REQUIRED SKILLS: NONE



**Referee's Notes:** The party is approached by a well-dressed man who explains that he represents the Council of Lords of the planet Molnarax. The non-human peasantry of that planet has always been contented and docile, but recently there have been insurrections and other difficulties. The Council suspects

that some off-world interference is involved, and wants to hire a small group of tough individuals to locate and remove the troublemakers. Cr150,000 plus reasonable expenses are offered for the job.

Molnarax (D5444T2-A) has a population of humanoid primitives who are dominated by a small group of humans - the High Lords - who have set themselves up as deities. The natives are small (1-1/4m), slender beings (-2 on strength, +1 on dexterity, education 0), limited to tech level 0-1; the only weapons they possess are clubs, spears, and short bows. However, they produce remarkably fine jewellery and abstract artworks, which the High Lords sell off-planet at high prices. The world is way off the normal trade lanes; the nearest populated world is a jump-4 trip away, although there are systems with fuel-bearing gas giants nearer.

1: There is no outside interference. A small group of junior Molnaraxi nobles is seeking to bring down certain of their seniors, and has spread rumours of 'false gods' among the natives to cause disruption. Establishing and proving this is the party's problem.

2: The 'troublemaker' is a lone ex-scout who stumbled across Molnarax, and took a

dislike to the political system. He is dwelling in a well-hidden cave in a mountain area, acting as a 'sage' to the natives (natives and animal encounters in the area must be determined by the referee). He has cloth armour and an automatic rifle.

3: The trouble comes from a far trader, whose captain managed to trace the source of certain valuable traded artworks. The crew have set themselves up as 'The True Gods', and are dwelling in a forest region.

4: As 3, but the trader has a small group of well-armed mercenaries along as a bodyguard.

5: The Imperial Secret Service, which regards the Molnarax situation as intolerable exploitation of primitives, has established a project to disrupt the High Lords' system and educate the natives. Their detachment on the planet, which includes a squad of marines, is small but well-equipped.

6: There is no outside intervention at all. The natives, who are quite intelligent and not particularly prone to superstition in the human sense, have begun to deduce the nature of their situation from a multitude of trivial clues. Being so intelligent, they may set some remarkably ingenious traps and ambushes for the party.

3 • TRADING PERMIT •• PATRON: MERCHANT, UPP 567896, AGE 47 •• REQUIRED SKILLS: ADMINISTRATION



**Referee's Notes:** A representative of an interstellar trading company offers the party work at Cr20,000 a head on a success-only basis. The job involves a planet named Vo, which is nominally a democracy, and usually regarded as a civil-service bureaucracy (planetary statistics C666889-8). The patron's company recently sought permission to establish a branch on Vo to trade high-tech machine tools for local products; the request was refused, for no apparent reason. Initial

investigations have suggested that Vo is really run by an Abstract Supreme Authority; certainly, many members of the bureaucracy, at different levels, are members of a mysterious organization called 'The Blue Crystal Brotherhood'. The job on offer is to obtain the trading permit, if necessary by penetrating the Brotherhood; Cr2,500 to cover expenses, plus return tickets, high passage, to Vo, are available.

1,2: There has been an error of intelligence on the patron's part. The Blue Crystal Brotherhood is an innocent social club with a childish taste for secrecy; the permit was refused because the negotiators neglected to place bribes in the right places. Careful application of cash should facilitate the party's work, as and when they identify the problem.

3: The Blue Crystal Brotherhood certainly thinks of itself as ruling Vo, although its influence is partial at best. It is a quasi-religious body, with a complex policy partly dictated by a divination method resembling the tarot. This is what caused refusal of the permit application - the cards demanded that the move be blocked. The problem may be solved by either bribing or threatening senior members of the Brotherhood, or simply by working through non-members within the civil service (who regard the Brotherhood as a nuisance).

4: The Brotherhood is an old, devious body, whose greatest asset is an ancient (First Imperium) 'super-computer', programmed

to optimise the running of Vo's economy. The trade application proved, when analysed by this machine, to imply a possible de-stabilising effect on the Voan system - local machine tool manufacturers would have difficulty adapting to such competition fast enough, and dependency on off-world supplies would make the Voan economy excessively vulnerable. This decision could be reversed, but only if the party can gain access to the innermost circles of the Brotherhood, and then negotiate from a position of strength. (The threat of reporting the existence of the computer to all and sundry might suffice).

5: As 4, but the computer is - unbeknownst to the Brotherhood - subtly controlled by agents of a neighbouring world's government, who have ensured that the long-term result of its advice will be to create a strong trade bond between the two planets, with Vo generally subservient.

6: The Blue Crystal Brotherhood is a powerful and very secretive organization; the most secret fact is that it is a Zhodani front. The long-term aim of the consulate's manipulation of Voan society is complex, but essentially involves preventing the development of unifying trade links in this subsector by the encouragement of social isolationism - hence the trade permit refusal. Extensive investigation of the organization may eventually lead to Zhodani intelligence network operating on the planet.



Starbase is a bi-monthly department for Traveller ideas, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue we present a special alien's package, by Phil Masters.

# Aliens

by Phil Masters

## The Phulgk'k'k

The Phulgk'k'k are a small (4' long), amphibious minor race inhabiting Thgg'k'llu (literally 'sea shore, indefinitely extended'), which humaniti call Vashoon's World, Thagg, or Longshore. The race resembles Terran crustacea (nickname 'lobsters') but is highly evolved; the exoskeletal carapace has a complex, flexible structure, the two pincers are incorporated in handlike members, and brain size is quite respectable. They have a multitude of lensless eyes on 'stalks' (giving a wide angle of vision, but poor focus), concealed hearing organs of moderate efficiency, and a vast array of chemical 'taste/smell' organs (Longshore has a complex mixture of gases, generally vented from volcanoes; sensitivity to the flow and pattern of these is a strong survival attribute).

Phulgk'k'k breathe air and water, preferring water, and appear to have evolved from scavenger/intermittents. UPP as follows:

<b>Strength:</b>	1d+1	<b>Intelligence:</b>	2d 1
<b>Dexterity:</b>	2d-3 (min 2)	<b>Base Education:</b>	1d
<b>Endurance:</b>	1d+2	<b>Social Standing:</b>	1d+1

Phulgk'k'k fight with two claws for 1d damage each; their carapace is treated as mesh armour. Most have some useful skills; calculate Base Educ + 1d-3, with a positive result being the number of rolls on the following table; use 1d for this, with DM + 1 if education (base or after earlier rolls) is 6+;

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1: +1 Endurance | 4: Liaison        |
| 2: Combat       | 5: Alien Lore     |
| 3: Mechanical   | 6,7: +1 Education |

Note: *Combat* gives a plus DM in claw attacks, equal to half the skill level rounded up. *Combat* 1-3 also gives carbine-½; *Combat* 4+ gives carbine-1 (see below on guns). *Alien Lore* gives an understanding of non-Phulgk'k'k psychology, society, and tastes; without it, operating in the interstellar community is difficult.

They have limited territorial drives, and the mating urge is weak until triggered by a complex set of circumstances. Their chief drive is derived from their non-sentient ancestors' danger/food gathering instinct, producing a tendency to rush in, make a quick claw attack or grab for food, then flee swiftly. Thus Phulgk'k'k are impetuous, but rarely sustain enthusiasm; they usually 'think better' of their first actions within minutes. Phulgk'k'k society has de-



veloped ways of controlling this rush/panic pattern: they confront all tasks by forming 'committees', which continually recruit and lose members to maintain a balance of enthusiasm and caution. Consequently, lone Phulgk'k'k, often behave erratically. Through interstellar trade tech level is now 4. One industry is the manufacture of light, waterproof guns (treat as carbines), designed for Phulgk'k'k use.

Phulgk'k'k with Alien Lore 2+ can attune their superb chemical senses to the particular tastes of other races; thus they make skilled cooks, perfumiers, and the like. Phulgk'k'k can be encountered throughout the Imperium on such work, or on trade or diplomatic missions. Player characters may even find work as bodyguards to a millionaire's chef, or pilots to Phulgk'k'k travellers.

Phulgk'k'k are not recommended as player characters, as they prefer breathing water, require special diets, and have a peculiar psychology that may be hard to role-play properly.

## The Ghashruan

Ghashruan originate on Ghashrua, a desert world lying within the Hiver Federation. Its inhabitants may be encountered throughout Hiver space, the Imperium, and other regions. This planet is mostly covered in wind-blown sand, but enough 'oasis' regions exist to support a complex ecology, in which an intelligent species has evolved from omnivore/hunter stock. The Ghashruan are small (average 1-1¼m), hunched-looking beings with leathery grey skins, two arms, two legs, torso and head, and long, splayed fingers and toes (four per hand and foot), which allow them to



move swiftly on soft sand—especially when they drop to all fours, (speed 2 when on all fours in open country). They have little taste sensitivity, and can smell only water vapour, but their hearing and eyesight are both acute.

When the Hivers first contacted the Ghashruan, they found a tribal, bronze-age society. Population pressure in the oases led to a pattern whereby youths of both sexes traditionally went out 'questing' upon maturity—the race retains an adventurous, 'tribalistic' culture, despite a Hiver-aided advance to high technology. Such impulses can easily conflict with Hiver non-violent co-operation, but Ghashruan are adventurous rather than simply violent, and their tradition of personal loyalty ensures them a place in the Federation.

If Hiver naval vessels are ever encountered, any ships troops may be Ghashruan. The Federation army has some all-Ghashruan regiments, where loyalty and pride run extremely high (in *Striker* terms, treat as Aslan, with initiative requirement levels raised by one). The armed forces of Ghashrua itself are equipped to tech level 12, and serve both as planetary police and as reserve units for the Federation.

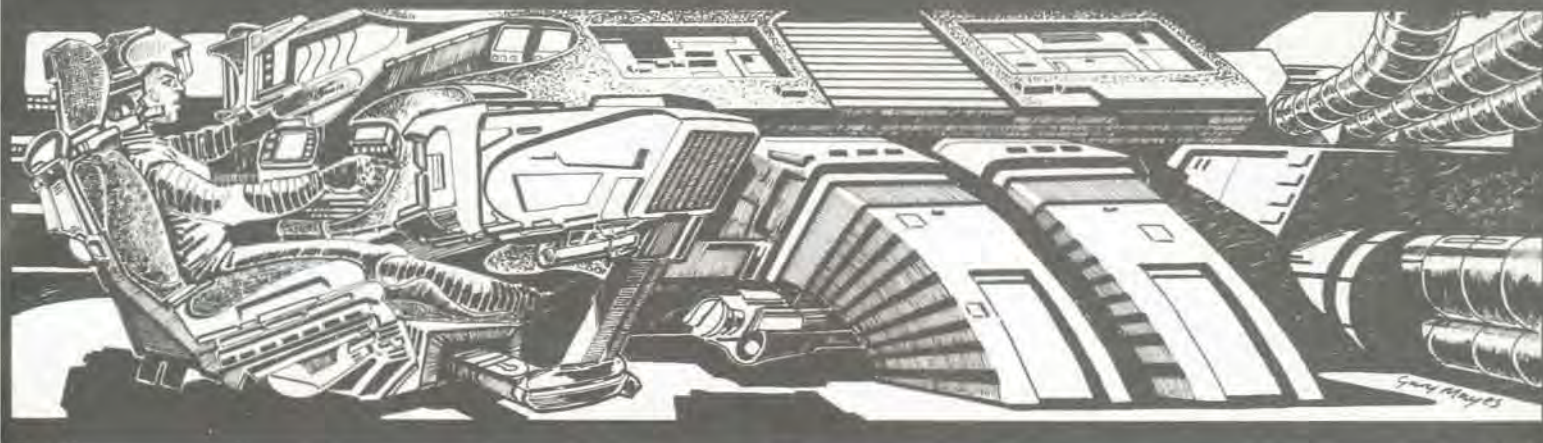
Some Ghashruan mercenaries exist outside the Federation; the Hivers tolerate this provided that other races' laws and traditions are not violated. Within the Imperium, Ghashruan mercenaries are regarded as good, but slightly unpredictable (treat as Vargr in *Striker* terms).

Ghashruan characters are generated normally with these adjustments: -1 to strength, +1 to endurance, -2 to education. Those with education 0 are 'backwood' Ghashruan, and automatically qualify as Barbarians, with no other choices open; others may join any of the services, as per humans, with the following DMs on enlistment (not on re-enlistment); Scouts, all military services, +2; Barbarians, +1; Pirates, Belters, -1; Bureaucrats, Sailors, -3. Ghashruan can go for three times as long as humans without water, with +1 on morale. They have little time for bureaucratic niceties; if a member of the race receives a level of Admin skill, it is 50% likely to be converted to +1 Education instead.

The race has a complex, but sometimes flexible, code of honour and respect, making their response to other beings highly unpredictable except when matters of honour or duty are concerned; to represent this, reaction roll is double the result.

If players wish to utilise Ghashruan characters, they must act with Ghashruan psychology, which referees should also try to bear in mind at all times. Courage, loyalty, and some impatience with other beings are central, as is tolerance of hardship and any waiting imposed by physical (rather than administrative) necessity. Younger Ghashruan (up to about 28-30 Terran years) tend to the greatest adventurousness, and have an impulse to 'prove themselves' to anyone who they respect; their elders will form and declare strong group loyalties, often combined with some vague loyalty to the Federation. All loyalty is to the death, although Ghashruan will demand fair treatment within their chosen group. □





# DATABASE

## Computers in Traveller by Marcus L Rowland

Although various computer models and programs are listed in the *Traveller* rules, uses other than main ship handling functions are rarely mentioned. This article suggests a few programs and accessories which might be found in a commercial or military spacecraft, and some suggestions for modifying the normal *Traveller* computer models to give a better approximation of the progress likely to be made in several thousand years of computer design and construction.

### Programs

Some programs use less than one full space in the computers' CPU or Store. The spaces they occupy should be added together and rounded up to the next largest whole space:

eg  $0.2 + 0.5 = 0.7$  but occupy 1 space.  
 $0.6 + 0.5 = 1.1$  but occupy 2 spaces.  
 0.6 occupies one space.

### Programs Available

Title	Space	Price (Mcr)	Effect & DMs
Backup	0.5	1.4	Copies programs
Business	0.6	0.3	+1 on Broker or Admin skill
Compiler/Aid 1	0.5	0.4	+1 on Computer skill *
Compiler/Aid 2	0.8	1.1	+2 on Computer skill *
Damage Control	1.0	0.8	Monitors damage to ship.
Low Monitor	0.2	0.1	+1 on low survival rolls.
Medicaid 1	1.0	0.6	+1 on Medical skill *
Medicaid 2	2.0	0.8	+2 on Medical skill *
Remote	1.0	1.3	Remote control of ship
Science Data	1.0	0.5	See below
Self Test	0.1	0.3	Tests computer
Simulator	1.0	1.5	See Below
Translator	1.0	0.4	Linguistic translator.
Watchdog	2.0	1.1	See Below

\* Different program DMs are not cumulative if loaded together.

A few problems associated with the following list of programs are rarely mentioned in the manufacturers sales literature - these are covered in the 'referee only' paragraph.

**Backup.** Used to make extra program copies for safety and security. Copies will only work on the machine that made them, and further copies cannot be made from them. Referee only: If the original program is lost *Backup* will not make another copy from the first copy.

Some manufacturers incorporate anti-copying devices into their programs which make *Backup* useless or, even worse, give a faulty copy which might endanger the ship.

**Business.** A general business and accountancy package: administrative routines, word processing, tax auditing, payroll generation. Referee only: User must have the Broker or Admin skill to get positive DMs.

**Compiler/Aid.** Speeds up the production of new programs and adds extra language and error-trapping facilities, making it easier to generate fast bug-free programs. Referee only: It must be tailored to the computer on which it will be used. If not the new program will eventually malfunction, typically at an inconvenient moment. If *Compiler/Aid* is bought along with the computer this will not arise. Referees should remember, 'What Can Go Wrong, Will' when new programs are written by player characters with or without *Compiler/Aid*.

**Damage Control.** Runs rapid system checks in computer monitored areas and detects minor damage (eg slow air leaks, jammed iris valves) as well as major malfunctions. Referee only: Faults are presented in alphabetical order, not in strict order of seriousness. For example: Iris Valve C7 - Jammed Open may appear on the screen before Jump Drive - Unstable Control Crystal. It is extremely sensitive to faults and may give false alarms (reporting the normal miniscule air loss around a turrets' bearings as an air leak).

**Low Monitor.** A specialised medical routine monitoring low berths that must be in the CPU or store for the flight duration. This program function is duplicated in both Medical programs, but they occupy more memory and are impractical to keep loaded at all times.

**Medicaid.** Gives diagnostic information based on the medic's opinion of the patients' symptoms and on medical monitor readings. Medicaid 1 covers a single race (eg Humaniti) and deals with most routine treatments, Medicaid 2 covers up to 4 races and can also be used to control autodocs. Both programs are covered by an updating service, similar to that available for Library Data. Referee only: Low Monitor and Medicaid are most reliable when dealing with the species which wrote them, and may make unfortunate errors in their coverage of aliens.

**Remote.** Links the ships comms and piloting controls directly to a portable computer. It must be loaded in conjunction with the vessels normal Manoeuvre or Manoeuvre/Evade program. Referee only: The program's range is limited to line of sight, although on planets with an ionosphere or good satellite relay systems indirect operations may be possible. If there is any speed of light delay between transmitting and receiving signals there will be pilot skill penalties, -1 per 0.5 seconds timelag. It is usually illegal to use *Remote* programs on or near heavily populated worlds.

**Science Data.** Detailed Library data, covering one or more subjects. Typical topics are Engineering, Extrobiology, and Biochemistry.

**Self Test.** Runs a series of several million calculations to check that the computer is working correctly. It must run for a minute per CPU and store space, whilst no other program is used.

**Simulator.** Used to train crew to deal with equipment failures and battle conditions. Produces lifelike instrument readings, visual displays, etc. It must be combined with an appropriate 'host' program such as *Gunnery*, *Jump* or *Navigate*. Referee only: An extremely rare fault is the activation of the system simulated, which can be avoided by disconnecting main power leads or vital components before a simulation run.

**Translator.** Gives written or verbal translations of alien languages, quickly, fairly accurately and of real time conversations. It can only cope with two languages at a time. The more obscure the language the more expensive the program. Special versions are available for difficult languages (eg Hiver sign language) with visual displays, tactile pad accessories, etc. They require 1.5 spaces of memory and are correspondingly expensive. Referee only: *Translator* copes very badly with figures of speech, similes, and words with more than one meaning. 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' might be translated as 'Invisible lunatic' This is less likely with widespread languages (eg *Zhodani*, *Vargr*).

**Watchdog.** A security program, to protect an empty ship. As well as normal internal anti-hijack operations it can be set to electrify the outer hull, fire ships weaponry at anyone entering a preset radius, activate drives or radars as anti-personnel weapons, and operate other protective devices. Authorised personnel are recognised by portable



computer signals or voice transmission codewords. Referee only: Watchdog is illegal at Imperial spaceports. Unless parameters are carefully defined this program can be lethally dangerous, firing devastatingly powerful weapons at drifting leaves or frying the ground crew who want to refuel the ship. If the deactivating codeword or signal is lost or forgotten the crew may find it difficult to return to the vessel. Voiceprint identification may fail if the speaker is injured, under stress, or suffering from a respiratory infection. Remember: this program is not 'intelligent' and cannot be persuaded to relax security.

**Hardware**

A typical ship's computer consists of the CPU and store, one or more master terminals giving full access to all its data (eg on the bridge and in the main engineering space), some specialised terminals (eg turrets) with restricted control, and several secondary terminals used as entertainment consoles, intercoms, and information points that cannot be used to control any vital ship system. Usually the Captain and the first officer will know a command signal enabling secondary terminals to be used as a master terminal, and the Captain will know another signal allowing such a terminal to become the only master control. Most systems also include an interface unit allowing data to be transferred to or from a portable computer. Printers and other peripherals usually cost and weigh extra.

**Computer System Extras**

Item	Cost	Weight	TL
Printer (simple)	Cr900	8kg	6+
Printer (advanced)	Cr1500	14kg	7+
Entertainment Unit	Cr25000	50kg	7+
Voiceprint Analyser	Cr2100	12kg	7+
Speech Synthesiser	Cr4000	1kg	7+
Backup Power Supply	.....See below.....		
Medical Monitor	Cr2000	0.1kg	9+
Neural Interface	MCr0.85	100kg	B+

**Printers.** Gives permanent records, usually on paper or similar. Simple units have a normal set of letters and numbers plus a few special symbols; advanced units are faster with neater results, many more characters and high-resolution graphics. Referee only: printers can generate electrical or magnetic fields that may affect other parts of the ship.

**Entertainment Units.** Gives secondary terminal access to plays, music and video games. Its programs are supplied by various entertainment corporations. These units are not part of the computer but they make use of its remote terminals and switching systems. The cost listed is for a unit with ten entertainment channels, more powerful units are available. Referee only: These units may interfere with vital control systems, intercoms, etc if several terminals try to access the same channel simultaneously. Manufacturers should install a cutout circuit to prevent this, but there is a slight chance (roll of 11+ on 2d6, +1 if unit is over 10yrs old) that this circuit is broken or missing.

**Voiceprint Analyser.** Used for crew identification. They are usually linked to the ship's radio and intercom unit. Referee: see Watchdog notes, for voiceprint or identification problems.

**Speech Synthesisers.** Allows the computer to talk. Usually used for emergency announcements and to give an intimate feel to games, it may also be used for routine messages and reports.

Generally, these units contain 200 words per TL above 6. Referee only: Unbiased observers tend to find them irritating after only a few hours use, and maddening after prolonged exposure. In one incident a navigator smashed a unit after it told him to 'have a nice day' eighteen times in one watch.

**Backup Power Supplies.** Available at all tech levels.

$$\text{Power output (hrs)} = \frac{\text{weight (tons)} \times \text{TL} \times 4}{\text{Computer Model No} + 3}$$

(round down)

Thus at TL12 a 1 ton Power Supply will give a Model 1 computer 12 hours power, a model 2 computer 9 hours power, etc. Backup power supplies are charged from the ship's power planet until needed. Referee only: If the computer is damaged its backup power unit may also be damaged (50% chance), reducing its storage capacity by 20% x d6 (anything over 100 is total destruction).

**Medical Monitors.** Worn on belts or carried in pockets. They transmit vital signs - pulse, respiration, temperature etc, to the computer, which must be running one of the Medicaid programs to interpret them. At higher TLs they may even be implanted in the body. Referee only: They can be easily modified to act as bugs or homing beacons.

**Neural Interface.** Lets the pilot control the ship by nervous impulses. Each unit must be for a specific pilot, who must be specially trained with the necessary electrodes implanted. At TL D+ multi-user systems are available, each pilot inserting a memory chip reprogramming the machine to his (or her) nervous system before plugging in. The system gives a +2 pilot skill bonus. In some designs the user can also control one or more turrets, which are much more expensive and usually unavailable to civilians. Their effect is similar to the 'Evil Eye' sight mentioned in *WD40*. Referee only: There is a feedback mechanism, so the pilot is directly aware of the ship's condition. This feedback is almost always via the nerves of touch and pain. If such a ship is seriously damaged the pilot may suffer intense pain (4d6 subdual damage) and may develop psychosomatic burns and scars. Such marks are fairly common amongst pilots with extensive combat experience using this system. Ships damage and injury areas are related:

Computer:	Head	Drives:	Legs
Power Plant:	Heart	Turrets:	Arms
Hull:	Skin	Fuel/Hold:	Stomach

**Referee's Notes**

If characters persist in adding new gadgets to their computer, remember that such haphazard additions increase the likelihood of a major systems failure. If the computer is used exactly as designed, the basic chance of failure is a roll of 24+ on 4d6 each week. Every minor device added after initial installation (eg Printer, extra cabin terminals, etc) gives a +1 DM on this roll. Devices like entertainment units or turret terminals which interact with the system to a greater extent gives a +2 DM, while major installations such as Neural Interfaces add a +3 DM. The malfunctions these devices cause should be rolled on the table below or determined by the referee.

A ship's computer will perform many routine functions regardless of prog-

rams loaded, such as regulating power supplies and life support, operation of the internal gravity field and acceleration compensators, and switching intercom and other information services. Any damage to the system may disable some or all of these functions as well as disrupting the use of main programs. Use the following if a computer is damaged but not destroyed - roll 2d6;

**System Damage Malfunction Table**

- Compensator failure: roll d6: 1-4 partial, 5-6 total.
- Gravity malfunction: d6 x 0.2g increase.
- Gravity malfunction: Reduced to zero g.
- Gravity malfunction: d6 x 0.1g decrease.
- Intercom failure: roll d6: 1-4 partial, 5-6 total.
- Life support failure: roll d6: 1-5 partial, 6 total.
- Power distribution malfunction, 10-60% power loss or gain to all systems.
- Control malfunction, -1 on Pilot and Navigator skills.
- Main programs garbled or lost.
- Anti-hijack systems activate randomly.

**Updating the Traveller Computer**

Many referees feel that the computer types in the *Traveller* rules are old-fashioned, resembling older multi-user 'mainframe' models more than today's Mini- and Micro-computers. At first sight it seems more effective to have separate computers for each job (eg gunnery computers) but such units would still need to exchange information, and an interlocking net of smaller units doing the same job as a master computer would be much more vulnerable to sabotage and battle damage, and probably slower. More valid objections are that the memory space in the CPU and in the Store are too restricted for the size of the computer, and that programs are too expensive. The following changes are suggested, which slightly enhance the abilities of *Traveller* computers without seriously disturbing game balances.

- Reduce prices of all programs except Jump (including those described above) by 75%.
- Multiply CPU space for all models by 1.5 and round up to the next whole number.
- Multiply Store space for all models by 2.5 and round down.
- At TL 9+ fibre-optics models are priced as normal units.
- At TL E+ multiply CPU and Store spaces by 1.25 and round up. This change is cumulative with 2 and 3 above.
- If a starship computer is replaced with a more powerful unit of the same TL it can be an add-on process rather than a full replacement, with a saving of 60% of the original model's cost. The resulting unit is as old as its oldest component, and any potential faults caused by other add-ons are not corrected.
- At TL A+ computer models 4 and above may incorporate artificial intelligence routines, at a cost of MCr3.5 with a 2-ton weight increase. The computer gains some reasoning ability, equivalent to a human intelligence factor of half (TL + [Model no x 2]). Usually the designers only include restricted free will, and the computer can improvise while obeying orders but not set its own goals. □



Starbase is a bi-monthly department for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, quick fleet design.

# A Fleeting Encounter

Book 2 Fleets by Andy Slack

High Guard vessels and fleets are fine for mass military actions and tournament play, but I have found that in normal *Traveller* adventures the amount of time spent designing them is wasted. Smaller units like the famous Gazelle class or my own Explorer class [WD39] have their uses, but in general can be replaced by ordinary *Book 2* designs without any loss of flavour. Huge craft like the *Azhanti High Lightning* are negligibly large – their firepower and marine contingents are such that if they appear in a game at all individual characters in a small ship stand no chance whatsoever, unless the opposing captain is an idiot. The average game or commission is instantly unbalanced unless the heavy cruisers are kept off-stage – so what's the point of spending days designing them?

A fleet of *Book 2* ships is much more deployable and far easier to design. It is also easier to run; because of the lack of screens and the way the weapons behave, tactics are roughly similar to modern naval warfare. Even with computer programmes such as those available to the vast Model 7 machines, lasers and missiles are roughly equivalent in effect whoever launches them or fires them. Further, because ships are not very resistant to damage, and because ton-for-ton a group of ship's boats have more weapons than a starship or non-starship, there is a strong incentive to having many small units, rather than a few big ones. From a game balance point of view, this means that

instead of being pursued by a 20,000 ton craft with a meson gun the players' free trader is set upon by a squadron of fighters or ship's boats. They stand slightly more chance, but the referee has had virtually no design work to do and can concentrate on the scenario not the rules or the hardware.

## Fleet Composition

1 Carrier – a large vessel carrying fighters or ship's boats modified as fighters. 2-12 Escorts – type C or type T cruisers would be perfect. 1-6 Auxiliaries – supply ships, hospital ships and so on. Type R or M subsidised merchants called up for war service, probably. 3-18 Scouts – the familiar type S. 1-6 Couriers – fast, long-range vessels for carrying reports and orders on strategy, future fleet positions, etc. 1-6 Tankers – large vessels with vast amounts of spare fuel to transfer to other ships. 1-6 Assault Carriers – large vessels carrying marines and their equipment, possibly in low berths.

## Deployment and Tactics

The running costs of warships will still be much higher if they are moving around than if they sit still, so to save money any government in peacetime will keep the fleet in port as much as possible. In peacetime, the scout ships will roam around space looking for trouble which requires a fleet's presence, and if they find it they will report back straight away. The escorts may also patrol randomly in the hope of nipping such trouble in the bud, blasting pirates, and so

on. The rest of the fleet will spend most of its time at a naval base, strategically placed for quick response to likely trouble areas. Still, sometimes it will go on exercises to fine-tune crews and equipment; so assume a naval base has a fleet present 5/6 of the time, and if a 6 is rolled the fleet is on an exercise. Naval bases will always retain some fighters to protect them, some scouts for reconnaissance, and some couriers to report or yell for help with.

When in war or exercise the fleet moves as a whole, the units have the following tasks:

**Carrier.** The flagship, also responsible for transporting up to a hundred or so fighters/combat ship's boats between star systems. It is lightly armed as a last line of defence.

**Fighters.** They do most of the real work. They attack enemy ships, usually with missile fire; support ground troops, serving as 'flying tanks' as well as maintaining air superiority; and attempt to prevent enemy fighters from doing the same things back.

**Escorts.** Their primary function is protecting the carrier from enemy fighters. If friendly fighters do not break up an attack, the escorts must do so as the carrier is not itself efficient in combat.

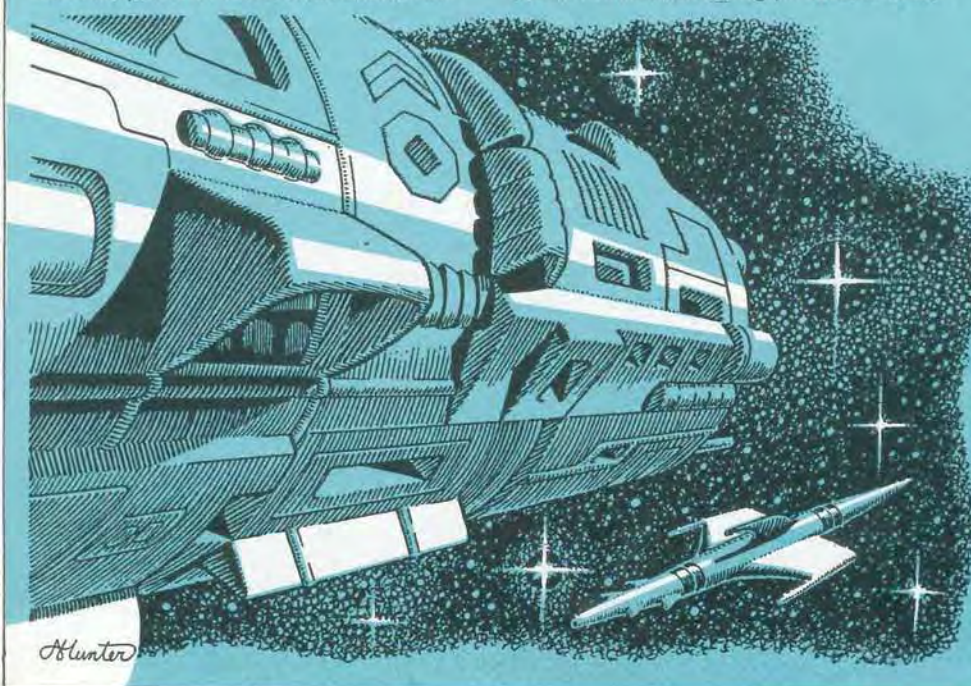
**Auxiliaries and Tankers.** Supply the fleet with fuel and other goods. They normally huddle around the carrier for protection.

**Scouts.** Primarily used for reconnaissance. They will jump into nearby systems in search of opposing forces and report back if possible. The fleet normally plans its movements some weeks in advance; this means that the scouts can leave the fleet in system A, search systems B and C, rejoin the fleet in system D, rather than the whole fleet sitting idle until a report is brought back. This also makes opposing scouts prime targets for capture by enemy intelligence, and since plans must often be changed, scouts are often lost from the fleet by appearing at the scheduled system to find the fleet absent. Contingency plans are laid against this, eg alternate routes and instructions to 'go to such and such world and wait for further orders', but even so there are a lot of lost scouts roaming around in a war. (Good scenario there, perhaps.)

**Couriers.** Required to carry messages back and forth between fleets and bases. A quite respectable 400ton courier capable of jump-5 can be designed at tech level 11 for around MCr250, which should be sufficient for most needs. The same comments about fleet schedules and routes apply here as were made for the scouts above.

Finally, each fleet must have its own marine force with it in case it needs ground troops, because it will rarely be able to wait weeks or months for troops to arrive. These too huddle near the carrier.

As can be seen the fleet has quite a realistic feel, and requires only a few hours work designing the couriers, carriers, tankers and assault carriers. In fact, most of this work can be skipped since only the courier is likely to appear in a scenario – a band might well be hired to hijack it to find the composition and route of its parent fleet. □





# ALFKA

○ MAJOR CITY	(F) FOXVILLE
(H) HOWARD	(J) JULIET
(C) CHARLSTOWN	(D) DELBERG
(G) GORN	(I) IBARN

## Background

Alfka is a relatively unsurprising planet in an unimportant Sector of the Imperium (SO: Federation). The chief export is crystals used in the optical technology for Imperial Federation Ships back-up Battle Computers.

The Government of Alfka is harsh and oppressive, but due to the value of the crystal exports and the government's efficiency and reliability in ensuring the trade, the Imperial Federation Authorities have in the past preserved the status-quo. Recently, however, representation to the SubSector Capitol about the harsh methods employed by the Alfkan government has been gaining support. There has been some action by local revolutionaries/terrorists but without any notable success as most of the population are content with the security the government provides. In the last few months the Government forces in *Operation Snapshot* have managed to capture and imprison a number of the principal revolutionaries/terrorists.

Representatives from the Sector Government are visiting the SubSector Capitol at the moment, and on the 45th of this month (Summer) will be paying a State Visit to Alfka. The events in this game happen during the Visit.

## Outline of Play

Two teams of players are required, one of four players and one of three; however less will do if seven players cannot be found. The teams are placed in separate rooms, each player is given the relevant briefing sheet and play starts. The Referee runs between each group with his notebook. Player characters are as follows: Team One: 3 Terrorists and Shuttle Pilot. Team Two: Starport Commander, Chief of Police, Government Representative.

## The Hostage Takers

(For the terrorist players only)

'The Peoples Revolutionary Army' or 'The Red Redemptionists'. Members of the Revolutionary Cell on board the Shuttle: *Gage*, *Maan*, and *Hariss*.

Your names and documents are false and you are unknown to the authorities because you have never done this type of thing before. You have sympathised with your Revolutionary Brothers in Charlstown (even though you have never met any of them) and agree wholeheartedly with their ideals. You have heard of the disaster of Operation Snapshot where the tyrannical authorities captured and imprisoned twenty of the movement's principal Brothers and Sisters. You have resolved to free them and demonstrate to the Sector Governor the real situation on Alfka.

So you have decided to hijack the Delberg to Charlstown Shuttle, land it at the Spaceport for maximum publicity, and hold the passengers hostage for the release of your Brothers.

A different scenario for Traveller, Space Opera and Laserburn for two opposing groups of 4-7 players. The nature of the adventure is such that it should prove an easy matter to convert for use with other SF RPGs. Information has been given firstly for Traveller. Where stats differ between the game systems, the alternative is given in brackets. LB = Laserburn, SO = Space Opera.

# SHUTTLE SCUTTLE

by Thomas M Price

## Objectives

1. The release of twenty political prisoners from the Charlstown State Jail.
2. A public statement on all channels acknowledging the government 'Oppression of the People'.
3. Three MegaCredits in Imperial Credit Placs.
4. Escape alive.

## Weapons and Equipment

3 x Autopistols. (SO: 9mm autopistols, TL 5/6). 2 x Hand grenades, HE, TL8 (SO, see *Ground and Air Equipment*, p31, Regular Grenades). 5kg of Plastic Explosives. 1 x 10 Second Delay Detonator.

## Notes

The weapons are hidden in the First Aid kit in the starboard Fresher, the explosives in the Fire Extinguisher in the other Fresher and the Detonator is in Hariss' hand baggage. They were hidden on board by a maintenance worker who was blackmailed by Maan.

You know that, in order to open the iris valve to the Shuttle's bridge, you need to carry a marker tag which activates the sensor by the valve. The tags are concealed as part of the crews uniform. You each have, in your hand baggage, 2 Autojects of Combat Drug [Book 2]. LB: Steam, SO: 2 Medijectors of Expeditor.

## Shuttle Pilots Brief

(Shuttle Pilot only)

You must do everything you can to ensure the safety of your passengers, *This is your prime concern.*

The following notes are to assist you if questioned by the terrorists, your actual reply to any question is up to you. You can (and indeed should) lie in order to protect lives. For example, if the terrorists say that they will kill a hostage if the Shuttle is not refuelled in half an hour, you could tell them that it usually takes at least an hour (where it actually takes fifteen minutes).

## Notes

The Shuttle follows a semi-ballistic path to save fuel and as such, *has* to land at the Spaceport. It does not carry enough fuel to do more than the most basic of manoeuvres, and certainly not enough to land vertically. Needless to say this fact is not generally publicised. You can prove it by showing the fuel gauges.

You (the Captain) require at least 2.8kms of flat metal runway to land on. The only alternative to this is ditching in the sea. The Flight Officer usually requires at least 3.5kms to land safely.

A single refuelling tender would take 15 minutes to refuel the Shuttle to full capacity, once it arrived at the site. Refuelling requires only one man from the automated Refuelling tender.

There is a concealed switch in the Bridge which changes the Shuttles transponder signal to indicate that it has been hijacked.

As a security precaution the iris valve onto the Bridge will not open unless the person trying to open the valve is wearing a company name-tag. These are sewn onto the crews uniforms and have the marker tag which activates the valve's sensors concealed behind them.

The two Stewardesses are both trained in First Aid (Medic-1, *Traveller* and LB: Meditech 1 in SO).

Dependant *Arams* is deaf and was given a complimentary ticket by the Shuttle Line, so she and her parents could visit the clinic in Charlstown.

All hatches are lockable from the Bridge and can only be released from there. On each hatch there is, however, a manual lock which cannot be released from the bridge. In an emergency, explosive bolts holding the hatches in place can be triggered, blowing all the external hatches out at once.

The drinks, pre-packed meals are served from a trolley, which is rather large and fully occupies one of the isles when in use. The trolley can be clamped to the floor in any position by a lever on the front.

There is no camera/viewport for below/above or directly behind the Shuttle - these are blind spots, and there is a 1.5m of clearance under the body when the landing gear is down.

In order to vertically take-off the belly thrusters require 10 minutes to warm up. They can be kept 'warmed up' for one hour, after that they will overheat and the safeties will cut in, preventing take-off for one hour to allow them to cool down. The main engines can be kept 'warmed up' indefinitely, but will consume fuel at the normal rate. Warm up time for the main engines is 20 minutes. The Shuttle can take-off by running down the Landing Ground on main engines only, and taking-off like a TL7/8 (SO: TL5) jet liner. This operation requires at least 2.5kms of straight runway.

The flight from Delberg to Charlstown takes 5 hours (+/- 10 minutes). Flight endurance is 15 hours at the normal rate on full tanks.

The passengers are usually collected in a Spaceport bus, which transports them to the Shuttle and they board.





dismount through the starboard hatch. A small tractor unloads the luggage container from the rear of the Shuttle and tows it after the bus.

Equipment locker contents: 1 Survival Rifle (LB: slug gun, SO: .30 rifle), 2 10-Man/day 'Rat-Paks' (LB: iron rations, SO: concentrated rations), 2 Inflatable Survival Rafts, 1 Axe, 4 Distress Flares (rocket type), 2 torches, 20 metallized-plastic Survival Bags, 1 Distress Beacon, 1 gas operated siren, 1 50m rope.

Ships locker contents: 2 Vacc Suits (SO: VS2's), 1 Zero-Gee Thruster Cluster, 1 Spare air tank, 1 Large scale Medi-kit (SO: Field Medi-kit), 2 CO<sub>2</sub> Fire Extinguishers, 1 Mechanical/Electronic tool kit, 1 heavy duty gloves.

Above the containers in the cargo area, is 0.5m of free space.

#### The Government Representative

(For the Representative only)

You are the Government Representative and are in supreme command of all operations. With the State Visit under way you are keen to present the Government in a good light, as a concerned leadership whose prime regard is towards its citizens. To this end your objectives are as follows (in order).

#### Objectives

1. Rescue the hostages alive.
2. Not give in to terrorist demands.
3. Capture the terrorists.

It is important that you succeed without loss of life (unless it is a terrorist of course!) and you realise that your future career depends on your handling of this operation.

#### Forces Available

The Army, the Navy (the Scout Base Commander will give assistance if required), the police, and the usual Emergency Services.

#### The Starport Commander

(Commander only)

As Starport Commander you are responsible for the planning and execution of all Military Operations and the deployment of all forces within the Starport boundaries. While you personally think that any talking to terrorists is a waste of time, and storming the Shuttle is the only solution, you are well aware that there is a lot of interest in this operation and will always follow orders. This is a welcome opportunity to show the Army off in a good light after all the publicity the Police have been getting from Operation Snapshot.

#### Forces Available

Mobile: *Close Observation Group* (8 teams of 4 men), Surveillance Specialists. *Special Response Group* (4 teams of 4 men), Snipers. *Regular Defence Battalion* (5 companies of 115 men), troops are trained in Internal Security Operations. *Armoured Defence Group* (3 Squads of 4 armoured cars *Journal 14*, p28, SO: 'Early' Lt tank [G & A, pg4], LB: Partisan, wheeled variety). *Demolitions Squad*. (19 men in 5 light APCs, *Journal 14*, p29, SO: 'Early' APC (T) [G & A, pg4], LB: APCs). Demolitions and bomb disposal experts. *Quick Reaction Group* (72 men in 8 STAMPs [STAMP = Small Tactical Aerial Mobility Platform]), Trained in STAMP operations.

Fixed Installations: 3 x Triple Beam Lasers (SO: 3 x Heavy Calliopes [G & A, pg30], LB: Heavy lasers). 6 x Missile Launcher Bunkers (SO: SAMS, LB: Missile Launchers, HE).

#### Special Equipment

##### Close Observation Group

1. *Long Range Listening Device*. (LRLD). This man-portable device is fitted to the standard Military back-pack. It consists of a laser projector, receiver and enhanced broad-band recorder/transmitter. It is aimed at a window of an enclosed area, or any reflective material liable to be effected by the vibrations of people talking, and measuring these vibrations in the reflected laser light. Computer filtering and enhancement is done to the signal relayed from LRLD and the filtered sounds relayed to the relevant personnel as required. The beam does not have to be at right-angles to the window, but the nearer it is to 90° the better the pickup. It can be defeated by the background noise being too high, or containing certain frequencies (eg large numbers of people talking or certain types of engine running). Wt: 12kg. TL: 9 (SO: TL6). Cost: 12,950Cr (without computer backup).

2. *Voice Analysis Equipment*. (VAE). This analyses the voice pattern of subjects and detects the mental state of the person talking – if he is lying or not. In order for it to work it must analyse answers to questions which are known

to be true or false to obtain a reference. The longer it is in operation the more accurate it becomes. It is defeated by distortion in radio signals, a trained subject who knows what is happening, a subject who is on drugs (it will detect this and nothing more), and the subject speaking in very short, clipped sentences. Wt: 75kg. TL: 9 (SO: TL6). Cost: 100,000Cr.

In addition to the above equipment the COG will have computer enhanced video cameras, voice amplification equipment, sound recorders/amplifiers, and secure communications to each other and higher command.

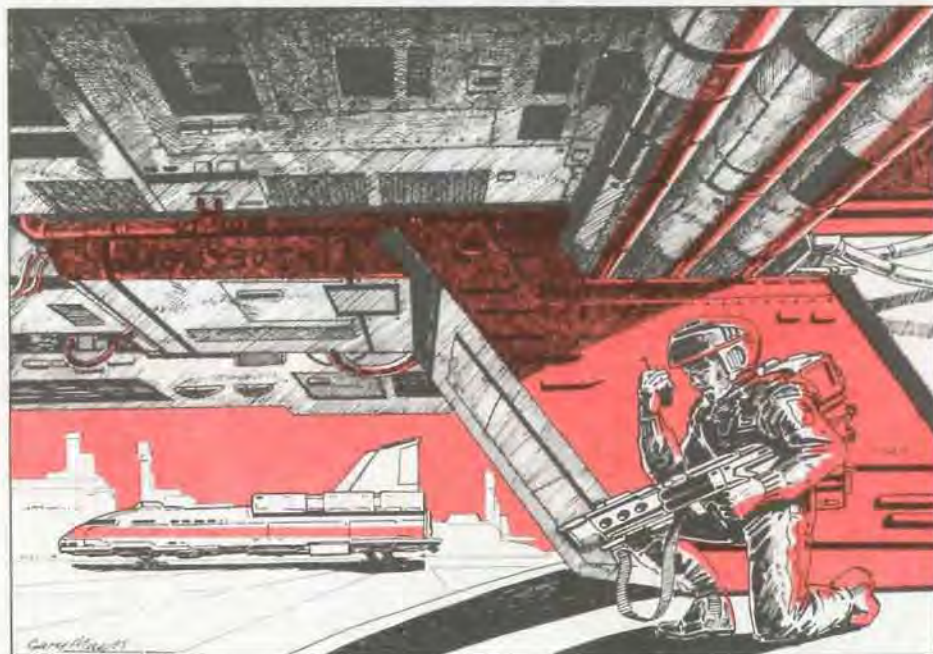
##### Special Response Group

All personnel in the SRG are equipped with high velocity sniper rifles with electronic sights and mounts, silencers, and secure communications to each other and higher command. All will have a skill level of 4 with their rifles (SO: skill level 80%, LB: 110%).

##### Quick Reaction Group

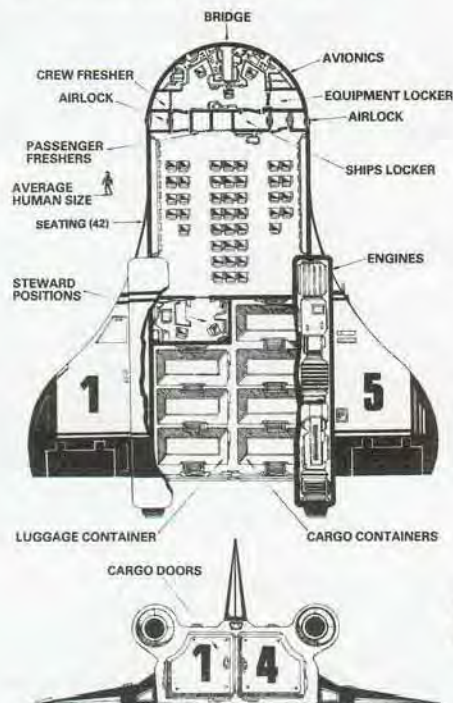
1. *Small Tactical Aerial Mobility Platforms*. (STAMPs). Using a simple VTOL airframe with twin Westinghouse G3 basic turbofan engines with thrust vector control, the STAMP is the precursor to the Air/raft. It is easiest to imagine as a helicopter without rotors or a tail boom (a Puma/Huey). The turbofan ducts run along the floor from the engine situated in the rear. Wt: 4 tons. TL: 8 (SO: TL5). Cost: 270,000Cr. Armour: none. Thrust: 6 tons. Damage points: 400. (SO: Damage Capacity 12, LB: Light Armour). Fuel: 2,200 litres (1.25 hours). Capacity: 8 troops + 2 crew. Max speed: 300kph.

2. *Concussion Grenades*. These grenades, (SO: regular grenades, G & A, pg31), when used, create a loud bang and overpressure in order to stun the target. They are quite dangerous in confined spaces and when they explode, personnel in a confined space (like the inside of the Shuttle), may get perforated eardrums. They can be defeated by wearing pressure helmets, or the effects reduced by taking Combat Drug (Expedito/Steam).▷

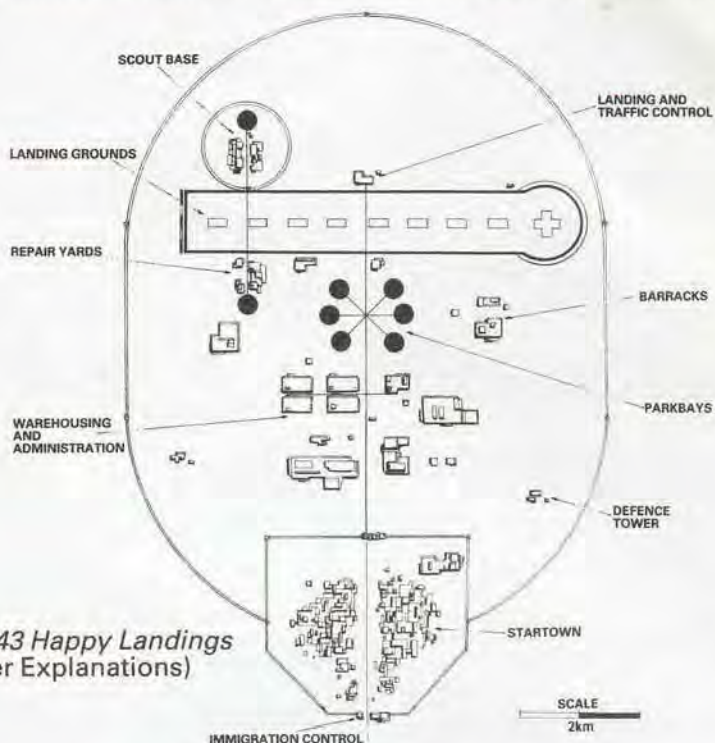




## 95 TON STANDARD SHUTTLE (modified for Passengers)



## ALFKA SPACEPORT 'C' CLASS SCOUT BASE REPAIR YARDS



(See *WD43 Happy Landings* for further Explanations)

▷3. **Electromagnetic Inductor.** This induces electric/magnetic fields in electronic equipment preventing it from functioning. It can defeat most simple locking devices by burning out the circuits. Defeated by manual locking devices. It only effects equipment it is in contact with. Wt: 1kg. TL: 9 (SO: TL6). Cost: 650Cr.

4. **Drop Packs.** Retro-rocket packs used to safely arrest the descent of troops dropping onto a target. The fuel is a binary liquid propellant stored under pressure in two tanks in the pack. A simple proximity fuse detects the approach of the ground and activates the pack, righting the trooper and lowering him safely to the ground. There is no guidance system in the normal military pack but they are ejected from specially equipped Cutters containing extensive ballistic computers to accurately determine the fall of the troops. A skilful operator can, by shifting his body weight, land within a few meters of a chosen point from any height above 1000m (lower will not allow enough time to make a difference). The pressurised fuel is dangerous but the quantity is determined by computer and will vary according to the trooper's body weight (and the weight of his equipment) and the height of the drop. It is all expended before landing, thus the chances of an explosive hit are minimal. Wt: 30kg (but discarded on landing). TL: 8 (SO: TL5). Cost: 1000Cr.

5. **Explosive Sniffers.** Small, handheld, battery operated devices for detecting the presence of minute quantities of explosives in the atmosphere. They are operated by pressing a trigger on the side and an audio or visual alarm indicates the presence of explosives. They will detect almost all commercial explosives and some military ones. They are defeated by complete sealing of the explosive and chemical scrubbing of the container. They are susceptible to false alarms from solvents, body odour,

continuous use and incorrect adjustment. The QRG personnel equipped with this device are expert in its use. Wt: 1kg. TL: 7 (SO: TL: 5). Cost: 250Cr.

All personnel in the QRG are equipped with combat armour, communication helmets, 7mm assault rifles or auto shot-guns in addition to the usual military equipment.

### The Police Commander (Commander only)

As the Chief of Police you are responsible for all Police operations, the gaining of intelligence, identification of suspects, arrest and imprisonment of criminals. These 'Revolutionaries' are nothing more than common criminals and should be treated as such. You are a humanitarian man however, and you feel that executing terrorists is wrong and just makes martyrs of them. Keeping them in jail for twenty years, where they will be made to do useful work for the community is the best option.

Passenger List	Status	Name	Sex	Age	Home address	Travel reason
Taxpayer	Arams	M	26	Delberg	Medical	
Taxpayer	Arams	F	27	Delberg	Medical	
Dependant	Arams	F	4	Delberg	Medical	
Taxpayer	Bink	M	54	Echo	Holiday	
Taxpayer	Bink	F	50	Echo	Holiday	
Taxpayer	Bink	M	28	Echo (sub)	Holiday	
Taxpayer	Coram	M	36	Foxville	Work (Mining)	
Taxpayer	Coram	F	34	Foxville	Work (Admin)	
Taxpayer	Danton	M	25	Gorn	Holiday	
Taxpayer	Danton	F	29	Gorn	Holiday	
Dependant	Danton	F	9	Gorn	Holiday	
Pensioner	Erans	M	68	Howad	Visit (Rels)	
Pensioner	Erans	F	62	Howad	Visit (Rels)	
Pensioner	F'arey	M	65	Ibarn	Visit (Rels)	
Taxpayer	F'arey	F	58	Ibarn	Visit (Rels)	
Taxpayer	Gage	F	31	Delberg	Work	
Taxpayer	Harris	M	33	Delberg (sub)	Work	
Taxpayer	Irons	M	38	Echo	Work (Plastic)	
Taxpayer	Jonne	M	44	Kilo	Work	
Taxpayer	Kim-Berni	F	26	Kilo	Holiday	
Taxpayer	Lands-downe	M	48	Juliet	Holiday	
Taxpayer	Maan	M	28	Delberg	Work	
Captain	Speaking	M	48	Charlstown	Crew	
Flt Officer	Kirk	F	29	Charlstown	Crew	
Navigator	Chekov	M	22	Delberg	Crew	
Steward	Uhura	F	26	Delberg	Crew	
Steward	Chapel	F	24	Echo	Crew	

You are in the public eye after the success of Operation Snapshot, but you are well aware that if the terrorists succeed, your humanitarian ideals will be kicked out (and you along with them) in favour of the 'Be fair - Kill them all, let God sort it out' Brigade.

### Objectives

1. Identify which of the passengers is a terrorist.
2. Find out how they managed to get weapons onto the Shuttle. (Assuming they actually have any...)

### Forces Available

2160 Police Officers, 74 Armoured Police Vans, 26 Fifty-seater Coaches, 380 Police Patrol Vehicles, 19 Police Patrol Helicopters, 1 Mobile Command Headquarters (with computer links planet-wide).

### Referees Notes

#### General

The conduct of this scenario is a little different from most types of RPGs, and at a higher level of command (at least on the government side!) than most players are used to; because of this the Referee needs to be careful to ensure a smooth adjustment.

Getting the terrorists to behave will require some care, you should point out that a heap of innocent corpses at the foot of the Shuttle's steps won't help their cause very much.

#### Notes

**Weapons and Explosives.** These were placed in the Fresher by a mechanic called *Wilson*. They were placed in his work locker and he smuggled them in his work bags (the checks being made to prevent people from stealing, not bringing things in.) The real First Aid kit and Fire Extinguisher were thrown into the waste disposal unit and this fact will come to light as soon as the fake First Aid kit is discovered.



**Mechanic Wilsen.** His home address is Charlstown, but he only moved from Delberg last year. He has only had his present job for six months but has been a reliable worker. His previous job was working for the Monorail company in Delberg, doing more or less what he does now. He was blackmailed/threatened by Maan who knew him from Delberg. Wilsen has a wife and young son, who know nothing about what is going on.

**Cutter Recent History.** The Shuttle has been on this scheduled run for the past two years. Last week it was in the workshops for the annual overhaul. The only unusual occurrence was that a gyro needed replacing and the First Aid kit was changed one month early. The reason given for the early change of the First Aid kit was, as each kit is replaced at six-month intervals, it was changed early to bring the change into line with the annual overhaul. The crewman who changed the kit is a mechanic called Wilsen; he is currently on leave which he took suddenly yesterday. He can easily be traced if required. If questioned he will repeat the official line about the change being to bring the changes into line with the annual overhaul. If questioned closely and arrested on suspicion he will break down and tell all, giving the details of the weapons and Maan.

**Recent Travel Movements.** The *Corams* and *Jonne* use the flight regularly. In the past six-months (in addition to *Jonne* and the *Corams*) the *Arams* family flew four months ago, *Maan* flew two weeks ago, and *Irons* flew six weeks ago. The *Fareys* are on an interconnecting flight. The Crew and Stewardesses have flown the route many times and are completely trustworthy.

**Security.** The security checks on passengers at Delberg are very strict and the Chief of Security has stated that nothing larger than a detonator could be smuggled on board. The luggage is inaccessible during flight. There is no check however on the addresses of passengers who pay by cash, the following paid cash: Bink, Erans, Gage, Hariss, Irons, Kim-Berni, Landsdowne and Maan.

**Incorrect (Fake) Addresses.** The following gave incorrect addresses: Gage, Irons, Maan, Hariss, Kim-Berni, and Landsdowne.

Irons given address was 30 Central Avenue, but there is no such place on Central Avenue. At number 13 Central Avenue there is a Plastics Firm who have an Irons on their books. He is currently visiting Delberg at the moment for them, but he is not due back for four days. Irons had a bad accident and broke his arms in a fall and decided to cut his trip short. As he was unable to write, the girl at the check-in desk filled in the paperwork for him, resulting in the 13/30 error.

Kim-Berni and Landsdowne are a boss and his secretary away for a dirty weekend together. The address given by Kim-Berni is a ConDo in Juliet rented last month on a temporary basis, the Police Computer is not updated yet. Landsdowne has given the same address. Extensive checking will reveal that their names are real, and there is a firm (and only one) where both a Kim-Berni and Landsdowne work, and that both are away at the moment (one sick, the other

on a confidential meeting).

**Political Prisoners.** The prisoners are housed in the local jail which is 20 minutes running time by coach. One prisoner is ill and a stretcher case (but he can be moved). It should be noted that none of the prisoners really want to go – to be taken out of their nice safe prison into a Shuttle held by a bunch of maniacs they have never met... It will take about 30 minutes to force them onto the coach before it can leave.

**Money.** 3 MegaCredits would be readily available. It can be got to the Spaceport Admin Building within 10 minutes, once the Government Representative authorises it. It would fit in a small attache case.

**Broadcast.** It is easy to arrange a broadcast using the local VisiProg Personalities which can only be heard by the Shuttle.

**Blind Spots.** It is important to remember that the areas directly above, below and to the rear are blind to people on the Shuttle (unless someone sticks their head out of a hatch...).

**Security Forces Equipment.** It should be noted that the LRLD can be defeated by the terrorists doing one of the following things: 1. Communicate by sign language and written messages only. 2. Speak only in the two lockers, the stewards compartment, or the Freshers. 3. Wear the Vacc-Suit helmets and use the internal radios (the transmissions cannot be heard through the hull). This has the added advantage of defeating any attempt to use concussion grenades. 4. Leave the main engines running, the noise and vibration will cover all frequencies and even computer assisted filtering will not work. 5. Speak in whis-pers directly into each others ears.

The Concussion Grenades (*SO: G & A, pg31; LB: concussion grenade rules*) when used, create a loud bang and over-pressure in order to stun the target. They are quite dangerous in confined spaces and will cause 2d6 damage to anyone in contact with one when it explodes; other personnel in a confined space (like the inside of the Shuttle) may suffer perforated eardrums. (10+ for 1d6 damage). In the turn in which the grenades explode the targets are stunned for a complete turn. They can be defeated by wearing pressure helmets, or reduced by taking Combat Drug; DM -6 on all actions (*SO: Expeditior, LB: Steam*).

If the Electromagnetic Inductor is used on the doors of the shuttle, it will trigger the explosive bolts, blowing all the external hatches open.

Accuracy on Drop Packs for experienced operators (and these are very experienced) is as follows: Above 1000m can land on Shuttle roof with 5+ on 2d6, below 1000m can land on Shuttle roof with 9+. Each time a pack is used throw 4+ to escape mishap (Vacc-suit modifiers apply, *LB: Jet pack rules, Jet pack 2 is required*) and throw 4+ to see if it can be re-used again.

#### General Game Conduct

The game cannot start until the hijack actually takes place. In order to give the Chief of Police a chance to identify the terrorists before the Shuttle lands, it is best to get the hijackers to take over the ship as early as possible. So if they don't

want to move early, have one of the passengers (one of the Corams) have an accident which needs the First Aid kit... The best laid plans. The Pilot will change the transponder reading and the Government will be notified.

Point out to the hijackers that it is part of their aim to achieve maximum publicity by landing at the Spaceport. Discourage them from attempting to land elsewhere, as it will probably result in a premature end to the game due to the lack of fuel...

It is very important to stress to the players that nothing will happen unless you are told about it. For example: If a hatch is opened, it remains open until you are told that it is being closed. Never help the Chief of Police, beyond getting him started on the process of elimination. It is essential to keep a strict timetable so you know what time it is, at any stage.

At the end of the game (I usually stop when the government storm the Shuttle) all the players should be brought together and each in turn told how well he did. Each players objectives should be read out and the Referee decide how well he did, and what the future holds for his character (not much for the terrorists, usually...). The hijackers should be praised if they managed not to shoot anyone (especially if they are all dead...).

You can tell if you are running a good game and really keeping the pressure on, when the following happens: 1. One group makes a decision that effects the other group, and you run through and get their reply. 2. When you get back, the first group start telling you what they are doing *before* you have told them the other groups reply!!

#### What Generally Happens

Sometimes during the flight the hijackers get their hands on the weapons and explosives from where they are hidden in the Fresher and take over the Shuttle. The Pilot operates the concealed switch, signalling that the Shuttle has been hijacked.

The Government Forces deploy in concealed 'hides' around the Landing Grounds, with their surveillance equipment. The Chief of Police starts working down the list of passengers eliminating those he can.

The hijackers wire up their bomb and actually work out what they are going to do, and where in the Spaceport they are going to land.

By the time the Shuttle lands the government should have identified who placed the weapons on board, and know what weapons and explosives the terrorists have.

The hijackers start making demands – the first is usually to refuel the Shuttle, and then they start worrying about deadlines. The Government usually give in to most demands but stall about the prisoners, giving them time to assemble 20 pale and unshaven troopers to masquerade as prisoners.

The hijackers let the fake prisoners on board and are easily overpowered (or perhaps not...)□

*The editors would like to thank Jon Sutherland (Laserburn) and Nic Grecas (Space Opera) for their help in presenting this scenario.*











Starbase is a regular department for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, something on modulating NPCs.

# Extending UPPs for NPCs

by Bob McWilliams

The UPP (Universal Personality Profile) is a central aspect of the *Traveller* system, yet is one of the least discussed elements of the game. This is probably because the personal characteristics are simple to generate and to use, and have stood the test of time. They work well for player characters (especially when taken with acquired skills), but experience has proved that, for me, a little expansion is sometimes desirable when refereeing important non-player characters (NPCs). Being of a basically lazy disposition, I do not enjoy having to continually invent new character descriptions for NPCs and have developed some additional UPP characteristics (for use with NPCs only) over the years. Some will prove of more use than others, depending on the situation for which the NPC is intended. It isn't necessary to use them all, every time – remember, they are simply referee aids, so watch out for counter-productive paperwork!

**Loyalty (Loy).** This is by far the most useful NPC characteristic. It is used as a measure of the NPC's loyalty to a person, organisation, ideal, etc, including (when relevant) loyalty to the players. Players will often need to try and gain the loyalty of NPCs – of guards, bureaucrats, informers etc. One method of regulating this is to throw 1d6 and add any player skills such as Bribery, Leader, Streetwise, Liaison, Admin, as appropriate; the NPC will side with the players if the total score exceeds the NPC's Loy rating. A better way, I feel, is to evaluate the effects of player's actions over a period of time by adding or subtracting points from a total – points being worked out on the basis of how player's actions appear from the viewpoint of the NPC.

**Determination (Det).** This is the mental/spiritual counterpart of Endurance – it might also be termed application to a task, and includes ambition as well. For NPCs, Det is used to measure ability to stick to a given task or course of action, and thus also indicates the level of opposition that will be put up with before quitting. As Det is tied to some extent to Intelligence, Det is thrown for by the usual 2d6 and then compared to the score for Int. If Det is higher than Int, decrease Det by one. If Det is lower than Int, increase Det by one. Det may be used whether the NPC is working for or against the interests of the players. Referees can invent a series of rolls that use 1d6 plus a figure that rates the degree of difficulty of a task – if the total exceeds Det, then the NPC will refuse to do it.

**Charisma (Cha).** Cha may sometimes be useful when the general appearance, demeanour and personal magnetism of an NPC is important. In a way, it is the reverse of the Loy characteristic; the NPC's ability to convince the players that

something is true or some course of action is best. I use Cha only infrequently, but it does serve a purpose on occasion. Liaison, Leader and Streetwise skills, if possessed, add to the Cha score.

**Luck (Lck).** A referee has problems regulating NPCs because he knows a lot more about the situation than any player or NPC. Most of the time, common sense and experience will tell the referee what an NPC can and cannot know – but there are always occasions when the NPC might make a lucky guess at adding two and two together. Will a guard hear or not hear the characters stealthy approach? These types of situation can be regulated by a Lck rating, in the same manner as with Det. If exceeded, the NPC has missed his chance.

Finally, let's take a look at some of these in action, in a relatively simple situation. Our players have landed at a starport on a fairly rigorously controlled world. About their persons are a few doses of combat drug, which will fetch a high price in the right hands and finance various operations they have in mind. They leave the Imperial territory of the starport, and approach the world customs barrier.

In charge of the immigration/customs desk they approach is one Halvor Dick. His characteristics are:

Str	Dex	End	Int	Educ	Soc	Loy	Det	Lck
7	8	6	8	5	5	4	7	9
Age: 34 4 terms								
Electronic -3, Admin -1, Computer -1, Revolver -1, Revolver.								

Our players hand over their immigration (visitor category) papers, and state they have nothing to declare except for personal blades (the Law Level of the world is 7), and various papers connected with buying and selling cargoes – which is their stated business. Note that Halvor has low Loyalty, average Determination and relatively high Luck.

Throw first on Luck. Spotting something uneasy in the player's manner I rate at four (out of six), and the die roll is a four, total eight. Halvor is suspicious, though not absolutely certain the players are hiding something. He begins to go through the player's luggage. The players are obviously alarmed – drug smuggling is a serious offence here, but they know that on this type of world corruption is usually quite normal. They risk a small bribe. Avarice easily gets the better of Halvor (throw on Loy – this time it is loyalty to the government – a bribe is rated three, plus a die roll of five (total eight) – boy, is he keen on money!), but he smiles condescendingly at the amount offered (average Det). On raising the amount his Det is soon passed, and the players are free to enter the world. (The players offer Cr100 – I class this as one, plus a die roll of three, total four – not enough. Then the players offer Cr300 – I class this as there, with the same die roll – total six, still not enough. Lastly, the players offer Cr500 – classed as five, plus three equals eight, which Halvor accepts – he would have taken Cr400).

Normally players would not know the various extra UPP characteristics of an NPC – though they will become obvious, at least approximately. Work out how you would referee that situation without Loy, Det and Lck and if the answer is long or less realistic, try expanding NPC UPPs. □



Players using other systems should find conversion easy enough. Prices, tech levels and effects given are rough guides; referees should feel free to modify anything they disagree with.

# IMMORTALITY

## Immortality in Traveller by Andy Slack

### METHODS

#### Drugs

TL15; Cr200,000 per month. A regular course of drug voids aging throws.

**Rejuvenation.** The drug may be rejuvenating or simply life-prolonging. Rejuvenating drugs actively reverse aging and the character gradually returns to his physical peak as the doses take effect; in most campaigns this does not happen, and would require someone to keep records of a character's history. Life-prolonging drugs may either keep the user perpetually at the age when treatment commenced with regard to appearance as well as characteristics, or the user may grow old in appearance but remain healthy.

**Signs of Use.** If it is rejuvenating, scars may disappear. If appearance is not conserved, the character will appear a hale and hearty 285. In any case, skin or eye colour might be affected, or some other sign might be visible. Similarly, the drug or process might make the user sterile—permanently, or while treatment continues.

**Addiction.** Most characters on anagathics will behave as if addicted, but withdrawal symptoms must be specified. Most likely the character will merely carry on aging from where he left off until treatment resumes. The character may be physically dependent on the drug, however, and may die, lose psionic powers or become ill if he stops. Most spectacular and unlikely is that all the 'cheated' aging rolls must be made at once, and the character ages the time his youth was maintained in mere minutes.

**Age Limits.** The drug may not work if the user is too old—or too young—when treatment commences. It is unlikely that anyone will want to start the drug before 30 in *Traveller* terms since there is no aging before then. If the drug arrests normal body development, the very young might not be allowed to start treatment.

**Disease.** As a side-effect, the drug may make a user more resistant to disease, or vice versa.

**Source.** The animal, plant or mineral the drug is manufactured from and where it is found must be specified. The process must be complex and expensive to preserve game balance; otherwise everyone will use the drugs and some player will start manufacturing them.

#### Medicine

In *WD40*, Sean Masterson suggested that for each tech level above 8, the aging rolls were delayed one term; this suggestion is a good way to handle the procedure.

#### Surgery

**Organ Transplants.** TL8; Cr-tens to hundreds of thousands per operation. This is already done with kidneys and hearts; in the future, once the rejection syn-

drome has been overcome, it will be possible to replace lungs, eyes, livers etc. A trained surgeon, assistants and a fully-equipped hospital are necessary; the recipient will be incapacitated for several months. In game terms, the recipient may gain DMs on his next aging rolls for Strength and Endurance; since central nervous tissue is unaffected, there is no effect on Dexterity or Intelligence rolls. The DM size should depend on operation costs. Operations should be repeated regularly, say every few years at first, getting more frequent and expensive as the character gets older.

A real problem would be getting hold of the parts. High law level worlds may retain the death penalty, condemned criminals being broken up for spare parts. Since everyone needs the parts, the death penalty is voted in for increasingly minor crimes. Organleggers may exist; criminals who kill people to sell their organs illegally to transplant surgeons. If the law level is low, desperate individuals (perhaps the travellers) may sell parts of their bodies or put them up as security on a loan.

At TL9 or so, regeneration therapy allows characters to regenerate lost

*'What do you mean you discovered Skirrow's World. That was over 200 years ago!'*

*Mr Skirrow looked knowingly at Jamison, a wry smile on his face. 'That's right', he said.*

limbs: soon after, growing synthetic organs (a kind of primitive cloning) is possible and the problem of obtaining spares lessens.

**Bionics.** TL8; Cr-hundreds of thousands to millions. Bionics are not the path to superhuman characteristics; they are still attached to a body which is at least partly flesh and blood. Again, Dexterity and Intelligence are not affected; however, bionic limbs might be used to restore a character's Strength and Endurance to former levels, or possibly a little beyond. Strength is the easier to raise since Endurance largely depends on the heart and lungs, but other bionic organs are possible at higher tech levels. The maximum benefit from a lengthy series of bionics operations should be +1 or +2 to a character's original (ie as first diced) Strength and/or Endurance. A hospital is needed for the operations.

Bionics are mainly prosthetic, and are likely to become redundant when tissue regeneration and cultured synthetic transplants are available. A bionic individual will be dependent on batteries, with a possible loss of dexterity due to the operation.

**Coring.** TL11; Cr-millions to tens of millions. Normally illegal. This involves killing someone in (hopefully) perfect health. Perhaps the bodies of condemned criminals would be used. A superb surgeon and an excellent hospital are required. The character's brain and large parts of his nervous system are surgically removed, and implanted in a new body. The donor's brain may be destroyed or placed in a robot body (see below). The transplanted character retains his own Intelligence, Education and skills; he gains the donor's former Strength, Endurance and appearance; Dexterity is reduced to the lower of the two previous values; Social Standing may be that of the donor or transplantee, depending on how secret the operation was. Aging then proceeds normally, in the new body.

**Robot Bodies.** TL12; Cr-millions to tens of millions. At TL12 it is possible to keep a person's brain alive without a body. The brain is kept in a tank of nutrient fluid, surrounded by life support equipment, normally wired up to numerous sensors so that it does not go insane. The equipment is fairly bulky, massing several tons; the robot 'body' is likely to be a large vehicle, perhaps a starship, directly controlled by the disembodied brain. Such a brain retains its Intelligence, Education and skills; other abilities depend on the 'body'. At higher tech levels, the life support equipment, becomes smaller and more mobile, until at TL15 a true robot body is possible. The characteristics of this depend on what system the referee uses for robots. Normally, robot bodies are used either for criminals (who must serve out their sentence as useful construction or earth-moving equipment before getting their bodies back) or those born hopelessly crippled, who then repay the cost of the operations by working for the government as courier ships, transport, etc.

At TL17, an electronic recording of a character's personality and brain pattern can be taken and replayed into a true robot body with no biological parts.

**Robot Antibodies.** TL17; Cr-millions. These virus-sized 'robots' are programmed to destroy harmful germs, viruses and other nasties such as cholesterol blocking the arteries, and cancer cells. Injected into the bloodstream they keep the user healthy from the inside. In game terms, they make the user immune to disease and most poisons, and allow a sizeable DM (+3 to +5 according to price) on all subsequent aging throws.

#### Clones

TL13; Cr-millions to tens of millions. A character gives a sample of his flesh (often only a couple of cells) to the cloning complex, comprising a large hospital and computer facility, where it is



grown into a duplicate body. The clone's age is accelerated to 18 in a few months, at which point it has no skills and zero education and social standing; the rest of its LPP is the same as the character's was when he was first died up, before enlisting. This, as it stands, is not much use to the would-be immortal. However, at TL14 it becomes possible to grind up a character's brain and extract the memory RNA in which his memories and personality are contained; this is then introduced into the clone body, so that the character has its own skills and experience, but in an 18-year old body. At TL16, an electronic recording of a character's personality and brain pattern is taken and replayed into the clone body, with identical effect. In either case, the character's Strength, Dexterity, Endurance and appearance are effectively restored to their values at age 18.

**Matter Transporters.** TL16; Cr: millions to tens of millions. Depending on the way in which the Matter Transporter (MT) is ruled to work, it may be possible to produce copies of an individual without destroying the original – similar in

effect to cloning. Normally, however, these will be exactly the same as the original, so nothing would be gained. At TL18, the information being beamed from transmitter to receiver is edited, producing a younger or neater version of the original. Typically, the character will be beamed to the receiver minus all the accumulated aging toxins in his systems, allowing a -4 DM on the next set of aging rolls.

#### Unusual Techniques

**Low Berths.** TL8, Cr50,000. Not an attractive method for the adventurer, since there is no point in living forever if you are in a drugged and frozen sleep all the time. However, rulers might store gifted experts in this way against possible future needs.

**Psionic Powers.** TL0, Cr0. A recurrent theme in science fiction is the individual who lives forever for no apparent reason, because of a happy accident of genetic makeup or supernatural help. The easiest way to represent this is as an extremely rare psionic special power; perhaps with a prerequisite of maximum

possible scores in psionic strength and a couple of other characteristics. After training, ability would use one level if the monthly advancement roll was a natural 12. The character can use the square root of his ability level (rounded down) as a DM on all future aging rolls.

#### SUBJECTS

Problems of immortality in SF are not so much technical as social and psychological. Who gets it? Usually it is assumed the method is very rare and expensive – not for the masses, but only for the few.

#### Rulers

The obvious group to get the treatment are the people in power. The rulers probably paid for the research, and if it is only available for a few, will make sure they get it first. If there is any left over, close relatives and friends will get some, as will trusted and skilled associates. The reason for this is partly sentimental, and partly to ensure loyalty (by threatening to withdraw the technique) and avoid being assassinated in jealousy.

#### Skilled Technicians

It is unlikely to be cheaper to keep a minion on anagathics than to train a new one every 30 years, but if a ruler does so, such a minion will likely be loyal (or at least terrified of losing favour), and will be vastly more useful because of his vast experience.

#### Long Term Personnel

If a project requires continual supervision and is likely to last centuries, the personnel concerned might be put on anagathics. This applies especially to slower-than-light starship crews, or even faster-than-light crews if the game universe is vast enough compared to the drive speed. This is the lowest-priority group, since one can always get by with machines or avoid such projects.



#### PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

Just watch your friends playing their 'unkillable' high-level characters, and you will see the sort of behaviour that is likely in an immortal character.

#### Risk-Taking

There are two likely attitudes towards taking risks for an immortal; either his extended life becomes so precious that he will do nothing to risk it or his immortality drug/machine. Such characters will not adventure at all if they can avoid it, and when they do it is with massive bodies of loyal guards against weak and surprised opposition. He becomes a master of the pre-emptive strike and the inescapable trap. Eventually he is assassinated. Or the immortal is likely to grow careless of danger and will tackle anything, sure that he will (somehow) survive. He may even start taking crazy risks just for kicks; sooner or later he takes one risk too many and dies.

#### Boredom

After a character has lived two or three hundred years, and seen it all, a feeling of boredom sets in. First, he may react against the boredom by doing weirder and weirder things. Often he feels long

life is only appreciated when there is a risk of losing it, and so takes progressively worse chances until one finally kills him.

Second, he may become a jack-of-all-trades; a career, a marriage, a hobby last 20-50 years, then he gives them up and starts afresh with a new set. This is common where the immortality method is secret and known only to a few; the immortal then needs to change his identity every few decades and move to a new planet, or Awkward Questions are asked.

Third, the immortal can dedicate himself to some very long-term purpose or project, often a scientific or social project which will need lifetimes of work.

#### Problem Solving

As the character gets older he will see solutions to problems more and more quickly, because he will have seen similar problems many times before. Often he will grasp the answer before the question is fully stated, and so tend to jump to conclusions; but these conclusions will usually be right. However, the immortal grows less and less likely to explain his orders, more and more con-

temptuous of those less experienced than himself. Frequently, the immortal is very predictable in his actions despite his search for novelty.

#### Lack of Memory Space

There could be a limit to the amount of information the human brain can store. If some form of personality recording and transfer exists, the immortal will edit his memory every few centuries to remove unpleasant or irrelevant memories. If the immortal cannot edit his memory, he will be very careful about what he learns. For instance, he will not learn to drive – he can always hire a chauffeur, and cars are likely to be obsolete within a few centuries anyway.

#### Identity Crisis

This is the most serious problem, and arises if personality recording and transfer is used. If the transfer destroys the original personality rather than copying it, you are not immortal – just dead. There is now an artificial personality which has your memories, right up to the moment of recording (or perhaps matter transmission), but it is *not* you. Some people will be able to accept this,



or will be unable to see what difference it makes, but others will get very depressed once they realise it. If the referee believes his personality recordings contain the character's souls (if they have souls!) he may allow the characters to use this method of immortality, but should persuasively put the opposite

case to players to worry them; if not, any character trying to use these methods simply dies.

If the personality transfer copies the original personality—which one is really you? One of the two identical personalities is older, of course, but that one is no worse off than before and may

well envy the younger version. Although both start with the same memories, from the instant they recover, both are separate people leading separate lives. Lawyers will probably rule that the new version of the personality has no wealth or property unless these are freely given to it by the old one, perhaps in a will.

**EFFECTS ON SOCIETY**

**Oligarchy**

As the immortal rulers get older, society is likely to become more centralised, more authoritarian, and more conservative. What's more, the government gets better and better at keeping it that way. Even with the best of intentions, the rulers will lose touch with the masses. Still, they will become harder to overthrow. The only real hope is that one of the rulers will wipe out the others, because one ruler alone must die eventually by accident or assassination. The next generation of rulers will probably not want to wait for their elders to die, and may well try to kill them. In a continuously-expanding empire, young nobles might be given a ship and some troops and told to go and carve out their own fief; this is only possible near the edge of human space, because near the middle of a race's sphere of influence it is easier to grab a neighbouring state or assassinate a pater. The young noble might be fobbed off with a provincial governorship.

**Resentment**

If immortality is only available for a few, the masses will resent paying for it. They will probably decide that if they can't

have it, nobody's having it. In addition, there will be a few philosophers who feel the whole thing is unhealthy for mankind. The mob will try to destroy the process and kill the users, which will drive the users underground unless they have an iron grip on society. The rulers in turn will bribe anyone competent enough to be dangerous with offers of anagathics provided they join the current clique.

**Currency**

Anagathic drugs might be the standard to which the Imperial currency is tied. Drugs are easy to assay, easy to dilute, small, easily carried and scarce. This would mean characters would be faced with a dilemma; whether to spend their drugs or take them. Of course, paper currency (or whatever) would continue to exist. Drugs would only be used for settling accounts between planets.

**Sexism**

People who can live forever are less likely to seek immortality by proxy through children, so perhaps the birth rate would fall. Certainly if the process only works on one sex, that one would

dominate society. Possibly without the need to raise children, or if the drugs arrested aging before puberty, the sexes would go their separate ways.

**The Xerox Problem**

If you can copy the personality once, why not do it twice? Fifty times? A thousand times? If a criminal is executed, the search must go on in case there is a copy of him somewhere, or in case the original is still alive and you only executed a copy. Is a duplicate of a criminal guilty of crimes the original committed? Legally, each copy must be treated as a separate entity with regard to possession and inheritance. This assumes some method of identifying which copy is which—possibly a radioactive tracer or a tattoo. Unemployment will rise still further—only the very best are good enough to be copied, and only a copy of the very best will be good enough for a big employer. Human life will become fairly cheap. If your top surgeon gets killed, you can always make another. If your ace pilot is sent on a suicide mission, you haven't killed him—you still have the original safe at home.

**SCENARIO**

**Patron:** Noble.

**Required Skills:** Combat

**Type of Immortality:** Cloning with personality transfer, TL 16.



**Player's Information:** The band are approached by an obviously rich and nervous person who has heard of their reputation and knows they are offworlders. She is an immortal, she confesses, in need of protection. Each time her new body wakes up, a recording is taken of her personality so that she has one available which is up-to-date. Normally she updates this recording at yearly intervals. Thus, she should remember waking up, living for a while then making a new recording, and so on.

Instead, she remembers waking up four times in a row; her guards and technicians assure her that she was assassinated each time before updating her recording. She no longer trusts her bodyguard, and reasons that the local police have already failed at least three times, so she will offer the players Cr1,000 per month each to be her new bodyguard until the mystery is solved. They will be expected to track down the assassin as well.

**Referee's Information:** Of course, the patron does something very like this every time she wakes up, and the killer knows the pattern by now. The band are thus under scrutiny at all times by the assassin.

1: The killer is one of the previous four versions of the patron (the first), who committed a vile crime and intends to assassinate the patron in some deserted spot so that she can replace the current version, which as far as the police are concerned is innocent of the crime. Naturally she will be able to impersonate the patron perfectly.

2: As 1, but the killer has already substituted herself for the newly awakened clone. She should make some slips so that the players have a chance to uncover the plot, for example remembering an item of news she should not have seen, or having been seen in public while supposedly dead.

3: As 1, but the police are aware of what is going on and are hoping to catch

the killer and bring her to justice. If the current clone is assassinated they will not care, since another will be grown in a few months once it is clear the patron is dead.

4: As 3, but after a successful assassination the police intend to kill whichever clone survives—just to be on the safe side.

5: As 3, but the players will foil the assassination attempt and kill the assassin in the process. Their patron will then be wrongfully arrested, and they will be charged with killing the innocent version of the patron.

6: The mystery is due to a fault in the cloning complex computer which accidentally killed the last four clones before the fault was completely repaired. The only way to test the machines was to try a new clone. The technicians are worried that the patron will fire them if she finds out. □

**Bibliography**

**Drugs:** *Dune*, Frank Herbert; *Tales of Known Space*, *Ringworld* etc, Larry Niven; *A Life for the Stars*, *Earthman, Come Home*, James Blish.  
**Medicine:** *Protector*, Larry Niven.  
**Surgery:** *The Long ARM of Gil Hamilton*, *A Gift From Earth*, Larry Niven; *The Ship Who Sang*, Anne McCaffrey.  
**Clones:** *The Ophiuchi Hotline*, John Varley; *Pursuit of the Screamer*, Anson Dibel; *To Live Forever*, Jack Vance; *Time Enough for Love*, Robert A Heinlein.



The following are personality and historic profiles of three infamous galactic travellers. They may be used as NPCs for a wide variety of purposes – to reward, to punish, to frustrate, or just to confuse. Each of the three may be encountered practically anywhere, though for obvious reasons they will prefer the relative safety of low law level worlds!

Naturally, individual Referees may alter any detail as they wish.

**Jahled**

UPP AA5776 Age: 53 Cr: 28000  
SMG-5, Cbt Eng-4, Cutlass-3, Rifle-3,  
Mech-2, Vacc-2, Pilot-1, Pistol-1.

Jahled, the only name by which he is ever known, is an ex-Marine combat engineer turned adventurer. He may be encountered anywhere in the Spinward Marches, and may be in company with 1-6 other men or women of similar occupation.

His attributes make Jahled a valuable ally to any Characters' group, and by the same token formidable opponent. Jahled has immense charisma and radiates an almost physical aura of loyalty and trustworthiness. Depending on the exact circumstances of the encounter, and the reaction of the Characters, Jahled may elect to help or join them, in return for a share of the profits from whatever escapades ensue. On the other extreme, he may attempt to seek revenge for any ill-treatment or insult he receives.

Absolutely no information on his past will be forthcoming from Jahled, except to say that he was once a captain in the 8th Combat Engineering Battalion of Imperial Task Group 686 during the Fourth Frontier War.

Depending how the situation develops, Jahled may stay with the group for an extended period of time, always totally loyal and selfless. However, the Referee should note that Jahled (real name: Tomas Deerkender) is a fugitive from Imperial justice, and is wanted for the murder of a superior officer in 1084. He will only be recognised on a throw of 12 when on an Imperial planet, his appearance having altered considerably from his days as a Marine captain. However, Jahled is being pursued by an Imperial agent, Herve Legrand (qv), and may at any time be confronted and possibly arrested.

**Herve Legrand**

UPP 98A799 Age: 42 Cr: 50000  
ISS Type S ship.  
Pistol-3, Admin-3, Pilot-3, Dagger-2,  
Streetwise-1, Bribery-1, Air/Raft-1.

Herve Legrand is an Agent (Grade 1) of the Imperial Secret Service, attached to the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service for the purposes of his mission – which is to bring to justice the alleged murderer and deserter, Tomas Deerkender (alias Jahled).

Legrand is based at the ISS centre on Regina/Regina and is the third agent to be assigned to the tracking of Deerkender. Of the first two agents given the task, one has since been promoted and transferred to the Corridor sector, and the other was killed in a starship disaster on Strouden/Lunion when in hot pursuit of his quarry.

Starbase is an alternate-monthly column for readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, we present a selection of NPCs for your Traveller scenarios.

# THREE OF A KIND

## NPCs for Traveller by Michael Clarke



Legrand was assigned to the case in 1101 and has since followed the elusive Deerkender across most of the Spinward Marches, coming close to arresting him on a number of occasions, the most recent of which was on Gothe/Five Sisters in 1107. However, the resourceful, fit, and highly trained ex-Marine has so far evaded even the most complex webs spun to capture him by the IISS.

He is accused of the murder of Colonel Harg Svensson, his commanding officer in the 8th C E Battalion, on 184-1084 on the planet Jewell/Jewell. Svensson ordered a platoon of engineers to advance under fire to lay charges on a vital viaduct. However, as they reached the viaduct, the platoon came under plasma fire from a concealed Zhodani support squad, with the result that only Deerkender and two corporals survived. Subsequently there followed a heated argument with Svensson, who, claimed Deerkender, should not have ordered the advance without the necessary reconnaissance and fire-support precautions. The upshot of it all was that after the battle Svensson was found dead, shot once in the back of the head, and Deerkender and two corporals did not report for duty again.

They were sighted on Lysen/Jewell two weeks later, and the Imperial Military Police (rightly or wrongly) put two and two together and ordered the immediate arrest of the deserters on the charge of murder.

Legrand may at any time catch up with Deerkender, and if the Characters have been in contact with him they could well become involved in a shoot-out and/or interrogation. NB: Legrand will not choose to confront Deerkender alone. He will always seek back-up of some description from the local police or military, or perhaps from the IISS or other agents of the IISS.

**David of Tenelphi**

UPP 7C9FA5 Age: 50 Cr:227000  
Stolen Type J Seeker.  
Rifle-4, Hunting-4, Survival-4, Pilot-3,  
Cbt Eng-2, Vacc-2, Computer-1, Leader-1,  
Vehicle-1, Medic-1, Electronics-1.

David Of Tenelphi is one of the great adventurers and entrepreneurs of the Spinward Marches. Almost legendary for his daring and infamous deeds – gun-running, escaping from an Imperial prison ship, discovering a new source of powerful anagathic, capturing a Leviathan class merchant cruiser with a force of only 20 men, raiding an Ancients site, storming an entire Hortalez et Cie courier fleet, destroying a local mafiosa's island base, assassinating the supposedly immortal 'Son of the Star', and holding an entire planet to ransom, amongst many others – he is always to be found with his partner in crime (or 'opportunism', as they prefer to term it), Haj Strelkor [UPP AACFAE; Rifle-5, Vacc-2, Battle Dress-2, Streetwise-2, Demolitions-2, Leader-2, Blade-1, Admin-1, Zero G-1; Cr: 308000].

David was born on Tenelphi/Trin's Veil, and joined the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service as an ecology specialist in 1075. After 31 years' loyal service, he retired in 1106 and was placed on the Detached Duty list, with possession of a Type S ship. However, later that year he was arrested for gun-running and sentenced to deportation to the prison planet Exin Alpha, in the Walei/Egyrn system. But, with his characteristic tenacity and daring, David (now in league with fellow convict, Haj Strelkor) managed to escape to freedom, consequently beginning the series of escapades noted above.

It is believed (but remains unconfirmed) that the IISS (Xenobiotic Bureau and Ancients Foundation directorates) are in pursuit of David and Haj in connection with the destruction of the previously mentioned Ancients site. The Research and Development Department of the Corridor Sector Naval Depot is also believed to be interested in rumours of a TL18+ Ancients starship supposedly looted from the same site by David and Haj. These rumours have yet to be substantiated, however.

If encountered, David (and Haj) will probably be engaged in some lucrative nefarious practice, the nature of which should be decided by the Referee, who should note that they are particularly attracted by money (in the MCr league), firepower, and (especially) starships. They are almost totally untrusting of everybody, and are quite, quite ruthless.

Wherever they are encountered, the possible presence of Imperial (and quite likely Zhodani, Sword Worlds, and Darrian) agents and the resulting pyrotechnics should not be ignored!!! □

Since *Traveller* is a game of science fiction rather than scientific fact referees should consider the possibility of designing a universe with an unusual structure.

**Curved Space**

The normal *Traveller* universe is apparently infinite, with each sector joining another in a flat plane spreading across the universe. An enterprising referee could consider 'folding' a single sector, by having the 'top' join the 'bottom' and the 'left' the 'right'. This is illustrated in figure 1, showing a normal sector surrounded by four others, and a 'folded' sector surrounded by itself. The boundaries between the 'top' and 'bottom', and between the 'sides', are of course undetectable – in fact non-existent – and are crossed by jump routes like the boundaries between normal sectors. Advantages for a referee are compactness, with a finite number of systems necessary to fill the universe, and the fact that short cuts are available which limit the longest possible journey to half a sector. This can have dramatic effects on the resolution of events. However, it does mean that large political organisations such as the Imperium are unlikely. Referees wishing to add more systems can add another 'folded' sector parallel to the first, linked by a few long jump routes (Fig 2). For more unusual effects it is possible to link the 'top' of a sector to one 'side' and the 'bottom' to the other, as in figure 3.

**Space Warps, Wormholes, etc**

These anomalies in the normal structure of the universe can be of any size, from a few centimetres in diameter to the width of a solar system. Objects entering them are instantaneously connected to another area of the universe. Small warps have value as transport and communications facilities, although they will rarely be in convenient locations, while a really large warp might surround a solar system, which would in effect be in two locations simultaneously. Ships jumping into the system in one location would have an exactly equal chance of jumping out into the area surrounding either of the locations. If there isn't a system in the corresponding destination hex it might be a little unfortunate, so a kind referee should have an identical pattern of systems within a four-parsec range of each location (Fig 4). The two linked locations could be a few parsecs apart, as illustrated, or at opposite sides of a sector. Another possibility is that a ship entering such a system would be

*Starbase is an alternate-monthly column for readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams. This issue, something on varying universal 'laws'.*

# The Edge of Infinity

## Variant Universes in Traveller by Marcus L Rowland

duplicated in both surrounding areas when it jumped out. Players could be aware of the duplication, and of their 'doppelgangers' fate – they might be psionically linked so that if one died, the other would die – or could remain ignorant until the referee chooses to let the 'two' ships meet. Worlds in the middle of a space warp would probably have a lot of peculiar features – twice the normal number of stars in the sky, a sun abnormally rich in heavy elements (it absorbs twice the usual amount of interstellar dust), and very high gas and micrometeorite counts throughout the system and so on.

Wormholes are similar to space warps, but involve travel at the speed of light rather than an instantaneous passage between one location and another. However, it would be impossible to tell the difference unless players actually travelled through such a hole, for they would experience no passage of time while the universe aged by years or centuries. If referees use either warps or wormholes they should be extremely rare, with only one or two per campaign. They should not be combined with any form of closed universe.

**Unnatural Laws**

In this section are all the odder suggestions of science, science fiction and pseudo-science, from Velikovsky's unusual version of celestial mechanics (based on the 1920s idea of atomic physics) to the more outlandish ideas of speculative physics and mathematics.

**Breakdown of Probability:** an area of the universe experiences localised alter-

tations of normal probability, with consequent chemical and physical instabilities, peculiar coincidences (everyone dials the same wrong number simultaneously), and a general breakdown of cause and effect. See *The Infinite Man* by Daniel F Galouye for one slightly extreme description of this process.

**Dimensionless Number Anomalies:** an effect which causes strange discrepancies between the normal results of measurement and calculation and the results of actual work. A typical effect might be that two metre long girders are welded together to produce one a hundred and sixty centimetres long. See *Getaway From Getahwei* by Colin Kapp.

**Artificial Universes:** some sort of artificial structure, as small as a single system or as large as the 'real' universe. It might even be a wholly imaginary creation, a figment of the 'mind' of a suitably powerful computer. This concept embraces a huge variety of possible structures, with many strange phenomena for players to encounter. For variations on this theme see *The Maker Of Universes* by Philip José Farmer, *Counterfeit World* by Daniel F Galouye, and *The Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy* by Douglas Adams.

**Velikovsky Mechanics:** in this peculiar system, planets can suddenly develop orbital instabilities and fall towards their sun, approaching other planets but being repelled by enormous electrostatic charges. Other effects of these close encounters are the formation of hydrocarbons in the atmosphere, with some being converted to edible carbohydrates (eg manna), odd orbital effects such as temporary halts in a planet's rotation, and the like. Interested referees should read *Worlds In Collision* by I Velikovsky, but turn off their critical faculties while doing so.

Referees must make every effort to be fair and consistent. Once a particular anomaly is realised the players should be given every possible opportunity to exploit it, if they can think of suitable methods. Above all, the referee should exercise as much restraint as possible – a universe in which every second system holds a black hole, a space warp, or some other peculiar manifestation will soon become boring for players and referee alike. Outside whatever variations are used, the referee should stick as closely as possible to orthodox play. When a suitable balance between conventional play and unusual physics is achieved, both the referee and players should find an added interest in the game. □

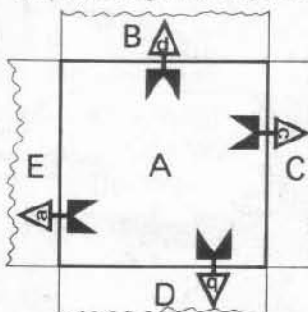


Fig 1: Normal sector compared to a closed folded universe. Sector A is surrounded by sectors B-E with the borders crossed by several jump routes a-d.

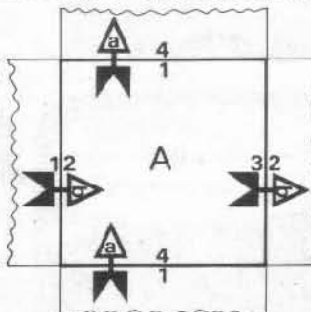


Fig 2: Sector A has four edges 1-4 linked as shown. Two jump routes are illustrated, one linking the 'Top' to the 'Bottom', a, and one linking 'sides', b. The jump routes follow directions of the arrows.

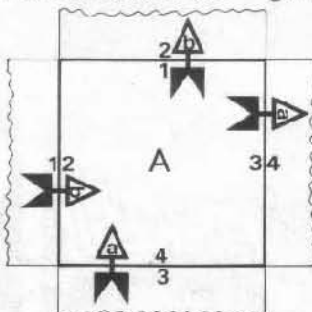


Fig 3: A folded universe with the 'top' linked to one 'side' and the 'bottom' linked to the other. Jump route 'a' links the 'bottom' to one 'side', and 'b' links the 'top' to the other 'side'.

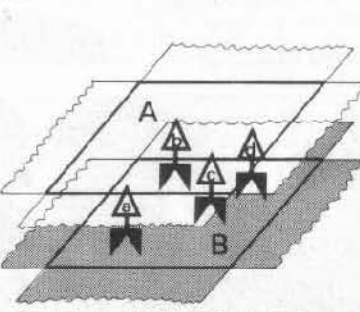


Fig 4: Two parallel universes A and B linked by a few jump routes (suggested length J3, or longer with 'stepping stone' systems.)



# Plying the Spacelanes

Ship Encounters in Traveller  
by Paul Vernon

The Starship Encounter Tables in *Basic Traveller* and *Supplement 7, Traders and Gunboats*, although adequate in many situations, leave much to be desired if used in a campaign situation over any length of time. Encounters with other vessels should be far more likely in systems with high populations and tech levels, for example, but by concentrating only on starport types on the one hand and a basic throw of 6+ on the other, the rules fail to take this into account. They also tend to make many star system encounters basically the same.

Ideally, each star system should have a unique quality of its own.

## Encounter Chances

For each system visited there will usually be two chances for encountering other vessels – once when approaching the main world and once when leaving. The base chance for an encounter can be calculated using the population and tech level digits (from the planet's UPP) and the Starport Weighting from the table below. Add these three numbers together, divide by 3, drop any fractions and subtract the result from 14. If the system is posted as an amber zone add 1 to this figure, and similarly add 4 if it is a red zone. If a Scout Base is present in the system subtract 1, and also subtract 1 if there is a Naval Base.

If the resulting number or higher is thrown on 2d, then an encounter will take place. This number applies only when travelling to or from the main world and/or Gas Giant, however. Negative DMs should be applied for ships not in the main spacelanes.

Starport Weighting Table

Weighting		Weighting	
Starport	Index	Starport	Index
A	11	D	3
B	8	E	1
C	5	X	0

*Example:* Regina has a UPP of A-788899-A. Its population and tech level digits are 8 and 10, and its A Class Starport gives a weighting of 11. The sum of these divided by 3 is  $29/3 = 9\frac{2}{3}$ , and dropping the fractions and subtracting from 4 gives us  $4 - 9 = 5$ . As both Scout and Naval Bases are present in the system we subtract 2 giving us a final result of 3. So an encounter will occur in the main Regina spacelanes on a 3+.

## Non-Starships

For encountering non-starships, subtract the encounter chance from 12 and divide by 2, rounding upwards. Add 1 to this figure if the world is Rich, add 1 if the system contains an asteroid belt, and add a further 2 if the main world is itself an asteroid belt. If the resulting number or less is now thrown on 2d then the encounter will be a non-starship.

*Example:* Yori/Regina C-360757-D has no asteroid belt and an encounter chance of 6+.  $(12-6)/2 = 3$ . Any encounter in the Yori system will be with a non-starship on a throw of 3+.

## Ship Classes

When a starship encounter occurs, the ship's class must be determined. Only broad classes should be given so that referees can choose the most appropriate ship. These broad classes are Naval, Independent, Scout, X-Boat, Merchant and Civil Vessels.

For determining the specific class of vessel encountered a six-column table should be prepared for each star system. One column should consist of official vessels – Naval (or Independent if the system is not a member of the Imperium),

Scout, and X-Boat (if the system is on the X-Boat routes). If the system has a Naval base an additional column should be for Naval/Independent vessels, and similarly there should be a Scout column if the system has a Scout base, and an X-Boat column if it contains a Scout Way Station. Official ships should occupy a maximum of 2 columns. If more than one of the above facilities is present in the system, use one column for Naval (or Independent) and the other for Scout (and X-Boat) vessels.

um on the table. A full column should be devoted to them if the main world is rich, and/or there is an asteroid belt in the system. Remaining columns should be taken up by merchant vessels.

In columns containing more than one class of vessel there is an even chance for either to be encountered.

Some provision should be made for encountering Pirate vessels as an additional class, just to keep life interesting. Normally two columns will be marked with an asterisk, denoting that these ships will be pirates on a throw of 11+. If a Scout base is present in the system only one column will be so marked, however, and an encounter with pirates would be extremely unlikely in a system

having a Naval Base. If a Civil vessel proves to be in piratical hands this could be a captured Naval or Scout ship in addition to a civil ship or Corsair. On a throw of 12+ the pirates will be encountered attacking a third vessel.

Similarly, there is a chance that any ship encountered will be in distress and asking for aid, on a throw of 12+.

*Example:* Roup/Regina C-77A9A-6 is a stop on the X-Boat network, so the official ships' column will have provision for Naval, Scout, and X-Boat vessels. Also the system has a Scout base, so a further column will be taken by Scout vessels. We'll assume that an asteroid belt is present so civil vessels will take up a full column. Remaining columns will be taken up by merchant vessels.

Usually, two columns would be denoted as possible pirates, but only one in Roup's case due to the Scout base. Roup's listing on an encounter table would look like this.

Example Encounter Table			
System	Roup	Regina	Yori
Encounter	8+	3+	6+
Non-Starship	3	6	3
1	N/S/X	N	N/S
2	S	S/X	M
3	M	M	M
4	M	M	M
5	M/C	M/C	M*
6	M/C*	M/C	M/C*
Starport	C	A	C

*Notes:* N = Naval vessels in service with the Imperial, Subsector, or Planetary navy (fleet couriers, transport ships, huge dreadnaughts etc). Non-starships could be fighters, system defence boats, or a variety of small craft engaged in routine tasks. Independent vessels (denoted 'I' in encounter tables) will be much the same, but found in non-imperial systems.

S = Scout vessels of the Imperial Scout Service, ranging from small scout/couriers through survey ships to heavy cruisers used to explore hostile space.

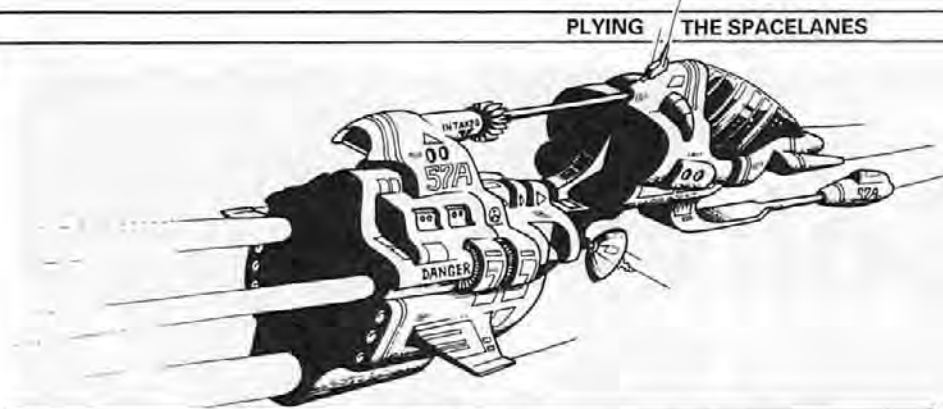
X = Vessels in service on the Imperial X-Boat network, including tenders and couriers in addition to the 100-ton X-Boats themselves. Non-starships would be found in connection with the running and maintenance of X-Boat stations.

M = Merchant vessels engaged in commercial ventures carrying cargoes and/or passengers between planets or stars. Starships range in size from 200-ton Free Traders to bulk carriers and luxury liners massing thousands of tons. Non-starships; small launches to large bulk carriers carrying materials between the main planet and outlying worlds.

C = Civil vessels – yachts, seekers, detached scouts, mercenary vessels, lab ships, vessels under charter, and any others in private hands. Non-starships will be of a similar nature, and include those of the Civil Starport Authorities. With this class of vessel it is useful to determine the vessel's mission [see below] before fixing upon a specific type.

## Ships' Business

The mission table can be used to determine ships' missions by throwing 1d6 and referencing according to ship class, applying the following DMs: X class starport -2, E class -1, B class +1, A class +2.



**When's the Next Ship to...?**

This is a question often asked of *Traveller* referees, usually when they're least prepared for it! It can be answered quite easily, however, by using the encounter chances of the departure and destination worlds. Add these two figures together, divide by two, and knock off any remaining fractions. Add the jump distance between the worlds (ie add 2 if the worlds are Jump-2 apart) and consult the Ship Frequency Table.

Ship Class	Missions Table					
	1-	2	3	4	5	6+
Scout	Exploration	Patrol	Survey	Courier	Survey	Courier
Naval	FLT Manoeuvre	Patrol	Escort	Transfer	Courier	Patrol
X-Boat	Courier	Commo	Imp	Commo	Imp	Courier
Independent	Patrol	FLT Manoeuvre	Courier	Courier	Commo	Courier
Merchant	Exploration	Trade/Transport	Patrol	Escort	Courier	Escort
Civil	Prospecting	Business	Trade/Transport	Trade/Transport	Transport	Transport
			Pleasure Charter	Pleasure Charter	Pleasure	Business

*Note:* A Class Starport +2, B Class +1, E Class -1, X Class -2. Naval non-starships should be treated as Independent for the purposes of this table.

**Formulae**

*Encounter Chance* = (Tech Level + Pop digit + Starport Weighting)/3 rounded down, subtracted from 14. +1 if Amber Zone, + if Red Zone, -1 if scout base, -1 if naval base.

*Non-Starship Chance* = (12 - Encounter Chance)/2 rounded up. +1 if rich world, +1 if asteroid belt, +2 if asteroid belt main world.

*Frequency Rating* = (Departure World Encounter Chance + Destination World Encounter Chance)/2 rounded up, + jump distance between worlds.

**Ship Frequency Table**

Frequency Rating	Ship Frequency	
	A	B
2-	5/Day	4/Day
3	4/Day	3/Day
4	3/Day	2/Day
5	2/Day	1/Day
6	1/Day	1/2 Days
7	2/3 Days	1/3 Days
8	1/2 Days	1/7 Days
9	1/3 Days	1/14 Days
10	1/7 Days	12/Year (1/30 Days)
11	1/14 Days	6/Year
12	1/30 Days	4/Year
13	4/Year	3/Year
14	2/Year	2/Year
15	1/Year	1/Year
16+	None	None

*Note:* Column A is for dense trade route areas, B for other areas.

Patrol missions involve travelling between worlds and bases to ascertain that all is as it should be. Any problems encountered will be attended to, and patrolling vessels will be likely to stop others to check that their papers and cargoes conform to legal requirements.

Survey missions require the collecting and/or correcting of astronomical and planetary data.

Courier missions carrying goods and/or personnel.

Exploration missions to (or from) unexplored regions. In settled regions substitute patrol for trade instead.

Fleet Manoeuvres involve at least three naval or independent vessels in military exercises. Other vessels will be warned to keep their distance.

Escort Missions, accompanying other vessels for security reasons.

Ships on transfer are on their way to their next mission.

Crews on Imperial missions will be full of their own importance and waste no time with lesser beings (ie players).

Communications Missions involve information transfer between worlds.

Transport Missions involve the carriage of goods and passengers between worlds for standard fees, Trade Missions, the carriage of speculative cargoes, and Trade and Transport a mixture of both. Where an asterisk appears there is a 1 in 6 chance that the ship is also involved in smuggling or some other illegal activity.

The exact nature of business missions will depend upon the type of ship concerned. Lab ships will be involved in scientific research, detached scouts working for a patron, seekers in mining etc.

Missions; examining planets and asteroids for minerals.

Pleasure missions involve travelling

to magnificent natural phenomena or beautiful/pleasurable planets solely for the enjoyment of passengers.

The nature of charter missions depend upon the person(s) chartering the vessel: bands of pilgrims visiting a sacred world, business magnates going to or from important meetings etc.

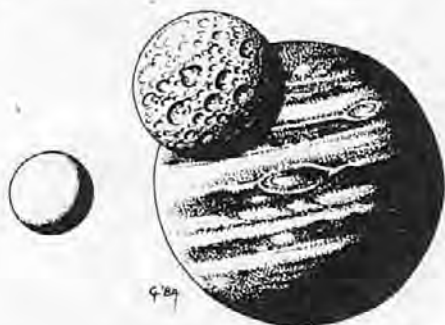
*Example:* A players' ship jumps into the Roup system intending to refuel at a secondary before continuing its journey without visiting the main world. The referee throws 8 on 2d, which would usually be sufficient for an encounter. As the ship is staying away from the main spacelanes, however, the referee imposes a DM of -2 giving 6, so no encounter occurs on the way to the gas giant.

Whilst returning to a safe jump point after refuelling the referee throws a 10, enough for an encounter in spite of a -2 DM. A second throw gives 4, and as this would have to be 3- for a non-starship to be encountered, another starship is in the area. One die is thrown and gives 6 on the ship class table, either a merchant (1-3) or a civil(4-6) vessel. A 2 is thrown, and the referee decides it is a Type A2 Far Trader. The ship could be a pirate on 11+ or requesting assistance on 12+, but the referee throws two 7s and decides it is neither.

A 4 is thrown on the missions table, and no DMs are applied as Roup has a class C starport, so the trader is on a trade and transport mission. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the ship is also involved in some illegal activity. This proves to be the case, and the referee decides the ship is carrying rare foodstuffs much in demand (and heavily taxed) on Roup, and is waiting to rendezvous with a Roup based launch to transfer this consignment before proceeding to the starport.

*Example:* A character wishes to get from Roup to Regina, but has no ship of his own. Adding together the encounter chances, dividing by two and dropping fractions we get  $(8+3)/2 = 5\frac{1}{2}$  so 5. Roup and Regina are jump-3 apart, so  $5+3$  gives us a frequency rating of 8. From the Ship Frequency Table we see that a ship departs Roup once every two days. The referee throws 5 on 1d and tells the player that the next ship leaves the following day. Referees can decide whether or not there will be any vacant berths aboard by using the passengers table in *Basic Traveller*.

The Ship Frequency Table gives us only scheduled passenger vessels, however. There will be about twice as many scheduled freighters carrying cargoes only, in addition to which there is a chance that an unscheduled tramp trader will be making the trip and have a berth available. To see if a tramp trader calls, 2d may be thrown each time period in the relevant ship frequency entry (day, week, month or year) and if the frequency rating is equalled or exceeded (count ratings of 13+ as 12) an unscheduled trader has arrived. □





# A Traveller Scenario for 3-6 Player Characters. The Referee will need Books 1-5 (or the Starter Edition plus Books 4 and 5).



by Paul Ormston

## BACKGROUND

The players have, for some reason or other, found themselves on New World One (B063769-C), a man made space colony orbiting the system's only planet, a solitary gas giant called Skiddir. The colony itself is housed in a huge cylinder (48 miles long, 6 miles in diameter) which revolves along its axis to provide artificial gravity. Conditions inside are perfect for all kinds of human activity but recently this apparent paradise has undergone a revolution and then, a counter-revolution. The present governors now feel that they cannot trust most of New World's inhabitants, so they have approached an 'off-world' party whose loyalty they can buy.

## PLAYER'S INFORMATION

The party is approached by Gyron Chard (UPP 56898A), a representative of New World's government, who offers the players a mission. If the party are interested in what he has to say they will be led to a private room where they will be given details of their mission:

Within the clouds of Skiddir are several airborne gas refineries or sky-rigs as the locals call them, vital to the colony. The rigs provide fuel for all the colony's power plants, as well as for refuelling visiting starships. Contact with a small experimental rig has been lost, and it is proposed that the party be sent to investigate.

The rig was working normally until five days ago, when the first outbreak of an unknown disease was reported by the rig's surgeon. Since then many of the crew have died. Then, 21 hours ago, audio contact was lost, and just 3 hours ago the rig's powerful location/navigation beacon failed. The government, fearing another uprising, dare not announce this to the general public until it is sure of what has happened to the rig.

If the party accept this mission they will have but one hour to collect any personal equipment and arrive at the starport. This speed is necessary due to the worsening weather conditions on the planet below. Gyron tells them that a 30 ton cutter is waiting for them at the starport.

### Cutter Profile (High Guard)

SY-0105501-20000-00000-0 MCr19 TL9 30 tons  
Crew = 2 Passengers = 8 Cargo = 6 Fuel = 2 Agility = 5

### Data on the Gas Giant Skiddir

Skiddir has a diameter of 151,270km (94,000 miles). The atmosphere is made up mainly of Hydrogen and Helium, but also contains higher than usual amounts of other rare gases. All altitude readings are taken from the exact centre point of the planet. Using this, the top of the atmosphere has an altitude of 75,635km (47,000 miles); the cloud tops start at 69,200km (43,000 miles), and the sky-rig the players are heading for floats at a height of 51,500km (32,000 miles). The average wind speed at this altitude is 560km (350mph), rising to 1050 (650mph) during storm conditions. Skiddir's gravity at this height is 3g, and its atmospheric pressure is five times greater than Earth's. Skiddir also emits a huge amount of radio noise, making normal communication links useless. To combat this, all ships that enter Skiddir's atmosphere are fitted with large arrays of communications/avionic equipment, but even these cannot pierce the extra interference caused by a storm.

## REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The referee should give the players a copy of the rig's deck plans. Gyron Chard will have informed the characters about all the relevant security procedures, so they can gain access to any part of the rig. The players should also know the data about Skiddir, as well as the fact that a storm is heading rapidly towards the Sky-Rig.

### The Journey to the Sky-Rig

The New World colony orbits Skiddir at an altitude of 2,059,960km (1,280,000 miles). It will take 8½ hours to reach the last known position of the Sky-Rig. During the flight roll twice for encounters on 2d6, 9+ an encounter has occurred. Roll 1d6.

### Encounter Table

Die Roll	Encounter
1	Turbulence. Pilot must roll 8+, DMs, +1 pilot skill to remain in control of cutter; if the roll is failed then the ship is out of control, roll again each round until control is regained. For each round out of control roll 2d6, if a 12 is rolled some piece of the player's equipment has been broken.
2	Lightning Strike. The cutter is undamaged, but one character takes 1d6+1 Damage.
3	Confused Avionics. Static build up on the outer hull confuses navigation instruments. Roll 8+, DMs, +1 navigation skill to remain on course. If the roll is failed add 1d6+1 minutes to flight time.
4	Radar Contact. The players see a blip on the cutter's radar that looks like another ship following them. It is in fact a false radar image, there is nothing there.
5	Personal Equipment Failure. Unknown to the players one piece of their equipment fails, due to old age, lack of maintenance etc.
6	Revolutionary Spy. A spy has hidden onboard the cutter, if the players say they are searching for the cutter he will be found, otherwise he will remain hidden. If he is found he will not tell the players his true identity, but he will always try to prevent the players from succeeding with their mission. UPP 678A66, he carries a snub pistol. This can only happen once, if it is rolled again count the second roll as no encounter.

Once the players have reached the rig's last known position, they will find that it has drifted off station, 32km (20 miles) 'downwind' and 4.5km (2.7 miles) lower than it should be.

Once aboard the players will have access to three other sources of information, the rig's main computer, the Captain's Log and the Surgeon's Log. Information can be gained from the rig's computer at any terminal throughout the rig but it only contains a great deal of very technical data which would take days to analyse. The two logs can only be found in the Captain's cabin and in the Sick Bay; the players should know of the Logs but not where they are kept. The Encounter Table and the Systems Failure Table give the events relating to the adventure. The referee should add other events to confuse and mislead the players. These can be about falling production figures, minor accidents or anything else the referee likes. The Surgeon's Log also contains a full description of the symptoms of the disease at the end.

## Encounters

**The Energy Sucker.** Deep within Skiddir's atmosphere live a multitude of strange unknown animals, of which the Energy Sucker is one. This particular individual lived off the occasional lightning strike, but entirely by chance, found its way into the upper reaches of the atmosphere, where it found an incredibly rich source of food, the Sky-Rig. As this creature approached it was sucked into one of the rig's gas intakes, causing all kinds of malfunctions in the rig's refinery which led to it being injected into an empty fuel tank where it lodged and started to feed.

The Energy Sucker lives off electrical energy, which it absorbs through a vast number of tentacles. This creature has caused all the deaths on the rig, and the players must find and kill it to save the Sky-Rig. It consists of three main parts. A large energy storage sac, a small body containing the brain and other organs and a vast mass of thin but extremely long feeding tentacles. These tentacles allows the passage of electricity along their length, but not through their sides, so all energy is absorbed at the very end of the tentacle.

Energy Sucker	Size	Armour	Hits	Wounds & Weapons
Energy Sac	25m Diameter	Cloth & Reflec	12/-	none
Body	3m Diameter	Cloth	2/29	none
Tentacles	150m Long	Cloth & Reflec	2/2	Electrical Discharge

For game purposes the number of tentacles is unlimited. The Energy Sucker can create an electrical discharge, a small lightning bolt projected from the end of a tentacle. Each tentacle can fire one lightning bolt each round; the bolt attacking as a laser rifle but only doing 1d6+1 damage. Reflec has no effect on this attack. It can also 'attack' via a by-product of the way the creature feeds. The human body is controlled by tiny electrical impulses in the central nervous system. These impulses are vulnerable to being absorbed by this creature. This draining effect manifests itself as a form of disease. The symptoms of this disease are:

A feeling of tiredness, lasting for Endurance x 1 minutes, after which▷

# SKY RIG

▷the patient falls into a deep sleep, lasting for Endurance x 1 minutes. The victim then goes into a coma which lasts for Endurance x 1d6 minutes, after which the victim dies.

Medical Slow drug will increase the survival time to three times that of normal (the players should not know this). The creature's tentacles do not have to touch their target, they absorb energy from everything within 3 metres of them.

**Finding and Killing the Energy Sucker.** The creature's tentacles have burnt their way through bulkheads following electric cables in between the decks. Opening any inspection panel will reveal great bundles of tentacles. There are no parts of this creature in plain sight.

There are three main ways of killing the Energy Sucker. Shooting the Energy Sac, shooting the body or giving the creature so much power so quickly that the shock kills it. Shooting the body is quite a safe method but the body is a small target compared with the Energy Sac, which sprouts directly from it. Shooting the Energy Sac is very dangerous, as once it has taken 12 points of damage, all the energy stored in it will be released in one huge explosion. This explosion will do 1000 points of damage and have a blast radius of 15 metres. Being behind hard cover will reduce the damage by half, and if the blast fails to penetrate, the damage will be halved again. Treat the blast as a PGMP-12 for 'to hit' purposes. If a character is in an area completely sealed off by bulkheads from the explosion he will take no damage. There is also a one in six chance that the outer pressure hull will split. If it does split an instant increase in pressure will occur; throw under Endurance to remain conscious. This will be accompanied by a sudden increase in wind speed; unless the character is tied down or can duck through an air tight door they will be literally blown out of the rig. The last method is to make an incision in the Energy Sac (2 points of damage will make a suitable hole) insert a steel cable and touch the other end to the side of the body or a group of tentacles. All its energy will be instantly released and the creature will be unable to cope with this massive influx of power and will die.

**Spikeys.** These animals come from the same region as the Energy Sucker, but are small and are not so dangerous!

Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armour	Wounds	
12 Flying Parasite	6kg	8/8	Jack	2d6	A6 F9 S2

These animals are 60-70cm across resembling huge snow flakes because of their crystalline structure. They attack by flying into their victims, the ends of their spines impaling the target. The rig's atmosphere acts as a slow poison on these animals and so they may die before the players encounter them.

**Worker Robot.** These machines are 2.5 metres long and very strong. They are designed to work on the outside of the rig in all but the worst weather conditions. Only one robot is still functional when the players arrive onboard. The robot has two work arms, and a central welding laser. It flies on null-gravity modules, but at the present time it can only fly as fast as a man can walk. The robot was originally controlled via a radio link, but this has been rendered useless by the Energy Sucker. Its

internal controls are malfunctioning and it will attack anything it can see moving. As weapons the workarms count as Blade +1 and the laser as Laser Rifle +1, its skin counts as Cloth -1. It has 35 hit points.

**The Scientist, Daniels.** The last surviving member of the rig's crew, Daniels has been affected by the disease and looks in a very bad way. When the players reach him he will weakly say "it's... it's a..." and will then fall unconscious.

## System Failure

This table reflects the feeding of the Energy Sucker on the power sources within the rig. As a guide for other pieces of equipment not on the list, large energy sources will fail before smaller ones and sensitive equipment will fail before the more robust. Most equipment will not be damaged, just all the electrical power that was in it will be 'gone'.

## System Failure Table

Time (mins)	Effect
5	Docking bay door power fails, the player's cutter is locked in.
7	Storm hits, all communication is lost with the outside world.
10	Air locks fail. Players cannot open the outer air lock doors, except by blowing the emergency explosive bolts.
20 END	Main lighting circuit fails, replaced by red emergency lights, cutter's power output reduced by half.
30	Characters feel heavy, due to partial failure of deck grav plates. Internal gravity now 1.5g. Battle Dress fails.
35	PGMP weapons fail.
40	Vacc suits fail.
45	Main bridge controls fail, laser rifles and short range communicators are drained.
55 END	Main computer fails, laser carbines drained.
65	Hand computers fail, the rig's cooling system stops, slowly increase the internal temperature.
70	Spikeys die, Worker Robot's power fails (see encounter section).
75	Laser pistols, and any other energy weapons are drained. All life rafts but one fail.
85	Emergency lighting fails. Internal gravity rises to 2g. Air recycling stops.
95 END	All remaining electronic equipment carried by the players fails.
105	Power to Iris valves, and lifts fail. Total power failure on the cutter.
110	Grav plates fail, internal gravity now 3g.
115	Last Life Raft fails.
120	Complete power failure, the rig's drives fail. The rig falls from the sky. Anyone left onboard at this time dies.

Time = Time after the party arrive onboard in game minutes.

END = Endurance saving throw. Throw under Endurance on 2d6, DMs; First save -2, second save -1, third save no DM. If the character fails a save they have 'caught' the disease.

The failure of the life support systems cooling and air recycling has no real game effect but it can add a great deal of 'atmosphere'.

### Captain Straker's Log

3rd. Science Officer Daniels has noticed some odd-looking crystalline like creatures through the Observation Blister.

4th. Several of these creatures (Spikeys as Daniels has named them) attacked some crew members on C deck. Security managed to capture and confine them in the Caging area under my orders. Martens is studying them now. I have Garron, the Chief Engineer, looking into how they got aboard.

5th. Garron reports a major malfunction in the Gas Intakes. This must be where the Spikeys came on board - hence the damage. However, the Engineering Section were able to repair it within five hours. (Referee: this was the Energy Sucker making an entrance).

6th. Garron reports some minor power failures, nothing to worry about, he says.

7th. Surgeon Martens tells me a crew member has died today - from some unknown disease. I have given him all the necessary facilities to examine the Spikeys in depth. It seems likely they are the

cause. I have ordered the quarantine of the Sky Rig. New World must not be exposed to the disease. Also puzzling are the continued reports of minor power failures. Afternoon - Martens reports that the Spikeys are slowly dying.

8th. This morning, Garron recommended the closing down of the refinery because of increased unexplained malfunctions, endangering the safety of the crew. The Production Manager objected but I was forced to agree with Garron and ordered the shutting down of the Refinery. Afternoon - the disease is spreading. I have called a general meeting to explain to the crew the importance of not leaving the rig, after Security stopped some people attempting to steal a life raft. A team of specialists have been promised by New World One. They should be here within the week.

9th. Continued mechanical failures. I feel very tired... Garron is gone... Must sleep.

10th. No entry.

11th. (Today's date). No entry.

### Surgeon Marten's Log

8th: Crew well. Riggins' flu improving.

9th. Treated 2 security men for puncture wounds, caused by some alien life forms that have invaded the ship. Have set up small lab in Caging Area to study them. The men look fine - there seem to be no added complications. Keeping them under observation in case of disease/biological reaction.

10th. Spikeys have a definite crystalline structure - extraordinary. They also appear to use helium in respiration. Security patients are improving. Riggins has been discharged.

7th. Crewman Williams from Deck C admitted, suffering from extreme exhaustion. Afternoon - he has fallen into a deep sleep.

8th. Crewman Williams fell into a coma and died last night. I still cannot determine cause of death. Two new cases from C Deck admitted. There must be a virus of some kind but I am unable to isolate it.

8th. The disease is spreading like wildfire. Sick Bay cannot handle them all, had to confine many to quarters. I am very worried - it is essential to confine the disease to the Rig. Several of the crew have died.

9th. Captain Straker has fallen ill. Afternoon - Captain has died. The plague seems to be acting faster. There are only five of us left now; me, Daniels, one of the security men and two other crewmen.

10th. Rogers (security) has left the Rig in a pressure suit. We tried to stop him, but he shot two of the crew - the stupid, selfish fool; with any luck he won't be picked up. Afternoon - Discovered that the cause of death involves the cessation of neuronal impulses in the central nervous system - as if all a person's nervous energy was drained. However, I am still unable to find any organism causing this. Evening - I think it is too late now. I am feeling drowsy... Where is Daniels?... It is only a matter of hours now.

11th. (Today's date). No entry.



# SKY RIG

## The Sky-Rig

This Sky-Rig is used to test new equipment and processes in working conditions. The equipment being tested now is a device which can extract rare gases from the atmosphere at a fraction of the normal cost. The rig's drives are non-standard anti-grav drives; these can be kept running constantly for many months at a time. The rig had a crew of 23 and 6 non-standard life rafts. These are built around a simple hydrogen ramjet. Each life raft masses 10 tons and can carry 10 passengers. The flight controls are entirely automatic consisting of just three buttons which activate and launch the raft. The raft uses the gas giant's atmosphere as fuel so once the raft is in orbit it will not be able to manoeuvre nor restart the jet engine. The life raft will complete three orbits of Skiddir after which time the orbit decays and the raft plummets planetward. On each orbit there is a chance that the life raft will be picked up by a ship answering the raft's distress beacon. This chance is: 15% on Orbit 1, 25% on Orbit 2 and 50% on Orbit 3.

## Sky Rig (High Guard)

SZ-G604622-40000-00000-0 MCr2,600 TL12 7000 tons  
Crew = 19 Passengers = 6 Cargo = 24 EP = 420 Agility = 4

## Life Raft (High Guard)

QN-0305110-30000-00000-0 MCr5 TL12 10 tons  
Crew = 0 Passengers = 10

## Special Equipment

**Pressure Suit.** Unlike a Vacc suit, this is designed to withstand the crushing atmosphere of Skiddir. It is a large armoured suit with anti-grav modules built in. The hands and feet of the suit have electromagnets built into the suit, so the operator can 'stick' to the hull of the rig while working outside. A skill of Vacc Suit-2, or Battle Dress-2 is needed to operate the suit. In combat the suit counts as battle dress, but any hit that penetrates the suit will cause a malfunction, all moving parts will jam and no movement will be possible. Anyone shooting a weapon while wearing the suit does so at -3 to hit due to the suit's bulkiness. In normal gravity the suit can fly at a maximum speed of 350kph.

**Life Support Machine.** Medical-2 is needed to attach the machine to the patient. A character with Medical-1 can attempt hook up - throw 2d6, 8+ the attempt succeeded. If failed then the patient takes 1d6 damage. These machines are movable but must always be connected to a power supply.

## REFEREE'S NOTES

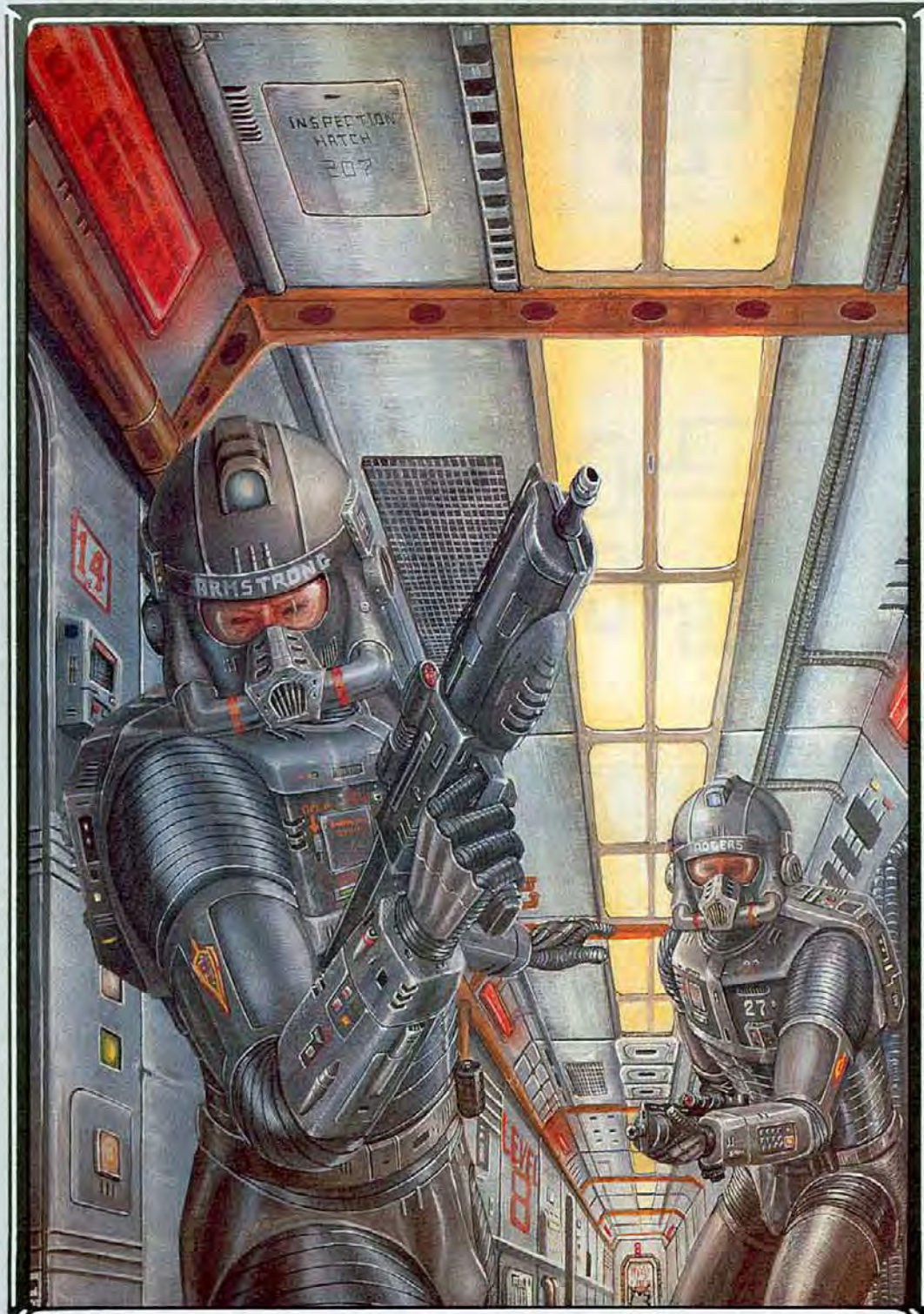
It is up to the referee to decide exactly what payment the players should receive, but it should be remembered that the cutter is only on loan from New World's government, and that the characters will be doing less than one game day's actual work.

### The Journey to the Sky-Rig.

Only encounter 3 will actually change the time the party arrives on the rig. Any other delay will have no effect. If encounter 6 occurs the players will find it much harder to succeed with the mission. If the spy is found he will seem to be friendly but once onboard the rig he will start giving away false information and may even attempt to sabotage parts of the rig. If the spy is not found then he will sabotage some areas of the rig, aiming to stop the players from finding out just what is going on. The spy will always try to leave without the players by using a life raft. One life raft will always be ready to save the players at the end of the time limit.

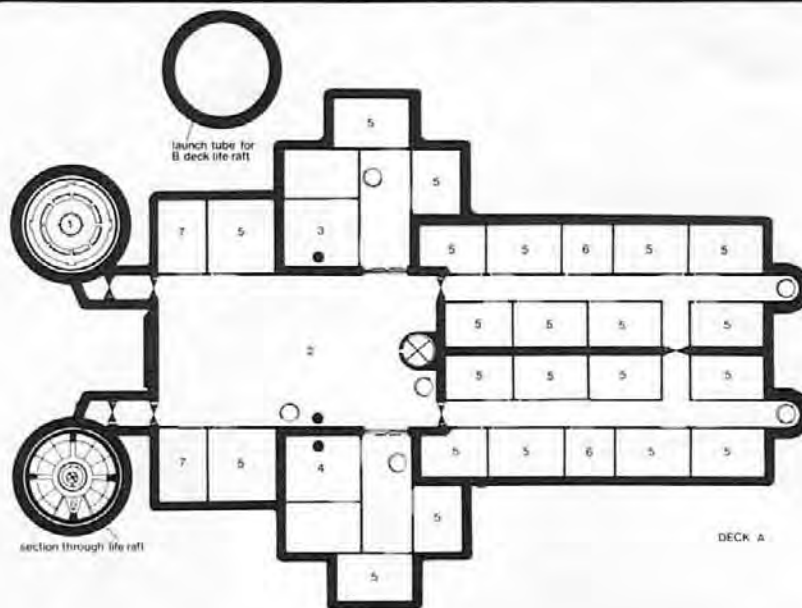
**On the Sky-Rig.** The referee should use the System Failure Table to create tension. Encounters with the lesser inhabitants of the rig are not keyed to any particular location, (except for the Scientist). The referee should let the players encounter them when they least expect it. The worker robot will only be found on C and D Decks, and the Spikeys will be found somewhere on E Deck. The System Failure Table should be kept to, but if the referee wants, he can lengthen or shorten the time slightly if he thinks it will increase the tension of the game. To give an idea of how long things take to do, it takes one minute to quickly search a stateroom and four to five minutes to search it thoroughly. It will take 7 minutes to read one of the logs.

**Recovery from the Effects of the Energy Sucker.** All affected equipment must be checked after it has been drained, or after that piece of equipment has left the rig, to see if it has been damaged in any way. Every character that caught the disease must also check at the same time. Throw 2d6. If the result is 2 or 3 then that piece of equipment has been damaged. It will cost 10-60% of its purchase cost to repair. For every affected character do the same except if they throw a 2 or a 3 they will permanently lose 1 point of Intelligence and 2 points of Dexterity, due to slight brain damage, caused by the disease. □



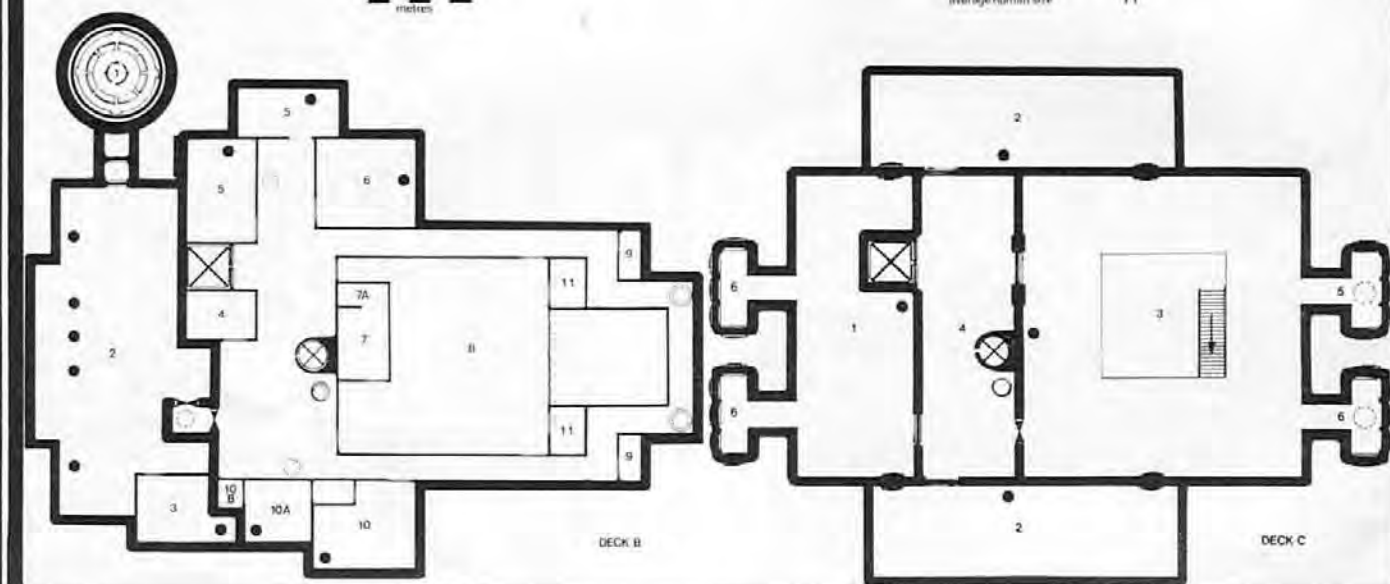


# SKY RIG



metres

average human size



## INTERIOR DETAILS

### A Deck, Crew's Quarters

1. *Life Raft.* One of the two life rafts will contain 3 dead crew members.
2. *Lounge.* Scattered around this area are low tables and comfortable chairs. The wall between the two life raft hatches is a large viewing screen, at present showing a recorded quiz show (fortunately, 45 mins after the party arrive onboard the screen will fail).
3. *Captain Straker's Cabin.* A double sized stateroom, full of mementoes of old commands and the Captain's log (see Referee's Information section for details). The dead body of the Captain is on the bed.
4. *Production Manager's Cabin.* A similar area to the Captain's cabin, but is much neater. In one corner is a larger scale model of the Rig.
5. *Stateroom.* All these staterooms contain various personal items. There will also be 7 dead crew members, all who have died of the disease. If the players want to waste time they will find Cr564 in cash, and 1,200 credits' worth of goods.
6. *Fresher.*
7. *Storage Space.*

### B Deck, Control and Recreation Level.

1. *Life Raft.*
2. *Bridge.* A large room filled with control consoles. From here the refinery can be controlled as well as the flight path of the rig itself. The consoles show that the rig is in perfect working order, but will also show the parts of the rig that are not working, (no reason should be given by the referee about why things are not working).
3. *Computer Room.* A computer Mk2 is fitted in this room. An extensive back-up memory has also been installed.
4. *Locker.* This area contains the usual types of equipment found in all ship's lockers, in a locked rack on one wall are 5 Snub pistols with 15 HE and 30 Tranq rounds.

5. *Offices.*

6. *Library.*

7. *Kitchen.*

7a. *Cold Store.*

8. *Recreation Area.* This was the rig's main common room where the crew ate their meals and relaxed. Amongst a pile of broken furniture near the folding doors is the body of one of the rig's crew. The area on the other side of the folding doors was used as a gymnasium.

9. *Fresher.*

10. *Sick Bay.* Four life support machines line one wall, all occupied by crew members affected by the disease. If they are removed from the machines they will die. All four are unconscious. The life support machines will fail after 90 mins unless another power supply can be found.

10a. *Surgery.* A small operating theatre. On the floor is the body of the rig's surgeon, Martens. His Log will be found nearby.

10b. *Air Lock.* Used to keep infected air out of operating room.

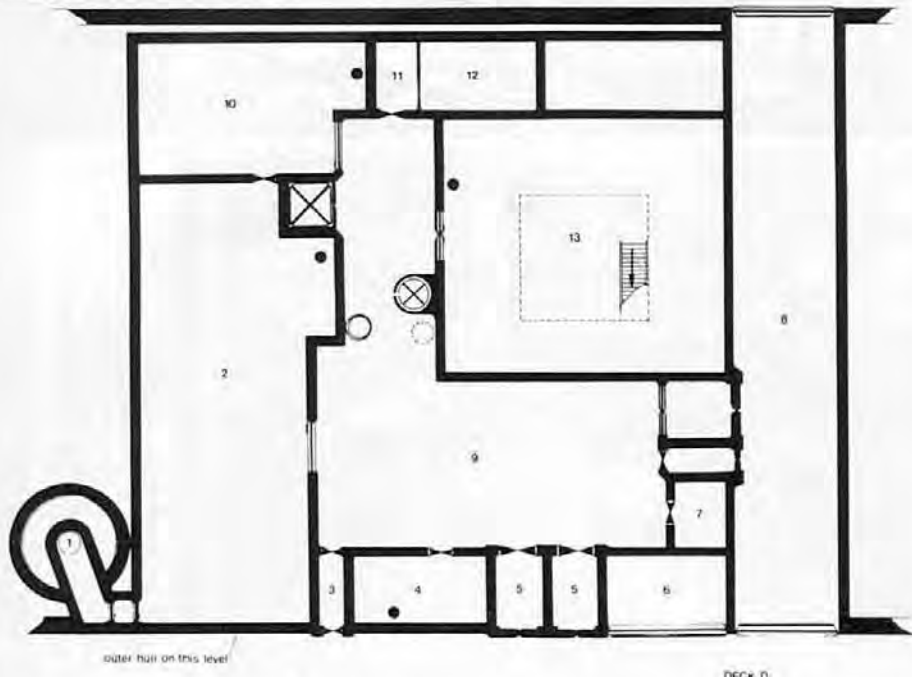
11. *Storage Space.*

### C Deck, Power Plant and Drives Level

1. *Power Plant.* In perfect working order, it will continue to run right up to the end. The Energy Sucker is absorbing the power, diverting it away from where it is needed. The Energy Sucker will not be seen even in this area.
2. *Drive Rooms.* These two areas contain the rig's drive units. They are in perfectly good condition. Two more dead crew members will be found draped over control panels.
3. *Upper Refinery Level.* A large amount of heavy machinery occupies this area. A vast mass of pipes lead to the central refinery, the top of which rises through an open area in the middle of the room.

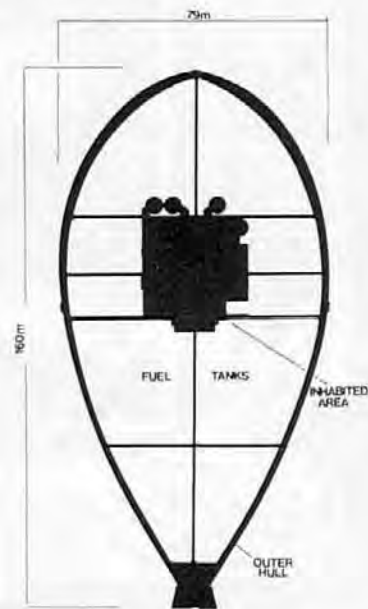
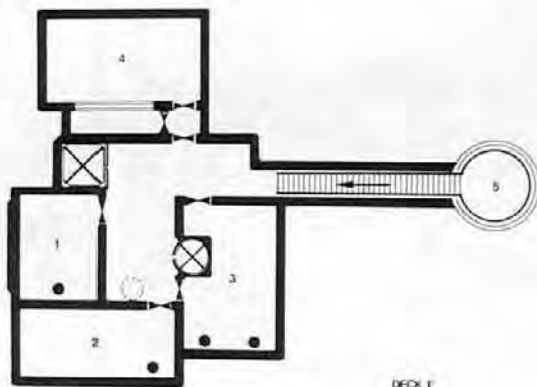


# SKY RIG



**KEY**  
 ● COMPUTER ACCESS / COMMAND CONSOLE  
 ■ AIRTIGHT SLIDING DOOR  
 ▨ ARMoured BULKHEAD GLASS

PLAN VIEW (SECTION) OF SKY-RIG



- 4. **Loading Area.** Two fork lift trucks stand idle; one is loaded with a large metal valve.
- 5. **Maintenance Access Area.** Lying here is the body of a dead mechanic. He was removing an inspection hatch leading to an empty fuel tank. If the players complete the mechanic's job they will find the central parts of the Energy Sucker within. The players will not be able to see the body of the Energy Sucker since it is hidden by the bloated bulk of the Energy Sac. The Energy Sucker will not react to the players unless they attack it, in which case it will draw in 2d6 tentacles each round and defend itself.
- 6. **Maintenance Access Area.** As 5, but without mechanic or the monster.

## D Deck, Refinery Level

- 1. **Life Raft.**
- 2. **Gas Separation Planet.** This machine separates the rare but useful gases out of Skiddir's atmosphere. This is a very large machine, filling most of this room.
- 3. **Air Lock.** Inside will be found another dead crew man (Rogers, Security). He is in a pressure suit, and carries a body pistol with a half empty magazine (he shot the crew men in the Lower Refinery).
- 4. **Robotics Control Centre.** Many control panels line the walls of this room. Each console controlled one of the worker robots. At present only one console is operating. The controls are not functioning but a TV picture will be seen, this picture is being transmitted by the last working robot. This picture will show some part of the interior of the rig.
- 5. **Air Locks.** These large air locks are designed to launch and retrieve worker robots.
- 6. **Fuel Transfer Equipment.** This sealed area contains the machinery necessary to transfer refined fuel from the rig to a waiting tanker.

- 7. **Locker.** Storage space for four pressure suits.
- 8. **Cutter Bay.** This tube acts as a hangar for cutters bringing food etc to the rig. The player's cutter will have to dock here.
- 9. **Cargo Hold.** Stacked high with crates containing newly designed machine parts.
- 10. **Workshop.** Along one wall are racks for holding the rig's robots, 6 of the 10 racks are occupied with deactivated robots. In the centre of the room are heavy duty work benches; a small crane is fixed to the ceiling.
- 11. **Electronics Store.** Spare parts for the rig's electrical equipment.
- 12. **Store.** Metal sheet, pipes of all shapes and sizes, as well as coils of steel rope are stored in this area.
- 13. **Lower Refinery.** This is the base section of area 3 on C Deck. It has a similar mass of pipes and ducts. At the bottom of the stairs are two bodies. Both have been shot.

## E Deck, Science Level

- 1. **Probe Launching Area.** Small unmanned probes are dropped into the clouds through a small air lock. Wall racks hold 11 unused probes.
- 2. **Weather Centre.** Instruments for recording weather patterns.
- 3. **Laboratory.**
- 4. **Caging Area.** The Spikeys were kept here [see encounter section]. During the confusion of the last few days they escaped, smashing the glass wall and killing one of the crew. His body remains in the middle of the floor in a pool of cold blood.
- 5. **Observation Blister.** At the end of the flight of stairs is an armoured glass observation post. This room has the only "windows" on the entire rig, and allows direct observation of cloud formations as well as the underside of the rig. The blister is crammed with all kinds of measuring equipment. It also contains the last surviving crew member Daniels [see encounter section, the Scientist]. □



Starbase is a bi-monthly department devoted to Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# THE STAURNI

An Alien Race for Traveller  
by Andy Slack



## Home World

The Staurni homeworld is Staurn, and they are rarely encountered away from it.

Staurn's LPP is AFB7870-C. It is a sub-Jovian world orbiting an F5 star quite closely, with two moons. Surface gravity is just under 2.0 G, and the world rotates in about 18 standard hours. From space, the blue-grey atmosphere with its blue-tinted clouds partially conceals a world with royal blue seas and ochre and cinnabar continents, with many volcanoes and areas of hot springs. Vegetation is predominantly reddish-yellow.

The planet's atmosphere is a mixture of hydrogen, helium, nitrogen, ammonia and methane at a pressure of three standard atmospheres. (NB: Oxygen burns and explodes readily in this atmosphere!) Because of the high energy input from the primary, winds and storms are especially fierce – no-one ventures out in a Staurnian storm. Surface water is heavily contaminated with ammonia. Animal life is common, and of standard types. The world can be placed in any system as a secondary world, in place of one of the nearer gas giants; the system should be politically independent.

## Appearance and Attitudes

The Staurni are approximately 3 metres long, half of this is a rudder-tipped tail. They have two arms with taloned hands, but no legs, they rest sitting on their coiled tails. A prominent keelbone and batlike wings with a 7 metre span allow the Staurni to fly. The head has a narrow skull with a protruding fanged muzzle and small rounded ears at the sides. The nostrils are hidden under the chin. The whole body is covered in a greyish growth that is similar to a cross between fur and feathers; a darker band of this surrounds the eyes. Clothing is limited to pouched bandoliers.

The Staurni are carnivores. They demand respect and must be addressed in an elaborate and polite manner in their own language. They will respect a character who meets them on their own ground, in the high pressure and gravity, rather than talking over a communicator. They are aggressive and warlike in behaviour. They are not gregarious and prefer to hunt for food. On reaching middle age, a Staurni loses both sex drive and aggression, and becomes content to stay at home. The elders are respected for their experience and wisdom.

## Evolution

The Staurni evolved from 200kg flying carnivore/chasers. Intelligence was developed to fight off a larger but related species which invaded their hunting grounds eons ago.

## History

Technology was slow in coming to the Staurni – before they discovered atomic energy, the only way to smelt metal was in one of the numerous volcanic vents. Eventually, a planet-wide industrial society was formed, composed of confederations of clans expanding by conquest and slavery. A nuclear war followed, lasting quite some time; afterwards Staurni society attained its present form, over a century ago.

## The Society

The Staurni social structure is based on a patriarchal male and his extended family, including his wives, cubs and relatives as well as retainers and their immediate relations. Staurni marriage is exceedingly complex both ritually and structurally. Each clan is independent and heavily armed, usually with atomic weapons, its home will be a complex of underground, nuclear-proof bunkers and fused stone towers in a mountainous region. These are called Aeries, perches, nests or some such term, and are identified by the name of their patriarch.

A quasi-religious organisation called the Lodge exists to settle disputes between clans and deal with off-worlders. Its leaders are old males, and most work is done by acolytes – usually younger sons of patriarchs, with little hope of inheritance, who join the organisation for the adventure, the concubines, and the chance of promotion and power.

## Technology

The Staurni know of Jump drive, but do not use it. Their only spacecraft are system defence vessels. They make truly excellent weapons, often deliberately for trade with off-worlders. They are a common source of advanced naval and personal weaponry, especially kinds which are illegal in most other systems. Their transport technology is very limited, since they can fly themselves.

## In Play

It is not recommended that Staurni be used as player characters because they

loathe to leave Staurn, and in any case their life-support requirements are most abnormal. For non-players, the referee should give Staurni a DM of +3 when dicing for Strength and Endurance. Aging is at normal rates. Staurni may not fly except in the proper atmosphere – it must have the right composition and pressure. Staurni may acquire any skill or benefit, but their Strength and Endurance may not exceed 15 at any time. An unarmed Staurni (a rare thing) is considered equipped with claws and teeth, and may use either (but not both) in any combat round.

The planet Staurn is useful as a source of non-standard weapons, especially for starships. A referee might invent his own weapons for the Staurni to sell, or might rule that *Book 4* and *5* weapons are illegal and may only be obtained from Staurn, and so on. In any case, players are likely to go there to tool up. Characters who have certain skills will know the following.

Those with Medical skill will know that a human being will require one dose of Medical Drug per day while on Staurn to counteract the effects of the high gravity. If this is not available, after two or three days a character will be too ill and exhausted to move or perform any actions. A character not using the proper drugs who is exposed to Staurn's gravity will take 2d6 wounds per day. In addition, a medic and those with Hunting skill will know that the water, air and animal life on Staurn are all poisonous.

Those with Survival skill (or Scout prior service if *Book 4* is not in use) will know that while the water on Staurn is polluted with ammonia, it is possible to obtain drinkable water by firing a low-intensity, wide beam laser pulse from a hand weapon (using one charge) at a metal canteen of local water; the ammonia is then boiled out over a period of minutes.

If the band travel on the surface of Staurn, there are two kinds of special events which may be encountered.

**Walking Forests.** A large corpse of trees, each 4 metres high, is encountered near dawn. As the sun heats them, the trees begin to 'walk' inexorably across the band's path. The trees move in this fashion in search of new soil, since they quickly exhaust the nutrients where they stand. When the sun goes down again, they will stop moving. A character caught in such a forest while it is on the move must make a Strength saving throw or be trampled underfoot, taking 2d6 wounds per combat round and almost certainly having his suit torn. One attempt to escape per round is allowed.

**Slaughter Machines.** In their nuclear war, the Staurni protected industrial centres with robot tanks, programmed to patrol an area and kill anything that moves in it. After the war, some clans left the surviving robots in place as a free defence of their nests. Heavy weapons will be useless due to age; the robot tank encountered by the party will attack with weapons equivalent to auto-rifles and laser rifles, several of each. The auto-rifles are harmless since the explosives in their bullets have decayed; but the lasers are still operational.

Staurn and the Staurni are taken from *The Star Fox* by Poul Andersen. □



## INTRODUCTION

Money. Everyone uses it, all the time. Yet few people have examined its physical make-up or the mechanics of its use. It usually weighs nothing and is easily carried from adventure to adventure (no currency controls or exchange losses here). Money is the single most important part of the *Traveller* Universe. Its physical make-up and method of use will have a major effect on the game and the conduct of adventures. Besides, there has to be money in the *Traveller* universe or 99.9% of characters would have nothing to steal...

## BACKGROUND

The *Imperial Credit Standard* (to differentiate it from local planetary credits) is the set currency for all interstellar transactions (and all, bar a tiny percentage, of interplanetary transactions).

## CASH

### Imperial Currency

Imperial cash (usually only seen on low tech worlds, and in deals of questionable legality) is available in fixed denominations: the *unit*, the *double* and the *quintet*. These denominations are available at each multiple of ten Credits (or *colours*) eg: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, 5000... etc.

The money is physically made up of a silica-plastic sandwich (called a 'plac'). Its appearance is of a plain plastic card, about the size of a CreditCard. Each multiple of 10 Credits is coloured differently (up to the MegaCredit) and has the value

# FOR A FEW CREDITS MORE

## Money in Traveller by Thomas Price

printed on it in white, with a white grid pattern as a background. Colours are as follows:

- Yellow: Single Credits.
- Orange: Tens of Credits.
- Green: Hundreds of Credits.
- Red: Thousands of Credits.
- Blue: Tens of thousands of Credits.
- Purple: Hundreds of thousands of Credits.
- Black: Millions of Credits (The MegaCredit).

The actual manufacture of the money is a simple process, although it does require a machine weighing several tons available only at Tech Level 12. The raw materials that go to make up the money are numerous (and classified) and individually of little value. Thus in the Imperial Banks (inevitably operated under licence by one of the MegaCorporations) no actual cash is stored. Money, when handed in, is broken down into its component materials and destroyed. A register of its value is held on the Banks' computer of course. When money is issued it is actually manufactured there

and then, at the denomination required. Operation of the machine requires more than one person and security precautions are quite excessive...

## Local Currency

On Low Tech worlds where the Banking system is not up to the demands of Imperial Currency, Local Currencies replace it. The Credit can still be used but in order to give small change (as the smallest amount recognised by the Imperial is the Credit) there will be local currency for fractions of a Credit. These vary greatly from place to place in the form of metal coins, discs, plastic strips, or even beads on a string.

On some worlds Local Currency will be used entirely, enabling the Government to keep tighter control on trade with other worlds. These other currencies have an infinite variety of physical characteristics but they all have one thing in common, they are worthless off-planet (except to a collector of local currencies...).

## CASH TRANSACTIONS

Establishments that operate for cash (usually not recommended for those of a delicate disposition) have machines that will analyse the Credit and then punch holes in it to the value of the purchases. The white grid printed on the Credit enables you to see how much remains. The small pieces of Credit are returned to a Bank which will analyse them and credit the establishment with their worth. An old con trick is to show a stack of Credits with only the top one showing its true value, the rest of which are full of holes...

On Low Tech worlds, of course, cash transactions are carried out much as they are today. A large denomination credit is tendered in return for services, and smaller denominations returned in change.

It should be noted that in the *Traveller* universe, where communications are limited to the speed of travel, there is no means of passing information as to changes in credit states. You cannot Telex your Bank in America and tell them to transfer \$100 to your Bank in the UK, because someone would have to travel to America to collect the information and travel to the UK with it. It would be easier to actually collect the cash. Thus the use of 'real' Cash is still quite common.

## CREDIT TRANSACTIONS

Although the actual transfer of cash will still be common there are problems concerned with the security of such operations. In order to overcome some of these problems (and to avoid the awful bore of carrying around dirty money...) credit transactions are used. A credit 'card' will have its value electronically printed on it, and that sum (in actual



cash) guaranteed by an outside agency (usually one of the MegaCorporations).

This means that the card is, in itself, worth the value printed on it. The advantage of the credit card over cash is that (depending on the degree of security used...) the card is of no value to a thief, as only the owner can use it. Depending on the Tech Level the degree of security will vary from simple signatures, to retinal patterns and brainwave scans to determine the rightful owner.

The Imperial Bearer Bond differs slightly from both Cash and Credit transactions. The Bond, like money and credit cards, is worth the value printed on it; unlike credit cards however, it can be carried by anybody. The Bond can only be surrendered for cash at certain Imperial Installations. The Bond is used to transfer very large sums over vast distances where, by the time it gets there, personalities may well have changed, but the position of authority will not.

### IMPLANTS

The ultimate in credit cards is the Implant, where the credit card is actually part of the person using it. The cards themselves (both temporary and permanent) are of a standard design agreed by all the MegaCorporations and the Imperial Authorities. They can be implanted so as to be undetectable to the naked eye, or as a plate on the wrist with the Company Logo (fashions change...). The usual position is on the wrist or forearm.

The cards themselves will retain their value after death of the user (unless massive damage takes place, say with a PGMP-13) but actually getting the Credits usually depends on lengthy court action and, of course, the Will of the deceased.

There are two facts worthy of note concerning the Implant, one is of the *Unlimited Credit* implant used by the bearers of Imperial Warrants; but the main fact all Travellers should take note of when using Implants is that they mean nothing on a world without the Tech Level 6+ equipment required to read them...

### SLANG

Money is the one part of the Imperial Universe that has the most slang associated with it. The following is a short extract from 'Modern Slang - Its Use and Abuse (The last 1000 years)' [Cometary Publishing - a subsidiary of Makhidkarun].

Slang concerning denomination:

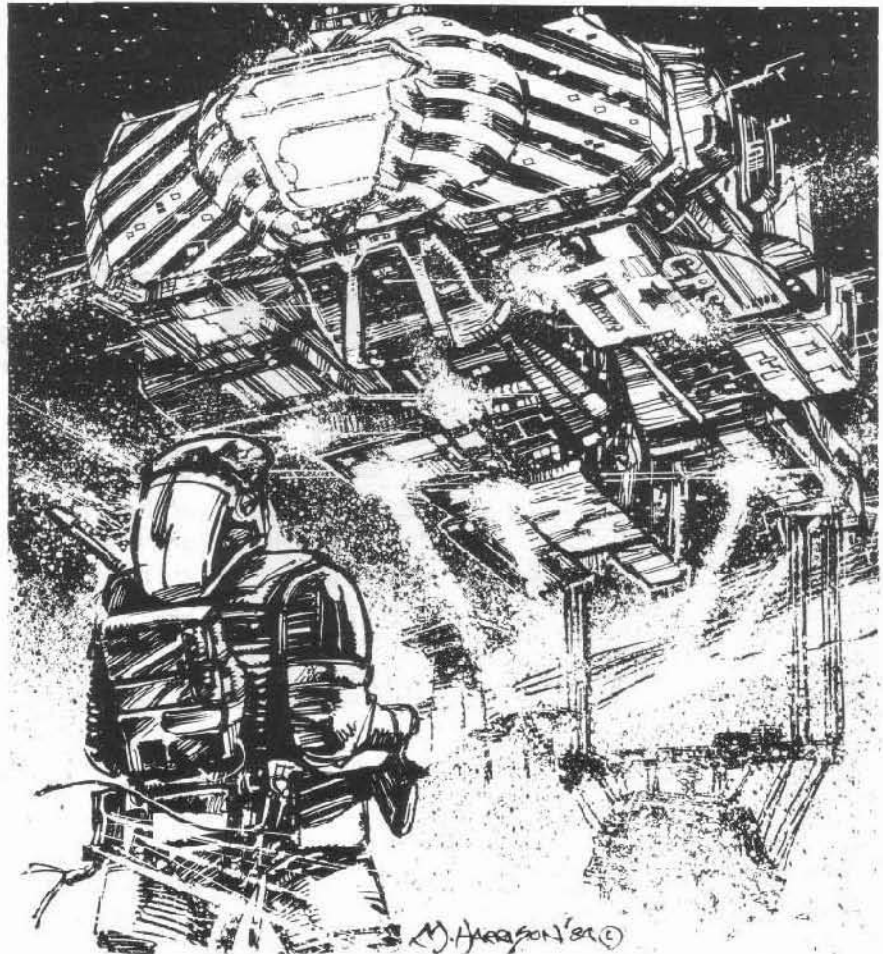
Chip, Frac: Fraction of a Credit  
Unit: 10 Credits  
Double, Cee: 100 Credits  
Triple, Block, Brick, Low: 1000 Credits  
Quartet, Quad, High: 10,000 Credits  
Meg, Biggie: 1,000,000 Credits

Slang concerning colour:

'He's yellow': A Cheapskate, Won't pay  
'In the red': Getting by, OK  
'In the black': Rich  
'Black-hearted': Thinks only of money  
'Greenies': 100 Credit Placs  
'Black': The MegaCredit  
'Purps': 100,000 Credit Placs

General:

The plan is 'full of holes': The plan will



not pay.

A 'Chippie': Someone who collects fractions.

'Ceas': Imperial Credits (as opposed to local money).

'Washers', 'Discs': Local Coins.

'Monopoly Money' (obscure): Local Currency in general.

### SCENARIO SUGGESTIONS

by Simon Farrell

Considering the foregoing, one or two possibilities immediately present themselves. Forgery would seem to be the best bet for the small time, money-grubbing *Travellers*. Just as today, it seems unlikely that people dealing in cash in the *Traveller* universe would check the authenticity of the cash they handle very often. The raw materials and their exact combination may be a closely guarded secret, but any resourceful character should be able to come up with something which *looks* right.

For the slightly more ambitious entrepreneurs, it might be worth wondering how often some establishments take those small pieces of credit to their local bank. Once a day? Once a week? How securely is it stored? How is it taken to the bank? An enterprising character might set up a small shop of his or her own - giving them a perfect right to bank all those little pieces of credit...

For those of insufficient skill to use forgery, the brute force method comes well recommended. The machine which manufactures money weighs several tons? Starship cargo holds carry more than that. It's well protected? My, my, think of all the senseless violence neces-

sary to steal such a secure item! You'd certainly be able to pay for any help you needed! And once the machine is in your possession you will be set for life. The Imperium is hardly going to change its unit of currency.

The other interesting thing about the use of money in an interstellar society is transfer of funds. Admittedly, this would not be as easy as it is today, but even so hauling large amounts of cash around the galaxy isn't the easiest way of transferring funds. The usual thing would be that X-Boats would carry information about the credit transfer electronically, passing it on to the planet concerned with the rest of the mail. The information would be coded of course, but codes can be broken; and unlike modern methods of electronic funds transfer, verification of the message's authenticity would be a slow and unwieldy process. All it needs is one inside man.

On a more legal note - on what is the Imperial economy based? Is it a standard like the gold standard, or does it fluctuate in relation to the other interstellar currencies - those of the Zhodani, the Aslan, Vargr, Sword Worlds? If so, then there's a chance for profit right there. So long as you have the capital in the first place. And where does the capital come from? For most Travellers the answer is obvious - you steal it!

All in all, when stealing money in *Traveller* - indeed in any time or place - it helps to have someone on the inside; and this kind of operation is probably the easiest in which to find such a person. After all, everyone has their price! □



Starbase is an alternate monthly column for Traveller enthusiasts, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# CORE

## Consulary Office of Reconnaissance and Exploration

The following item tackles the perennial problem of providing players with suitably high-powered antagonists. I should not advise the use of the career procedure for player characters as it produces over-skilled persons compared to normal Traveller procedures. Please also note that although Rudolf has used the Zhodane – Imperial setting, this expansion is in no way 'official' –B McW.

Despite its (intentionally misleading) name, this organisation of the Zhodani Consulate is no regular scout service. In fact, it is a highly secret intelligence agency specialised in covert survey and secret operations on non-tech and low-tech planets (TL0-3) within both the Zhodani Consulate and the Imperium.

Most CORE-missions are designed in order to establish a Zhodani-friendly and Zhodani-influenced (controlled) government, enabling the Zhodani to use the planet as a naval base, or to gain access to the planets natural resources.

Apart from these routine missions, CORE is also responsible for covert survey on newly discovered non-tech planets where a decision pro or contra interdiction has to be made, and for the control of all existing interdictions.

### ORGANISATION

CORE Headquarters on Zhodane consists of the Executive Committee with Planning Board/Braintrust, the Scientific Department (evaluation of data, development and improvement of equipment) with a small Medical Branch and the Administration and the Field Operations Staff, which co-ordinates and controls all activities of the various detachments. Each District or Frontier District has a number of CORE-Detachments equal to the number of low/non-tech planets within or just beyond its boundaries. Size and equipment of these detachments vary widely, as they are tailored to the specific situation on the planet in question. One common feature is the *Bal-Team*, a field unit consisting of one scientist/psionic (referred to as *Brain*), one combat specialist (*Arm*) and one support specialist (*Line*).

### CAREER

To enlist with CORE, a Zhodani has to have 9+ Intelligence and Education. Former members of army, navy or scout service are preferred.

### Basic Training

Consists of 4 years at CORE Academy on Zhodane. The trainee may choose one of the three careers:

**Scientist/Psionic (Brain).** Only possible if the trainee is a telepath/clairvoyant. Apart from psionic training, the subject of Xeno-Ethnology is also studied, and gives the future specialist Liaison-1, Interrogation-1 and Streetwise-1.

**Combat Specialist (Arm).** The trainee attends weapon training and learns some related skills: one vehicle skill; Recon-1, or Survival-1; Demolition-1 or Combat Engineering-1; and either Sword-1 + Bow-1 or Blade-1 + Pistol-1.

**Support Specialist (Line).** A well-trained technical expert, skills being Communication-1; Computer-1; either Mechanical-1 or Electronics-1, one vehicle skill and Forgery-1. Lines are able to handle almost any equipment of TL14 and anything below. After Basic Training the recruit is promoted to Specialist 1 and starts his or her first 4-years' term in active service. Each term is divided into 1 year active duty (Field Assignment), 1 year Internal Duty, a second Field Assignment of 1 year, and finally 1 year of Advanced Training.

During Field Assignments no skills may be learned. During Internal Duty, the specialist learns the following skills on a roll of 9+ each: Medical, Administration, Computer.

### Advanced Training

Each fourth year this may be attended on any school of any Zhodani service. The specialist is free to choose any school and to learn whatever he thinks necessary for his job, but common favourites are Commando School for 'Arms', Intelligence School for 'Brains' and Specialist Schools for 'Lines'. Each CORE-agent surviving a 4-year term without spoiling a major operation is automatically re-enlisted and promoted to the next higher rank (CORE-Spec 2, CORE-Spec 3 and so on).

### CORE TACTICS

If the situation on the planet in question does not request otherwise, the routine procedure for a mission is the following:

1. The *Bal-Team* (only very rarely more than one team) is smuggled onto planet by a scoutship and uses the first week(s) to establish a secret and well-hidden base, where the equipment, supplies and one vehicle are stored.

2. The support specialist uses his outfit (recon drones etc, often disguised as animals) to obtain as much information as possible.

3. When enough information has been gathered the support specialist stays at the hidden base to give back-up if needed, and the two others disguise as natives and carry out the planned operation. They stay in permanent contact with base, at least once daily, by radio. Under normal circumstances (not always within Imperial space), a scoutship or a patrol vessel of the navy keeps near the planet to provide additional support, if required.

CORE-agents rely heavily on their technically superior outfit and their skills to solve a given problem. Direct use of force and modern weapons is considered 'unsound', having little to do with good intelligence work.

In any case, the *Bal-Team* is always commanded by the scientist/psionic ('Brain'), and also all supporting units.

### SCENARIO SUGGESTIONS

CORE-specialists may be encountered on literally any low-tech or non-tech planet along the Zhodani-Imperial borders – Spinward Marches, Out Rim Void, Vanguard Reaches and Beyond. There are innumerable ways how players could come into contact with them. Here are a few:

1. The players were sent by a patron, probably a corporation, but perhaps an Imperial military or intelligence organisation, to establish peaceful contact with a local government. Unbeknownst to the players, a CORE-team is trying the same, and will do its best to get rid of the players.

2. Something (eg a crashed courier-ship) or someone on the planet has vital information. Both sides, the players and the CORE-team, are racing to get the information first. Unfortunately, the natives know of this, so all activities have to be under cover.

3. In addition to the plot(s) above, the society forming the background of the struggle is strange and unpredictable. Activities are hindered by the natives' religious beliefs and traditions ("Never step on Aki'll'geshks on the day of the sinking moon!"), and the players have to use all their cunning.

Many referees have problems in designing low-tech cultures. Help may be found in fantasy RPGs, for much of their material can easily be adapted. I used the town *Irillian* (WD42-47) as a capital of a low-tech world, and had the players trying to overthrow the Zhodani-controlled council by causing an insurrection of the mob. It worked quite well, although some problems had to be solved in advance:

1. Magic and strange monsters are difficult to fit into *Traveller*. You may throw them out, or replace them (eg turn magic into psionics – but be careful – and monsters into dangerous animals).

2. Fantasy adventures often have a very straightforward plot: the good ones trying to erase the bad ones and vice versa. Just drop the 'philosophical' side of the conflict (Law versus Evil) and change both sides into more human political factions, including much treachery and double-crossing.

3. Most *Traveller* skills, except perhaps sword and bow, do not fit too well into a low-tech setting. Therefore, lay emphasis on good role-playing instead of dicing out the successful use of skills! Make the players use some brainsweat on 'political' moves like destroying an enemy's reputation through nasty rumours and the like. And never forget that the CORE-guys are experienced in just this kind of psychological warfare.

4. Take care that no-one runs berserk with a plasmagun! Such weapons can easily destroy an entire low-tech town within seconds. □

# BOARDING STATIONS

Hints and Hazards for the Professional Privateer in Science Fiction Role-Playing Games

by Marcus L Rowland



One of the most common combat situations in any SFRPG is a spaceship boarding action. Theoretically, both parties in this type of operation have tactical advantages, but in practice the result is usually a confused melee around the airlocks, with bullets or energy bolts ricocheting off the bulkheads.

The attacking forces usually begin with the advantages of surprise and superior intelligence data. They can choose their moment, their means of entry, and the weapons they carry.

The defenders are fighting in their own terrain, they can spend weeks or years preparing for an assault which may never come.

## Preliminary Manoeuvres

A ship which has been completely immobilised by an attacker is easy prey for a boarding party. The only circumstance justifying a fight in an immobilised ship is the need to delay the attackers while destroying documents, sending out lifeboats, or summoning help.

Defending ships sometimes pretend to surrender before the ship has taken immobilising damage, then attack the other ship at point blank range. Such surrenders may be accepted if the victim seems to have taken real damage. The defenders may give this impression by camouflage or releasing prepared debris. A few dummy weapons, rigged to explode harmlessly if damaged, can give a convincing impression of serious damage; such disguises may be vulnerable to sensor systems and other advanced technology. In Q-Ships most weapons will be hidden.

At this stage the attackers usually have the advantage, and should do their utmost to keep it. The attacking captain should be very cautious, and inflict more damage than the victim seems to warrant.

## Entry Formalities

Once the two ships have closed, and the attacker has caused enough damage to make escape unlikely, the boarding operation begins. Provided matter transmission or teleportation aren't available (see Special Attacks below), the best place for the attackers to enter is an airlock. Unfortunately airlocks are usually good places to mount a defence, since they have armoured walls, easily controllable doors and hatches, and a good power supply.

Q-Ships may have one line of defence which isn't economical in other vessels - a false airlock concealing a heavy weapon installation [see diagram]. If the boarding procedure utilises a docking tube it's possible to bypass the outer hull of the attacking ship and send a shot directly into its interior. Such a weapon will kill anyone in the lock, and may wreck the attacking ship.

On a less lethal scale, most airlocks can be fitted with a few anti-personnel weapons. A remotely controlled TV camera

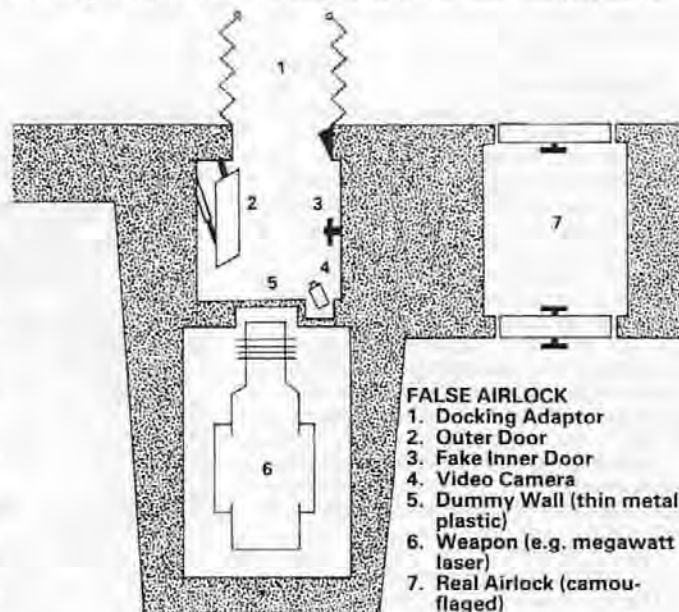
and laser form a useful system, but are easily destroyed by boarders.

Any airlock will contain two airtight hatches, or some equivalent, and sensors to indicate the exact status of the lock. Usually the hatches are operated by servo motors. One easy trick is to allow the boarders to enter the lock, let it fill with air, then suddenly open the outer doors. Anyone in the lock will probably be blown into space. This tactic fails if the enemy ship has docked onto the airlock. A simple alternative is a section of hull secured by explosive bolts, triggered when the airlock is full. If the attackers are destroying hatches and depressurising the ship as they board, these systems may not work.

The airlock is also the best place for the use of gas or acid sprays, and any other weapon which might inconvenience the defenders as well as the attackers. Examples include paint sprays (reducing vision through helmets), flame throwers, liquified gas nozzles, and water cannon. An even more extreme tactic is the placement of low-power mines or explosives, with damage insufficient to hole the hull.

Defenders should note that the use of human guards in an airlock is almost always futile. They will either be killed or taken hostage.

What can intruders do to reduce the hazards of the airlock? Nothing. Unless the attackers have paved their way by sabot-





age or bribes, they must either run the gauntlet of the airlock or find another entry to the hull. Alternative entry points might include weapons turrets, ports servicing access panels, engine ducts, or holes left by the attackers' weaponry. Alert defenders may have surprises ready in these areas too. An attack on two or three fronts is most likely to succeed, if personnel are available, since it may overload the defenders' security systems.

### Corridors of Power

Starship corridors are a natural killing ground for unwary attackers. They rarely contain vital installations, and can be isolated by armoured hatches or valves. Doorways and cross corridors lend themselves to ambushes and defensive positions. Additionally, the attackers are now inside the victim, and vulnerable to any environmental changes the defenders may make. Usually the crew start their defence with control of lighting, heat, ventilation, communication systems, fire-fighting mechanisms, drives, and internal gravity. Creative use of these facilities can seriously disrupt an attack.

Many starships use artificial gravity and compensator systems, countering the thrust of the engines and giving a 'natural' environment. If the security system is linked to these systems it's possible to leave the attackers in free fall, then drop them down the length of the ship with several gravities acceleration. If the ship isn't accelerating, suddenly cutting the gravity and activating the compensators will hurl the attackers forward.

Less lethal, but still dangerous, are the use of free fall and disorientation. Simultaneously switching off the gravity and lights, then flashing the lights on and off as strobes, will probably leave most attackers feeling distinctly unwell, it is probable that the attackers will be in no condition to fight. The referee should calculate appropriate saving throw, with modifiers for drugs, armour, and physical characteristics. Attackers wearing space suits may still be vulnerable to these attacks, and suffer serious consequences if they vomit into the suits' mechanisms. Space-suited characters are also vulnerable to radio jamming and magnetic induction attacks.

Other possibilities are more blow-out panels, rapid changes in atmospheric pressure (which may leave unsuited attackers deaf or dead), and remote-controlled weapons. Fire barriers, remotely controlled hatches, and powered doors can be used to split the attackers into small and easily handled groups.

If all these tactics fail, the defenders may finally be forced to enter the corridors themselves. Note that especially vulnerable sections (such as engineering and the bridge) will usually be sealed at the first sign of trouble, leaving crew in the remainder of the ship to deal with the intruders.

Provided there has been some warning, a starship defence team should be equipped with some or all of the following equipment:

A portable barricade, with weapon ports. A metal-topped table or a mobile partition can double for this role, provided it is sufficiently tough.

Fire fighting equipment.

Communications equipment operating unjammed channels.

Gas masks or space suits.

Personal armour and weapons.

Medical kit.

Their primary objective should always be to contain or expel the attackers, but other priorities are to take prisoners, to inflict maximum casualties, and to avoid becoming a hostage. The attackers should be allowed to escape if the alternative is a fight to the death.

As soon as the attackers enter the ship, the defenders should try to cut off communications, so that personnel in the attacking ship will be unsure of the situation. However, the attackers may retaliate by firing on the defending ship. Once inside the hull the attackers should try for the following objectives:

1: Incapacitate the ship. In particular, damage the drives, gravity systems, and weapons.

2: Destroy or neutralise the computer. The most valuable member of a boarding party might be a computer operator, if the attackers can capture a working terminal or break into data lines.

3: Capture hostages.

4: Maintain communications with the mother ship.

5: Any special mission objectives.

Attackers should be extremely wary of unusual design features. Concealed hatches, long fore-aft corridors, ceiling spray nozzles, and armoured bulkheads may suggest that a warm reception has been prepared.

### Taking Control

If the attackers seize any important part of the ship, they will probably succeed.

An alternative to control of the ship is the use of hostages. If the attackers manage to take prisoners they may have a powerful bargaining card – however, some human and alien cultures will not be interested in such tactics. For example, Kzinti [see Larry Niven's *Ringworld* etc] would regard any surrender as dishonourable, as would the Aslan tribes of *GDW's Traveller*.

A third possibility is total subversion of the ship's computer. If the attackers can penetrate the system they may gain control, and operate the ship's defences against the crew.

Once control is established, the attackers can secure the ship, and capture and disarm its personnel.

The only viable defence at this stage is an unusually thorough reprisal system. Attackers who find that both ships are locked together, and are about to be destroyed by a moderately powerful hydrogen bomb, may be prepared to negotiate, this stage usually represents a victory for the attackers and a defeat for the defenders.

### Special Attacks

So far this article has ignored the use of highly advanced technology and psionics, and assumed that all boarding operations will be physical.

If the defence have similar abilities available they may be able to block such attacks, or even divert them out of the ship and into space. Exact details obviously vary with game system, but the following broad suggestions may be helpful:

1: Compartmentalisation. If the ship can be divided into small areas, the attackers may be forced to materialise individually or in small groups.

2: Obstruction. It's difficult to imagine successful teleportation if all open spaces are obstructed. By filling compartments with any sort of solid, the attackers may be forced to materialise in a preplanned area.

3: Automatic weapons. Most forms of teleportation and matter transmission must leave some detectable trace. A security system could be programmed to react to such traces.

4: Overlapping fire fields. Each compartment is occupied by two or more guards, who set up in such a way that every part of the compartment can be seen. This method is best combined with obstruction and compartmentalisation.

### Budgeting

How much can anyone afford to spend on defence? A minimal system for a very small ship may cost more, and installation may make the ship-owners eligible for reduced insurance rates.

Any spy looking at the plans of a starship will probably be able to get a general idea of the costs involved. Ship owners are naturally aware of this danger, and may take various steps to counter spies. The most obvious precaution is to file false ship plans and misleading flight data. □

### Sources

This article has several important sources, which are recommended to all interested players and referees:

Alfred Bester	<i>Tiger! Tiger!</i> *
James Blish	The <i>Star Trek</i> books
Randall Garrett	<i>Unwise Child</i> †
Harry Harrison	<i>One Step from Earth</i> (collection)
Larry Niven	<i>Neutron Star</i> (collection)
Niven / Pournelle	<i>Oath of Fealty, The Mote in Gods Eye</i>
Fred Saberhagen	<i>Berserker</i>
James H. Schmitz	<i>Agent of Vega, The Witches of Karres</i>
E E Doc Smith	The <i>Lensman</i> series
<i>Flying Buffalo Inc</i>	<i>Grimtooth's Traps</i>
<i>Game Designers' Workshop</i>	<i>Snapshot</i>
<i>Game Designers' Workshop</i>	<i>Azhanti High Lighting</i> †

\* Also known as *The Stars My Destiny*

† Also known as *Starship Death*

‡ Games set in the *Traveller* universe

Starbase is an alternate monthly column for Traveller enthusiasts, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# THE MOTIVATED TRAVELLER

by Andy Slack

A recent *WD* article described the idea of choosing objectives for *D&D* characters and awarding experience points for actions consistent with these objectives. Here is a similar system intended for use with SF RPGs, notably *Traveller*, *Space Opera* and *Universe*. *Star Frontiers*, having character advancement based on experience points, would be better served by the original system.

The advantages of using the system are threefold: first, it provides a quick, simple guide to the character's actions and personality; this is most valuable when dealing with NPCs and for beginning players. Second, it provides clearly defined goals for the character, often a problem for players, especially those new to the system concerned. Third, it provides a way to remove large sums of money from the game painlessly.

## Objectives

On joining the game, characters must each specify 3 objectives. (Choosing 3 makes for some interesting 'crises of conscience' as the demands of various objectives conflict.)

Possible objectives are: Adept, Altruist, Hedonist, Killer, Miser, Rover, Socialite, Warrior. The character's goal is to amass Victory Points (VP) and so increase his Victory Level (VL), which represents his reputation and self-esteem. VP are totalled monthly; in any game month in which a character fails to mass at least as many as his VL, his VL is decreased by one; in any game month in which he amasses 3 times as many VP as the next VL, the character's VL is increased by one. The GM should award VP as he sees fit, but the following are guidelines. Note that a character may gain VP twice for an action if he has two objectives which would each gain him VP for it.

**Adepts** are characters devoting themselves to the pursuit of excellence in one particular skill.

An Adept must specify one skill as his speciality. His VL may never be less than twice his expertise level (in *Traveller*) or less than his skill level (in *Space Opera* or *Universe*) in this skill, and he gains a favourable modifier when studying it; a +1 DM in *Traveller* and a 5% chance of success in the other systems. The Adept's minimum VL as defined by his expertise is not affected by VP gains or losses.

**Altruists** are those who strive to help others and do good deeds - a rare type of character indeed without some incentive such as this system. Generally they avoid combat where possible, not from cowardice but for moral reasons.

An Altruist gains VP as follows: 1 VP per student per week if he is acting as an instructor, 1 VP per Cr500 x his VL which he donates to a worthy cause (GM's discretion is required in determining what constitutes a worthy cause), 1 VP for healing a character of a minor wound or disease and +2 VP for healing a charac-

ter of a major wound or disease.

**Hedonists** enjoy the good things in life - good food, good living, and other pleasures. Much of their income is spent on these things.

A Hedonist gains VP from Gambling and Carousing (see below). He also gains VP as follows: For 'High Living', +2 per month. For travelling High Passage, +2 per trip. Per Cr500 x his VL spent on otherwise useless luxuries, +1 VP.

**Killers** are generally nasty characters who enjoy causing pain and suffering, and are ruthless in pursuit of their goals.

A Killer gains VP as follows: +1 VP per minor wound inflicted on a character; +2 VP per major wound inflicted on a character. Note: These awards are doubled if the Killer wounds another player character. The purpose of this is to ensure that those travelling with a psychopath are always a little uneasy about it. A Killer also gains +1 VP each time he hits an opposing ship in space combat.

**Misers** are those who desire money for its own sake; they tend to be wary of any expenditure, however necessary, and will do almost anything to make money.

A Miser's VL may never be less than the logarithm (base 10) of his cash balance in Credits, regardless of VP gains or losses. Thus a Miser with Cr10,000 must have a VL of at least 4; one with Cr1,000,000 has a minimum VL of 6.

**Rovers** travel for the sheer joy of travelling, and are born tourists. They are usually intrigued by natural wonders and exotic sights and customs.

A Rover's VL increases by one each time he lands on a world he has never visited before, regardless of VP gained or lost that month.

**Socialites** are characters who make a career out of social climbing; their overall aim is to be rich, famous and powerful, preferably noble with it.

A Socialite gains VP from Carousing and Gambling. He also gains VP as follows: for High Living, +2 VP per month. Being a member of the Travellers' Aid Society, +2 per month. Each time a Socialite's VL increases (or decreases) by one. However, a character may not become a noble in this way unless the Emperor grants him a title, which he will do on a roll of 12+ on 2d6. Whether and how this roll may be influenced are up to the GM, but the wishes of other nobles will have great effect. Note that systems without a set of social ranks must have them defined by the GM before the Socialite objective has its full use; VL could possibly be used as a measure of social class.

**Warriors** are those who love fighting, but fight not to kill or maim as does the killer, but for purposes they consider just and honourable, and are normally

generous and merciful to those they defeat.

Warriors gain VP as follows: For being on the winning side in combat, +2; for commanding a winning side outnumbered n:1 in combat, + (n x n); for each hit personally scored in space combat, +1.

## Carousing and Gambling

Carousing is an activity lasting one week and costing Cr50 x character's VL. It gains a Hedonist or Socialite 1VP. If two or more Socialites carouse together by mutual and prearranged consent, this is called toadying; the Socialite with the highest VL present gains +1 VP per other Socialite present, and other Socialites gain VP equal to 1/2 the difference between their VL and the highest present.

Gambling uses the normal rules for the system in use. A character may make up to 6 bets per week of gambling, each of Cr50 to Cr5,000. Hedonists and Socialites gain +1 VP per Cr500 x VL bet; Socialites gain +1 VP per bet won, and lose 1VP per bet lost.

## Alien Beings and their Objectives

Aliens seem best handled by restrictions on which objectives they may choose.

Every SF game or writer has a race of eline creatures with the codes of the Samurai: Niven's Kzinti, *Traveller's* Aslan, *Space Opera's* Avatars, Cherryh's Mri; the list is endless. Such creatures must choose either Killer or Warrior as an objective; they may still choose whatever they like for their other two objectives. In the same way, other races would be characterised by one objective which they must (or may not) choose; Niven's Puppeteers or *Star Frontiers'* Vrusk would be forced to select Miser as an objective; *Traveller* Zhodani would automatically choose Socialite (as all aspire to become enfranchised nobility); and so on. *Traveller* Vargr are perhaps an exception, and should be allowed (unlike other characters) to change their objectives annually, reflecting their changeable attitudes to life.

## Non-Players

Objectives are easily selected for NPCs to flesh them out in the same way. It is easy to allocate them by a random die roll, but take into account that character's skills, characteristics and race. An extremely rich character, especially if an ex-merchant and most especially if he has a ship, is very unlikely to be a Miser. A tough character with many weapons skills is likely to be either a Warrior or a Killer, and is probably not an Altruist. An ex-Scout, again especially if he has a ship, is more likely than most to be a Rover. In short, pick objectives for NPCs sensibly; choose something for them which would start them with a high VL, and allow them to improve that VL easily. □



# AN ALIEN WERREWOLF

31st August 1888

IN LONDON

By Jae Campbell

This is a *Traveller* scenario for 2-4 players, who belong to an Imperial intelligence organisation such as the Covert Survey Bureau.



## Computer Library Data

### RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VARGR RACE

INTELLIGENT MAJOR RACE RESULTING FROM ANCIENT GENETIC MANIPULATION OF TERRAN CARNIVORE STOCK FROM THE *CANIDAE* FAMILY *CANIS* GENUS. THE TYPICAL VARGR IS NOT VERY IMPRESSIVE AVERAGING ABOUT 1.6M IN HEIGHT AND 60KG IN WEIGHT. THEY ARE UPRIGHT BIPEDS AND REAR LIMBS DIGITI-GRADE. THEY HAVE MANIPULATIVE ORGANS SIMILAR IN SIZE AND APPEARANCE TO HUMAN HANDS, SLIGHTLY FASTER REACTIONS AND SUPERIOR SENSES IN SMELL AND SIGHT. THE TYPICAL VARGR IS INDEPENDENT WITH A TENDENCY TOWARDS INSTABILITY AND RESENTMENT OF AUTHORITY - RESPECTING SUPERIORS THEY KNOW AND ADMIRE RATHER THAN A REMOTE AUTHORITY. THEY ARE ALSO INTENSELY PROUD OF THEIR RACE AND ARE EASILY INSULTED, ENTERING INTO FIGHTS WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES (FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE SUPPLEMENT II LIBRARY DATA N-Z)

## PLAYERS' BRIEFING

Last night, at 0300 hours, a break-in was recorded at the Temporal Research Foundation (on the outskirts of Haut-Devroe Downport on Terra), where top secret research on the nature of the universe has been going on for the last ten years. The investigating security team discovered the two-on duty guards just inside the building; one was already dead, his throat had been torn out and his spine had been broken in two places. The other guard was alive, barely. He also had been severely savaged and failed to return to consciousness. Investigation of the laboratory later by one of the scientists in charge revealed that a top secret device, an extraterrestrial artifact discovered on the planet Minerva ten years ago; a Temporal Matter transport or T-Matt had been activated and a portable control device was missing. The T-Matt is a machine that is capable of creating a vortex through time and space which the portable control which had been nick-named 'Passports', can by psionic means manipulate a specified space-time location. There is no possible way that the culprit could have left the building except by escaping through time!

The scientists have located the culprit, using a tracer that is built into the passport to August 1888, London where it has apparently stabilised. Medics examining the bodies of the guards have determined that they were killed by a vargr who had ripped their throats out with his fangs then exhibiting abnormal strength had snapped their spines. Further investigation of the

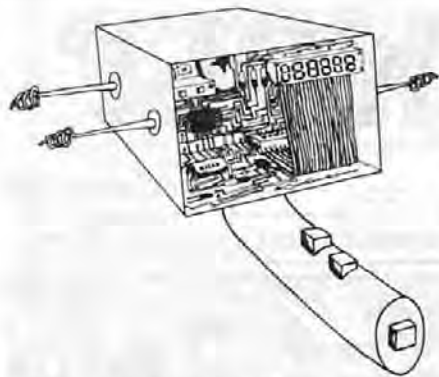
wounds revealed minute traces of Hyper-dexamine - our vargr is a combat drug addict which is highly addictive and is now stuck back in time without a supply. Our psychiatrist has come up with a theory that our vargr was already verging on insane due to addiction and broke into the research foundation in order to steal something to sell for more drugs. Your task is to return in time, track down and capture our vargr 'friend' and if possible, wipe out any trace of his, and your, adventure into the past. The scientists have warned us that any change of the past must be rectified before you return or history as you know it may have changed beyond recognition. At all costs you must avoid drawing attention to yourselves, avoid leaving behind anything that could alter the future, and above all, avoid hurting anyone of that time period. The research historians have been working throughout the night to try and create 'authentic' period costumes and have compiled all the information we have on this little known period of Terran history... Before you go, one further point is that the vargr is believed to be armed with a scalpel-like blade which he used to stab the second guard through the abdomen with - he must be considered both insane and highly dangerous, dismissed!

### T-Matts, Passports and Time Travel

The T-Matt is an Ancient's device (Tech 18+) that is capable of creating an artificial nexus into the Tau energy field - an energy that permeates the whole multiverse

and co-exists everywhere and everywhen simultaneously. The nexus results in a whirlwind-like storm within the energy field around the nexus, the 'eye' of the Tau storm; anything caught in the 'eye' will be expelled out into the multiverse at a completely different location and time. A secondary function of the T-Matt is that of being able to plot psychic traces through the storm to their site of origin. It then records the temporal and spatial co-ordinates on a computer clip for use by the 'passports' - a type of electrical compass that allows the passports to interpret the storm pattern and use it to cast anything trapped within its protective field out into the multiverse approximately at the plotted co-ordinates. These psychic traces or echoes originate from one or two sources, either as part of an individual's psionic talent; the ability to project and the Tau field (Telepathy & Special) or the ability to read and trace individuals emotions (which permeate the energy field) back to a source point. The T-Matt is capable of analysing physical objects which, because of 'witnessing' or being used in highly emotional circumstance (such as a particularly violent murder) has retained a distinctive aura that cannot be eradicated and which can be traced back to aura's point of origin. On the night of the break-in the T-Matt had been plotting a distinctive psychic echo that had originated in Victorian London and a 'destination' clip had been prepared, been placed in a passport and forgotten - what the Vargr has not got is a clip with the return co-ordinates!





The passports are gun-like devices [see diagram] which create a protective field around the wearer and anything or anyone he or she is holding and proceeds to phase them into the Tau energy field where, assuming they have a destination com-clip, the passport interprets the direction and force of the storm and uses the knowledge to ride out of the storm at the approximate temporal/spatial co-ordinates. Without a destination com-clip, the passports will phase the wearer into the storm and protect the wearer from the buffeting of the storm. But it cannot control where the wearer will come out - this is exactly the same function that the emergency activate buttons perform with the advantage that it will phase out within one combat round unlike the activate button for the psychic tracer which takes 1-6 combat rounds. In order for the unit to work the passport has to be attached to a living creature so that its telemetry sensors are in contact with the body, if the unit is not deactivated (this is done by removing the 'activate button' circuit before removing the unit), then 1-6 combat rounds after the sensors are removed from the wearer the passport will create a shield around itself and automatically activate its emergency circuits and phase out, (if the unit is being held when it phases out the unit will take the person's fingers with it while leaving the rest of the body behind) that unit is now considered lost and may turn up anywhere and anywhen in a deactivated form. At the base of the unit is a tracer signal unit which leaves a psychic trail for the T-Matt to trace. The passports weigh about 0.5kg. It should be noted that nexus do appear naturally throughout the Multiverse.

Note that the tracer can be used as a location of other activated passports in the same space-time location.

**TIME TRAVEL Referees Only**

The arrival of a person from another time period results in the introduction of a potential catalyst in world history that is capable either consciously or unconsciously, of changing the flow of history. History is changeable and the arrival of someone into a time period does not mean that the person was required to be there to complete historical reality. Nature automatically protects itself and so minor changes to history are like plucking at a rubberband, in that the 'natural' flow of history will reassert itself the further in time you go. As a general rule, the effect of any one person on history is minor and will usually be fulfilled by someone else if that person's influence is removed . . . This means, in general, that the removal of an individual (unless that person was of a major impact on that

period) will not affect history too much as individuals who would have come through that line will, because of the racial gene pool, still be born although to someone else and perhaps later than in the previous 'reality'. This does not mean that the removal of major historical characters or their direct family or any sort of interference with the same will not result in major changes in history, it generally will. Joe Smith of no particular importance may be influenced or removed by travellers with little or no effect but even minor interference with a character like Lincoln or Hitler or their parents and family could result in major upheaval. It should also be noted that the introduction of advanced technology into the past may also affect the flow of history and so should be avoided even to the extent of limiting the players from taking any equipment bar the passports that could not be normally found in that period.

**VICTORIAN LONDON Referee's Discretion**  
Note; it is up to each referee to decide just how much information on Victorian London and the style of living would still exist on record.



The Victorian era was an essential period of history in that it was a transition period leading to the early technological advances upon which we rely so heavily. The British Empire was at its height and the average Briton knew this was not only the proper way of things but also that it would go on forever. The suffering of the poor and the excesses of the rich would eventually be curbed and the British way would continue to progress towards the inevitable conclusion of Victorian thinking - Utopia built upon a foundation of British ideals.

The Empire was, with a few rare intrusions by royalty, in the hands of the Government and the politicians. Victoria had been on the throne for almost fifty years, and was revered and loved because to many she was Britain. God and science, in the minds of the people, had yet to come in conflict with each other, electric light had begun to be installed in London streets, the first tube of underground railway had opened, radio had been invented and the first automobiles were making their hesitant advance into society. Life for most was good yet within the city itself was a dark

cancer.

In the dim-lit, fog-strewn streets of London the poor lived in cramped filthy living conditions, thousands were forced to live rough in the streets, dying of disease or malnutrition, their only 'pleasures' were drink, violence and sex - all of which they did to excess. All that was left for many was to sell their bodies just to live. The other classes were dimly aware of the plight of the poor under them but dismissed it as their own fault, their lack of virtues, lack of desire to work etc . . . Transport through London was by railway or Hansom cab a fast, uncomfortable two seater carriage of which 7,000 roamed London. Four seaters known as 'growlers' or 'Clarences' also frequented the city and telephones were becoming quite common among the higher classes. Telegrams like letters had 11 deliveries a day (they cost 6d for first 12 words and 1/2d per additional word) and solved the Victorian need for world-wide communications. Clothes for the men were sombre black or grey with white shirts and ties, hats were frequently worn. Women's clothing was much more colourful with long skirts (with the occasional, scandalous glimpse of ankle), bustles were starting to become less popular. Hats of all shapes and sizes were universal. The poor of Whitechapel had to make do with whatever they could make, beg, steal, or borrow although dress lengths remained conservative. The police or 'bobby' was very much in evidence throughout London and the use of a firearm openly would automatically result in police presence, though due to their low pay and bad work conditions they were frequently bribable.

**Price List**

meal . . . . .	1 s - 3s
mug of beer . . . . .	2 1/2d
glass of whiskey . . . . .	3d
suit of clothes . . . . .	25s+
boots . . . . .	21s
Hotel lodging . . . . .	5s - 20s
hostel . . . . . (double bed)	8d
hostel . . . . . (single)	4d
rope lean-to . . . . .	2d
hansom cab fare (1 hr, 4 mile radius)	
. . . . .	1s - 2s 6d
omnibus fare . . . . .	3d (1d -6d)
London guidebook . . . . .	2s
Underground fare . . . . .	2d
postage . . . . .	1d
revolver . . . . .	£5 10s
100 bullets . . . . .	11s 6d
rapier . . . . .	£1 2s

**"To Boldly Go . . ."**

The characters, dressed in period clothing, armed with whatever knowledge of Victorian London that the referee has given them are handed passports and shown how they work, they are fitted with destination clips and handed return clips and hypo-guns.

**Hypo Gun/wrist Hypo**

Gas powered needle gun (body pistol skill) that is attached to the wrist and resembles a fine steel bracelet except it fires a 10mm needle at high velocity using a small canister of compressed gas (10 shots) and uses dissolvable needles to inject a sleep drug - the trigger is found on the side and the whole operation is completely silent. There is a chance (12 on 2D6) that a victim will be allergic to the drug and die. Drug does 2d-6d) stun damage.



**Range Matrix**

Close	Short	Med	Long	V/Long	wound
+3	+2	-3	no	no	1d6*

\*needle damage only

**Weapons Matrix**

nothing	jack	mesh	cloth
+1	0	-1	-4

As you activate the passport attached to your wrist you feel numb all over your body then a few seconds later the sight of the scientists and laboratory start to fade to be replaced by a whirling claustrophobic kaleidoscope of colour and sound. A gentle buffeting echoes through your body which itself begins to fade and before your eyes you start to see a vague outline of a large building which clarifies into a street.

You are standing in a doorway of a terraced house, it is a moonless night, pitch black except for a single gas light at the end of the street and the light of a lantern over by the warehouse wall opposite, beside a stable gate where a small crowd has collected. The Vargr is nowhere in sight so you and the rest of the team cross the road to the crowd where you see a police officer bending over a corpse of a girl that has had her throat cut right back to the spine and she has obviously been stabbed many times in the stomach. Blood is everywhere and the people are busy speculating as to who could have done such a monstrous deed when you spot a small amulet lying in the gutter which you manage to pick up. One of the team recognises as a symbol of the Vargr Goddess, KnithnGheu, protector of purity . . . A vague memory enters your mind unbidden as you look back at the corpse - could this Vargr be . . . Jack the Ripper?

**(Referees Only) THE VARGR'S AND COL SIR WILLIAM DAVID-ASTOR'S STORY**

The Vargr-Gvoudzie, age 42 UPP 6B5899 Unarmed Cbt 3, Blade, 2, Medic 4, computer 3, bribe 1, forgery 1

Gvoudzie, an ex-scout who was cashiered a month previously for theft had become addicted to *Yag* (Hyperdexamine) while in the service and had been unable to locate any since has been forced to go through a painful and mind-distorting withdrawal made worse by the communication barrier that he only speaks Knithnour, Gvegh-Aek, and high Vilani.

Always religious, his mind as it became more and more unbalanced began to dwell on the more unsavoury side of his Goddess, KnithnGheu and particularly the old worship of female sacrifice and preparation. He used up his last dose of *Yag* and used his drug-reinforced ego to plan his break-in of the nearest Government installation - the Temperal Research Foundation, intending to steal anything he could sell on the blackmarket. He managed to get into the building but succeeded in activating an alarm that alerted the guards. The frustration of being caught finally sent him over the edge and he savagely attacked the guards activating the T-Matt accidentally in the process, as the guards lie, bleeding and torn, he grabbed a passport and pushing it into his pocket for safe keeping he accidentally pressed the activate button and to his mind's final horror he was catapulted back to Victorian London, early Friday morning,

the 31st of August 1888. His only possession apart from his jacket of cloth armour and the passport which he has accidentally jammed is a long thin blade. He is trapped in an unknown past.

**(Referee's Discretion)****PLOT DEVELOPMENT**

Is Gvoudzie the Ripper or merely someone caught up in the hysteria of the period? If the referee doesn't want him to be the Ripper then he would be forced to steal to live and would have to avoid the police and the street patrols, living in the sewers. The adventurers may then have to deal with both the real Ripper and the Vargr. If he is the Ripper then he will be sacrificing female 'animals' to the Goddess and 'preparing' the bodies so that they are acceptable to her. He may also be killing males but removing the bodies of his hideaway where he will devour their bodies. A combination of any of these possible scenarios may be used if desired as there is a theory that the Ripper was actually two different people.

**Facts on the Ripper**

Male, left handed, believed to be sexually frustrated, was responsible for the murder of at least six prostitutes over the period of August to November 1888. He was never apprehended by the police. He obviously had some medical knowledge, it is also possible that he was a Mason and that the ritualistic killings was to cover-up an indiscretion on the part of Victoria's son, the Duke of Clarence which may have resulted in an illegitimate child. [Read *Jack the Ripper: the Final Solution* by Stephen Knight.]

Col Sir William David-Astor  
38 UPP CBB7AA ex-Bengal Lancers  
(medical discharge - damaged left leg when his horse fell on him)  
Tactics 1, Admin 2, Sword 2, Leader 3,  
Rifle 2, Brawling 2, Gambling 1

2AM Monday the 3rd of September - While returning from the opera to his house on the edge of Whitechapel he noticed that his window had been broken and fearing a robbery he rushed to the door. As he entered the hall he heard his brother Philip (18) cry out in pain and rushed up to his brother's room grabbing his revolver as he went, he battered the door open and saw a wolf-like creature, dressed in a black cloak and standing on its hind legs savaging the mutilated remains of his brother. Horrified, he fired his revolver again and again at this sinister being with apparently no effect (the bullets were fired at the torso which was protected by the Cloth armour) and in shock he saw the werewolf (for what else could it be?) wrap the bloody sheets around the remains of his brother and escape through the window. After Sir William had stopped being violently sick he rushed out and got a policeman but after examining the room (minute blood traces only), and hearing his story which sounded like the ravings of a deranged mind they dismissed it and went back to working on the horrific murder of Annie Chapman by what the press were beginning to call Jack the Ripper. Sir William swore vengeance on the werewolf and next morning had his sword stick's blade coated in silver as well as getting silver bullets made for his revolver. Each night he hunts through Whitechapel searching for the supernatural creature, his dark, suntanned face, bristling black beard and wild eyes, dressed as he is

in a dark cloak and deerstalker will, over the next couple of months, become a familiar sight in the fog-filled streets as he searches for his brother's murderer.

**The 'Peelers'**

From the 10th of September a reward of £500 will be offered by the MP Samuel Montague for the capture of the Ripper but throughout October the police will be searching for (and eventually apprehending) a John Pizer, nick-named 'Leather Apron' who they believe to be the Ripper but who will prove to be innocent. Lt Col Sir Henry Smith of the City police has since August sent a third of his force in plain clothes into the city and from the 30th of September Inspector Abberline, a soft-spoken, rather portly bank manager-like person, will be scouring the East End with his unparalleled knowledge of Whitechapel searching for anything out of the ordinary, anything that could give a clue as to the identity of the Ripper. Assisting him are three inspectors, Reid, Moore and Nairn and four sergeants, Thicke (called 'Johnny Upright' because of his walk and his method of working), Godley, McCathy and Pearce who can all be brought into play with our mysterious team and with Sir William.

**THE RIPPER'S VICTIMS**

**Polly Nichols**, 45(?) 4AM Friday the 31st of August. Buck's Row. Throat cut, abdomen stabbed several times.

**Annie Chapman** (*Siffey*) 45, 5' tall, small woman with dark brown, wavy hair, blue eyes, large nose and with 2 teeth missing from lower jaw - she had obviously seen better days. 6AM Saturday the 6th of September. The back of a lodging house at Hanbury Street (No 29) in a yard which has an unlocked passage leading to it.

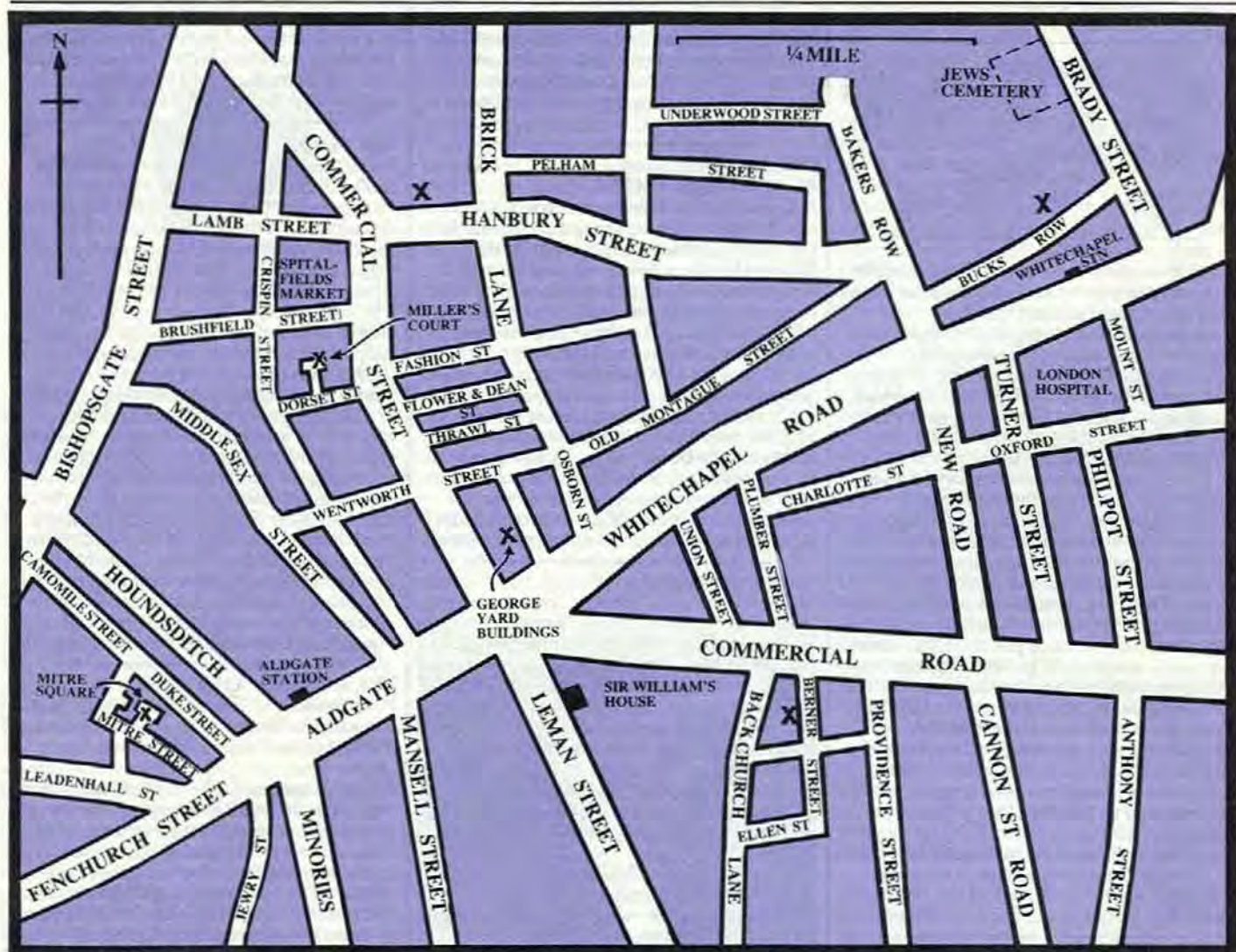
When found she was face up, palms outstretched with both face and hands covered in blood. As Annie Chapman, but more violently. Her personal belongings such as money had been laid at both the feet and above the head.

**Elizabeth** (*Long Liz*) **Stride** 40(?) 1AM Sunday the 30th of September. In a narrow court off Berner Street beside an occupied Working Man's Club (where people were still partying it up) behind some wicker gates. She was lying on the ground with a blood covered right hand covering her chest, her face was quite placid with the mouth slightly open, her throat had been severed but there had been no abdominal wounding.

**Catherine Eddowes** (?) 1.30AM Sunday the 30th of September, in Mitre Square in the city proper surrounded on 2 sides by warehouses belonging to 'Kearley & Tonge' (watchman in attendance), on the 3rd side by three empty houses and on the last before the corpse were 2 houses one occupied by a policeman and the other was empty. A policeman patrolled the Square every quarter of an hour and discovered the body at 1.45.

Her throat had been cut in the now familiar pattern and had been badly mutilated. Part of her blood-stained apron had been cut away and was later found at Goulston Street where a message was written in chalk on the wall '*the juwes are not the men that will be blamed for nothing*' (this was the middle of the Jewish sector of London and





The crosses mark the sites of the Ripper murders

may have nothing to do with the actual murder or could be a clue pointing to the Masons).

**Mary Jane Kelly** (24) 3.30AM Thursday the 9th of November. Room 13 (a back parlour had been partitioned off and with its own front door) No 26 Dorset Street, - first door on the right in Millers Court.

Mary was 3 months pregnant when she was killed by someone who either had a key (which had been lost earlier) or else knew about the broken pane of glass which allowed a person to reach through and open the door. This was perhaps the most bloody of all the murders. Her clothes and other items had been burned in the fireplace.

This was the last murder directly blamed on the Ripper although there were others years later that were similar in many details. The first murder directly blamed on the Ripper was completely different to all the later murders in that Martha Tabram was stabbed 39 times in the stomach on the first floor landing of the George Yard Buildings at 3AM on Tuesday the 7th of August but no other mutilations were done to the corpse despite the fact that nobody was around. It is highly possible that this murder was actually done by a different person, not the Ripper.

#### TIME TABLE OF POSSIBLE EVENTS

**31st August:** Arrival of the Vargr and the killing of Polly Nichols, while fleeing to safety (assuming that he is the Ripper) he

drops an amulet. The arrival of the adventurers at the scene of the crime they now need to obtain money and lodgings by some means.

**3rd September:** Sir William David-Astor witnesses the death of his brother by what he believes to be a werewolf - the event turns his mind and he sets out on a vendetta to avenge his brother's death - from this night on he can be encountered by the adventurers while roaming the streets of Whitechapel - he wants to kill the werewolf and will be suspicious of anyone who also appears to be supernatural though if approached properly he will help by providing lodgings, knowledge of local conditions and provide funds.

**6th September:** Annie Chapman is murdered, Sir David-Astor will be the first on the scene (as will the adventurers if they have joined forces with him, otherwise they will encounter Sir David-Astor bent over the corpse and the inertial locator built into their passports which they were using to track the signal from the Vargr's passport to this location has suddenly gone silent). If the adventurers or Sir William are still at the scene of the crime after 20 minutes the police will arrive and they will proceed to ask a lot of awkward questions. If on the other hand the adventurers have joined forces with Sir William then they will be spotted fleeing the scene of the crime by a passerby.

**10th September:** A reward of £500 will be offered by Samuel Montague for the capture of the Ripper. Any strange behaviour

by the adventurers will result in someone reporting them to the police as part of their routine enquiries. If the adventurers are staying with Sir William, they will be interviewed by Inspector Abberline. Otherwise they will be stopped in the street by Sergeant 'Johnny Upright' Thicke.

**22nd September:** The adventurers will have traced the Vargr's passport to a drain beneath the streets of Whitechapel. If the adventurers investigate, they will find a smashed passport lying on the narrow shelf of a sewer, still giving out a signal. Beside it floating in the water, is a corpse (closer investigation will reveal it to be the decayed carcass of a pig from the market above).

**30th September:** The murder of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes. If the adventurers are still free, and roaming the streets at night, they will spot the Vargr entering the sewer near Mitre Square. Should they follow him, they will find themselves led to an old crypt, entered by a decaying tunnel from the sewer. Here they will find the corpses of males who have vanished over the month and the Vargr awaiting them, armed with a scalpel. The fight is on.

The murder of Mary Jane Kelly was committed by an agent of the Duke of Clarence after she became pregnant. This was done in a prevailing atmosphere of murder to cover up his own indiscretions. This murder would only be committed by the Vargr if he escapes. There is a chance (12 on 2d6) that the murder of any local inhabitant of that period by the adventurers will result in a



change in the future, and they will be unable to return to the moment of departure, and must roam through time.

**Victorian Atmosphere**

In order to stretch your adventure out over the period needed by this scenario, great emphasis should be made of conditions at that time, the claustrophobic streets full of beggars, urchins and thieves. The difficulty of obtaining money with jobs being low paid and long hours and the hard, exhausting working conditions, the differences in language and dialect (I gave my adventurers only a 35% chance of understanding Victorian English which I increased by 2% each day). The sexual restrictiveness which would cause female adventurers to stand out like a sore thumb amid the inhibited women of that time or identified as 'ladies of the night' The ever present weather; the infamous London fog that invaded all corners of the landscape, muffling noise, hiding death, creating fear and suspense. Certain cameos may be inserted into the scenario in order to provide red herrings or needed help.

If the characters are unable to find (or steal - note that the inhabitants of Whitechapel were very aware of robbers and dealt with those who stole from amid the poor inhabitants painfully and often permanently) money for food, one of them will be offered employment selling onions at Billingsgate to the fishermen (½d each) with everything made over a shilling being his own. Despite trekking for hours amid the milling crowds, and being pushed around he still has only made 4d when a beggar lying nearby will spot him and offer to take him to Blind Harry, king of the beggars where according to the beggar he would be taught how to beg, given food and a place to sleep in return for ten percent of whatever the character would make as a beggar - the offer sounds attractive and helpful. The beggar then proceeds to hobble down a dark alley towards an old house signalling all the time for the character to follow him. If the character does, he will find himself in a dark dead-end alley surrounded by six beggars armed with knives who want his clothing and any valuables (including his passport if he has it on him) or they'll cut him up bad . . . there is no way to escape except by going through them and they look spoiling for a fight.

Another way of supplying food and shelter is to allow them to fall in with one of the persecuted religious groups of that time, particularly if they are 'unusual' for that time (one of the characters in my game was of Arab-Negro extraction while another was a Vilani descendant from the blue-skinned Rmoahal race of lost Lemuria) and are rejected by the society. I used the Mormons to provide shelter and free food since at that point of time there were more Mormon converts in Britain than in America (over 15000) and not only had suffered religious persecution for the last fifty years but were prepared and due to the mass exodus to the salt lake basins had centres for the care of refugees in all the major seaports in Britain . . . The characters could be invited to partake of a free meal and to join them in service (if they refuse the service they will still be offered a free meal and a bed) as the meeting is about to begin the sound of a mob will be heard outside followed by stones being thrown through the windows glass cutting the faces of the chil-

dren and women sheltering by the pulpit the crowd will then force the doors finally breaking them open and crushing a young Mormon Elder behind one of the doors. This will quieten the crowd down somewhat and attract the police who will investigate the crime and everyone involved including the Adventurers who will have to provide some evidence of identity and will be remembered by the police if they are detained again.

**Weather Table**

(throw twice a day to indicate how the weather will progress throughout the day)

2	heavy rain
3	heavy rain
4	heavy rain
5	light rain
6	light rain
7	fog (heavy) visibility down to 1d10m
8	fog
9	fog visibility down to 1d10m
10	dull/overcast
11	dull/overcast
12	fine/clear skies

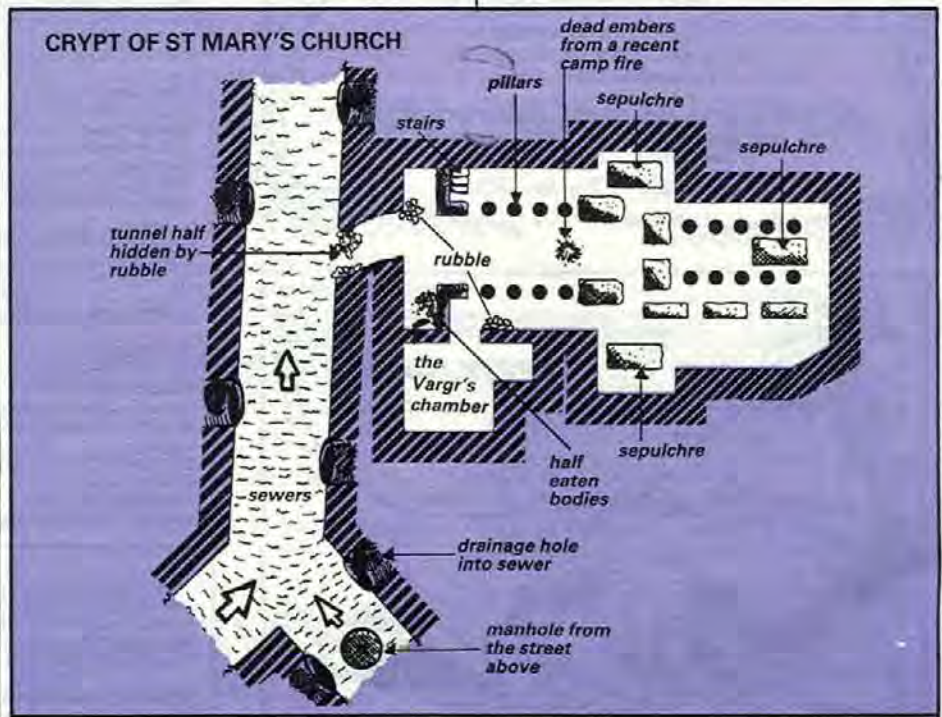
**Final Notes**

Some amusing problems arose for my own group while playing this scenario. After the team had arrived in Victorian England they found their passports (due to the inertial locators) pinging away because they were all switched on thus effectively blocking any signal that might come from the stolen passports, and also to avoid causing anymore attention to be focused on them, it was decided to switch off all but one of their own passports and hide them away out of sight.

This would have worked perfectly, allowing them to track the Vargr, except one of them failed to remember how to deactivate his and placed it inside his cloak where it proceeded to activate and warped out taking with it a large hole in both. Later after a couple of days without food or lodgings and with a few failed attempts to steal they witnessed an urchin trying to steal from a merchant. They decided to try and con the merchant into believing they were

police, taking him for 'questioning' and rob him up a dark alley only to find their language difficulties leading to the merchant becoming suspicious and creating a hue and cry leading to them fleeing through the streets being chased by a large hostile crowd, unable to fight for fear of hurting one and thus changing their own time.

The fog was used to great advantage when two members of the team found themselves separated amid the fog-haunted streets and discovered that their locators started to ping away revealing what they thought was the insane and homicidal Vargr to be at the end of the street around a corner - it turned out to be each other. They both sighed relief until one switched his off only to be find that the locator was still pinging away revealing the signal coming from within a dark passage beside an old dog food shop at 29 Hanbury Street. Go out of your way to establish the sense of fear and you will be richly rewarded as I discovered when the characters finally went after Vargr down at the dank, wet filth covered sewers and found their torch being knocked into the water by a fleeing rat - trapped in a totally dark tunnel having to feel there way about with a killer ahead, or perhaps stalking them, what was that sound behind? An emptying drain or the Vargr? What was the heavy burden at their feet, wood or human bones? And that sudden noise from the corner, that sudden flash of light glinting of something, could it be a knife held ready to strike? As the referee you decide . . . imagination or death? If the Vargr is killed it is important that the adventurers either return with the body or else completely destroy it, else there is a chance that someone might find the corpse, deduce from the skeleton that alien life exists and has visited Earth thus changing history on the other hand if the modified hands and the feet are destroyed it might to the non-expert be merely the skeleton of a dog or wolf, but can the adventurer dare to take that risk? This adventure is only a stepping stone to greater and more spectacular journeys through space and time . . . good luck with future travels and time paradoxes. □







Too late Myorn saw the G-Scout speed above his head, a blurred flash of black; he dived into cover as he saw the gauss bullets kick the dirt behind his feet. Rolling over, he shook off his Carl-3 man-portable tac missile system, professional panic adding speed to his careful movements. Feverishly aiming the device, he tried not to think of the other members of his squad, or the bullets ploughing into the dust less than a metre away. Taking careful aim at the ugly vargr claw, he clenched his muscles into a bracing position, and tightened his finger...

This article is a follow-up to Andy Slack's excellent essay on vehicle combat for *Traveller* (WD43), and makes further suggestions as to anti-vehicle security devices, and also proposes a vehicle damage system.

## VEHICLE SECURITY SYSTEMS

### Multibeam Security System

First introduced at tech level 8, this device occupies hardly any room and uses about 5% of the vehicle's power in the more primitive models. Although possessing large ranges, power input increases proportionately with range, and the chances of false alarms.

As the system is based on a microwave emission system, jamming is difficult, although detection is possible. Even non-metallic items break the sphere of microwaves and thus trigger the alarm, although the equipment can be programmed to selectively ignore small items.

The system is also vulnerable to 'chaff': layers of foil that can trigger the system into believing that an enormous number of enemy objects are coming its way; this system may also be rendered inoperable by ECM, leaving its complacent crew to discover the fact too late, although some systems sound an alarm when such bugging occurs.

The system comprises a small radome mounted on the vehicle, and a small instrument panel at the controls of the craft with audio and visual warnings.

<b>Price:</b>	Cr20,000
<b>Tech level:</b>	8
<b>Requires:</b>	Elec-2 and Mechan-2 to install
<b>Range:</b>	Variable—0 to the horizon. Power use increases at longer ranges
<b>Weight:</b>	15kg
<b>Volume:</b>	0.15m <sup>3</sup> inside, 1m <sup>3</sup> outside

# ARMS AND THE MAN

Or, How to Kill Vehicles (And Stop Your Vehicle From Being Killed) by Michael Holman

### Automatic Evasive Manoeuvre Program

This computer program has two settings — automatic and manual. For the program to operate automatically, it requires a multibeam security system. When the program is set in motion it automatically (unless manually overridden) places the craft in a series of evasive manoeuvres. At lower tech levels these are preordained; at higher levels the program is able to evaluate the threat and pick the best course to avoid it. The program operates differently in each class of vehicle and is more effective in some than others. For example, a tech level 8 tank would only be able to make a limited series of manoeuvres, while a G-Scout could drop out of the sky, vector in forward flight (VIFF), even (with higher tech programs) dive underwater. A driver's vehicle is not counted as a negative 'to hit' DM when this system is operative.

<b>Price:</b>	Cr50,000
<b>Tech level:</b>	8
<b>Requires:</b>	Elec-0 and Mechan-1 to install
<b>Weight:</b>	5kg
<b>Volume:</b>	0.25m <sup>3</sup>

Negative 'to hit' DMs at referee's discretion; -1 to -4 (very rare!)

### Note on Computer Programs

The computer program of *Book 2*, although apparently ideal to convert to vehicle combat, suffer from the fact that (a) the computers are much larger and more powerful, (b) that each combat round in space combat is 1000 seconds — over 16 minutes, (c) by and large, the weaponry available is more powerful than atmospheric weaponry, and finally, (d) that all these DMs can create havoc!

### ECM Package

Electronic counter measures systems are designed to explode or divert oncoming missiles. Bulk, effectiveness and price all increase proportionately. In *Traveller* terms, an ECM device is good against all types of missiles (like the *Book 2* computer program), partly to help the GM, but also to reflect the growing complexity at higher tech levels to be able to jam circuits open or closed. The

Type	Weight	Volume	DM (to hit)
<b>Basic</b>	10kg	0.02m <sup>3</sup>	-2
<b>Extensive</b>	30kg	0.06m <sup>3</sup>	-4
<b>Price:</b>	Cr50,000 (Basic), 200,000 (Extensive)		
<b>Tech level:</b>	7+		
<b>Requires:</b>	Mechan-1 and Elec-2 to install		

prices remain, therefore, fairly constant, although DMs against incoming missiles of a different tech level to the vehicle are reduced to one for each tech level by which the missile exceeds its target, to a minimum ECM value of zero. ECM weapon pods will cover most angles.

### Lasar Sensory Device

An all-over array of sensors that check for small heat patches on the skin of the craft, that indicates either laser fire or laser targeting; reactive procedures (evasion or dispensing anti-laser aerosols, chaff, etc) can then be taken. Introductory tech-level is 8, and the system can be linked to an ECM package, dispensing devices (see below), and/or an automatic evasion manoeuvre program.

<b>Price:</b>	Cr38,000
<b>Tech level:</b>	8+
<b>Requires:</b>	Elec-2 and Mechan-2 to install
<b>Weight:</b>	200kg
<b>Volume:</b>	0.2m <sup>3</sup>

The die roll to detect incoming laser beams is 8+ at introductory tech level, modified by -1 for each subsequent tech level, to a maximum of 2+ at tech level 14+.

### Chilled Exhaust

Reducing the effectiveness of incoming IR missiles, a chilled exhaust costs Cr500 to install, requires periodic maintenance and may be vulnerable. It requires Mechan-1 to install and is considered to be included in engine and chassis weight and volume.

### Dispensing Devices

Either manually or automatically controlled, such devices fire small 'grenades' of IR attracting heat flares, anti-laser aerosol, smoke, chaff or anti-personnel variety. Each dispenser weighs 2kg empty and has a four round capacity. Each bomblet weighs the same as a hand grenade (1kg), and costs Cr20. The anti-personnel round should be considered to cause 10d hits, use the additional effects for HE, and has a 10+ chance of hitting any given target exactly. Because they are outside the

<b>Price:</b>	Cr100 (dispenser), Cr20 per bomblet)
<b>Tech level:</b>	7
<b>Weight:</b>	2kg/1kg
<b>Volume:</b>	0.002m <sup>3</sup> (per loaded launcher) outside the vehicle
<b>Requires:</b>	Mechan-1 for Installation



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vehicle, they are vulnerable to small arms fire, and on some occasions, at lower tech levels especially, the resulting pyrotechnics might destroy the vehicle.

### OFFENSIVE SYSTEMS

#### Gunnery Computer

Accurately gauging the range, elevation, expected evasions, selecting the ammunition type, etc, the gunnery computer interfaces with the human gunner, allowing him only to pick the target and press the button, unless overridden. For practical purposes, the computer is considered a retarded Model 1-fib, able to resist radiation damage. It has a CPU of 1, no storage capacity, and may not run other programs. It must also be programmed to the individual vehicle, its weapons type and ammunition used, etc, and cannot be removed and placed in a completely different vehicle.

**Price:** Cr100,000

**Tech level:** 8

**Positive DM:** +1 to +3 to hit (depending on tech level, etc)

**Requires:** Mechan-1, Elec-1, Gunnery-1 and Computer-1 to install

**Weight:** 10kg

#### Missiles

Missiles are constructed according to *Striker, Book 3*, yet may have added characteristics.

#### Decoy Missiles

Occupying 1kg of the missile's weight, and costing Cr100, this package automatically discards aluminium foil and magnesium flares along its flight path, confusing anti-missile weaponry, yet making its presence obvious. Operator guided missiles can be ordered to jettison bits and pieces when required by the operator. Introduced at tech level 8.

#### MITV

Multiple Independently Targeted Vehicles; one vehicle carries a multitude of warheads, usually with a small amount of propellant. The main missile goes most of the way before splitting up, allowing the individual warheads (usually 5) to home in on a designated target, often releasing chaff at the same time. Obviously only large missiles are going to have the option of carrying MITV, and general expense prohibits widespread use. Each independent warhead should be constructed as a missile separate to the carrying missile. The carrying missile must be operator guided or teleguided, and the warheads must have homing, target designated or target memory guidance systems.

#### Extensible Package Launcher

The inspiration for this device came from Middenface McNulty, a character in the comic *2000AD*, who has a package launcher which extends telescopically at either end. Thus it can be carried with a smaller volume, only being extended when required for firing. This adaptation doubles the cost of a package launcher, but halves its volume and weight.

#### FAE/FAX

Fuel Air Explosive has a detonation force

of from 2 to 8 times a similar amount of conventional high explosive, although it tends to be used as an area weapon, dropped as bombs or high calibre artillery rounds. When dropped, a cloud of fuel is released, evaporating before being detonated soon afterwards. Consider an FAE warhead to be available at tech level 7, having a  $\times 5$  increase over conventional high explosive (at that level). Increase this multiple by one for each additional tech level of manufacture (max  $\times 8$ ). Warheads cost the same amount as flechette rounds and have the same 'danger space' outside the initial burst size, which is calculated as  $10 \times \text{bore} \times \text{tech level multiplier}$ .

**Note.** Masochistic GMs may like to combine missiles, ECM and auto/evade programs, however, the DMs are overwhelming!

#### Carl-3 Man-Portable Tac Missile System

In a package (disposable) launcher, the Carl-3 is a manportable anti-vehicle assault system. It contains 2 HEAP missiles, one homing, one an IR follow-up missile.

The Carl-3 consists of two tubes, one on top of the other, with a shoulder brace and two handles, the trigger being on the front one. A sling is provided to carry the device. The second missile is pre-set by the operator to fire 5-10 seconds after the first, adding to the general destruction. Only rudimentary sights are supplied (and needed).

**Price:** 1083

**Tech level:** 7-15

**Weight:** 12kg

**Maximum Range:** 1km  
Package launcher, two tubes, HEAP missiles, 10cm calibre

The second missile automatically hits or misses, depending on what the first did. Treat both missiles as one.

**Damage:** (both hit) 4d6

**On:** 8+ vehicle disabled; 11+ vehicle destroyed; 1-6D6 damage to survivors; 16+ vehicle instantly destroyed, no survivors.

### VEHICLE COMBAT PROCEDURE

Throw 8+ to hit

DMs: Tech level difference between missile and target (+/-) ECM; basic (-2), extensive (-4)

Skills: Gun Combat/Heavy Weapons/FA Gunnery

Vehicle (if evading). Requires a Multibeam Security to know that the vehicle is under attack.

Automatic Evasive Manoeuvre Program (in which case vehicle expertise is not counted); DM/ to hit +1 to -4.

Confusion caused by dispensing devices: GM's option.

#### Determining Vehicle Damage

1. Determine from these DMs the likelihood of a hit, and then roll for it. Additional DMs may be imposed for situations such as weather, flying, etc, at the referee's discretion.

2. Four classes of damage have now been introduced: *damage, disable, destroy* and *destroy instantly*, although the three classes of vehicle armour –

softskin, light armour and heavy armour – remain as before.

Any single attack by non-small arms fire rolls 2d6; on 6+ the vehicle is damaged; on 8+ disabled; on 11+ destroyed, and on 16+ destroyed instantly. DMs of +2 on a lightly armoured vehicle and +4 on a softskin vehicle are applied.

The referee should draw up a damage location table for the vehicle that has been hit, from the five different angles of attack – deck, belly, front, rear and sides. An extended example is provided below.

#### Effect On Vehicle Features

**Lights.** A hit on the lights indicates that these have been destroyed. A further hit on this location smashes other exterior features. A disabling shot will have smashed an essential exterior item: tracks, grav generator, etc. A destroying shot will have simply smashed a large hole in the hull, writing the vehicle off.

**Visor.** A hit on the visor smashes the windscreen or viewing equipment. A non-disabling shot means that the windscreen or whatever, shatters, but can still be seen through, although with some difficulty. A disabling shot smashes the windscreen, depressurising the vehicle and not allowing subsequent re-pressurising. A destroying shot destroys the hull in the area of the visor and causes internal damage.

**Door/Hatch.** The door or hatch is unusable, and no entry or exit can be made through it. A disabling shot removes the door and does not allow repressurisation. A destroying shot smashes the door and crew.

**Motor.** A damaging shot on the engine reduces the craft to half speed. A disabling shot cuts an important bit, making movement impossible. A destroying shot moves the engine into the crew compartment.

**Fuel.** A damaging shot causes half the fuel to be lost; successive shots will remove a further half. A disabling shot either removes most of the fuel or causes a contained fire in the fuel tank; either way, the fuel is lost. A destroying shot ignites the fuel explosively. In any case, roll 8+ for non-fusion fuel to explode and move damage up one progression.

**Electronics.** One system has been damaged, choose from fire control (half operational capacity), communications, computer, radar, laser sensors or anything else that might be carried. A disabling shot shuts down all electrical operations – fire control will be counted as tech 5 for *Striker* purposes. A destroying shot will smash the battery and cut off all electrical systems immediately, including life support, making all electrical systems just expensive scrap.

**Suspension.** A damage result will allow a ground vehicle and grav vehicle to proceed at a maximum of half top speed, the journey being very uncomfortable in addition. A disabling shot will immobilise a vehicle, although a grav craft is capable of vertical movement only. A destroying shot will move the belly of the vehicle up into its deck.





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reach their vacc suits, if carried, and they succeed on rolling under their dexterity, with an additional DM of vacc suits kill  $\times 2$ . Life support systems are capable of six repressurisations.

### Point Defence Fire

Point defence weaponry consists of a powerful computer, target acquisition radar and a small weapon to destroy incoming missiles, rockets and grenades. Often, rapid firing machine guns, lasers, plasma or fusion weapons are used, and because of their advanced computer such systems receive a positive DM of 2-4 when used in direct fire mode (due to the larger target size).

For Traveller purposes, use the point defence system (which may be linked to its own DMs) once a projectile has been determined as having achieved its 'to hit' roll (see *Vehicle Combat*). For a point defence weapon, the basic 'to hit' roll is 8+. Plasma and fusion weapons each have a burst radius and therefore have a +2 'to hit' bonus. Lasers and machine guns receive a -2 'to hit' penalty. The tech level of the controlling system now operates: at tech level 7, one chance 'to hit' is allowed per round, increased by one for each further tech level by which the fire control equipment advances. (Remember that fusion and plasma weapons are automatically spotted.)

### Small Arms Damage

For every 24 hits inflicted on the vehicle, throw on the table; although certain results cannot be affected by small arms fire. Additionally small arms fire against lightly armoured vehicles must throw 9+ to be effective, against heavy armour, 12. No DMs are allowed for this roll, except a -1 if HE bullets are used.

### Progression Of Damage

Small arms damage of over 24 hits and major weaponry hits that do not cause disabling or destroying hits have caused damaging hits, resulting in non-disabling inconveniences. The damage progression now is: *damage, disable, destroy and destroy instantly*.

A *damage* result is taken from small arms fire of 24 hits over or damage hits of 7 or less from a grenade or other explosive weapon hit.

A *disable* result occurs when a damage hit of 8+ is incurred.

A *destroy* result occurs when a damage hit of 11+ is inflicted, 1-6d6 damage is inflicted on inferior personnel.

A *destroy instantly* result occurs when a roll of 16+ is obtained, all crew are killed.

A 'damage' hit on one attack (eg front) area that has already received such a hit escalates upwards to a disable hit. Likewise a further disabling hit (but not a damaging hit) will give a destroy hit. Only another destroy hit will create a destroy instantly hit. Thus small arms fire and sustained hits cause more damage as they escalate. So, small arms fire against the G-Scout example on the front angle of attack might cause a damaging shot to 'lights' on the first combat round, a disabling shot to the visor on the second and a disabling shot to all other targets.

An example of a target table is provided below for a tech 10 G-Scout.

FRONT	SIDE	REAR	DECK	BELLY
1 Lights	Lights	Fus:	Lights	Lights
2 Visor	Ammunition	Crew	Weapon	Suspension
3 Motor	Fuel	Lights	Door/ Hatch	Power Plant
4 Power Plant	Power Plant	Door/ Hatch	Visor	Motor
5 Electronics	Motor	Weapon	Crew	Transmission
6 Breach	Breach	Breach	Breach	Breach

### Checklist

1. Has shot hit? (8+ DMs + gunnery, - vehicle if evading, etc).
2. Is craft *damaged/disabled/destroyed/destroyed instantly?* (see above).
3. What face was hit? (Front/Side/Rear/Deck/Belly)
4. What feature was hit? (Visor, Motor etc).
5. Read off damage depending on the type of hit sustained.

*With a shattering roar, the upper tube exploded, and Myorn saw the smooth silver missile curve upwards, homing in on the magnetic emissions of the vargr craft. He blinked in amazement as the vargr craft dropped suddenly down before curling away in a series of gut-wrenching manoeuvres. The second missile launched itself, and Myorn stood up to watch the ballet of death performed in the skies. He saw the G-Scout suddenly twist and fire flares and chaff at the missiles, but they stayed locked on to their target. With a roar, the first missile struck the rear of the craft; within seconds, its twin had followed it. The craft seemed to hang in the air for a time before spiralling downwards, only to blow up before it hit the ground. Throwing away the launcher, Myorn moved on to find the rest of his squad.*

### Sequence Of Events

Myorn fired the missile and threw an 11 on the 'to hit' roll. The tech 15 missile against the tech 10 craft gave him a +5 'to hit' DM, swiftly whittled away by the extensive ECM unit in the craft (-4 DM). Because both missiles are treated as one (Striker rule 19G) this negative DM is applied only once for both missiles. Myorn's gunnery skill (1) is added as a DM, but because the vehicle has a multi-beam security system, this automatically trips an Automatic Evasive Manoeuvre Program for a negative DM (chosen by the referee) of -3. Myorn is a scout so gets no positive modifiers for profession; the chilled exhaust fitted to the craft is useless against a missile homing in on magnetic emission. The dispensing devices, chaff and heat flares, caused momentary confusion, -2 the GM decides. The final result is an 8 - only just a hit.

On the damage table, Myorn received a 16 - the vehicle was instantly destroyed with no survivors.

As a final word, although this article tries to be definitive regarding vehicle combat, referees should feel free to alter various pieces as they see fit. As regards situation DMs, referees who possess a copy of *The Space Gamer 43* might like to apply the 'Modifiers of Environment' to any 'to hit' roll. □

### References

*Striker*  
*Double Adventure 2,*  
*2000AD*  
*The Omni Almanac*  
*White Dwarf 43*

**Transmission.** Transmission damage reduces a vehicle's speed to half; disabling it will slow it to one tenth, or, if a G-vehicle, only make it capable of vertical flight. A destroying shot tears off the bottom half of the vehicle.

**Ammunition.** If HE, HEAP or KEAPER ammunition is carried, a disabling shot will detonate all the ammunition and is counted as a destroying shot. A destroy result is treated as a destroy instantly (on 8+ for PC's vehicle). A damaging shot is counted as a disabling shot and is rolled again (additional damage to that caused by losing the ammunition).

**Crew.** Concussion damage and personal wounding may occur; a damaging shot will cause 1D of damage to each crew member, a disabling shot 1-3d of damage, and a destroying shot 1-6d.

**Breach.** The hull of the craft has been breached. A damaged craft will be lose one piece of interior electronic equipment, and take 2d6 minutes to patch up; a disabled craft may be repaired after 30 minutes of work exterior to the hull, and having lost half of all 'extra' electronic equipment carried (chosen randomly). A destroying shot will remove a large proportion of the hull. Hostile atmospheres may cause additional damage.

**Power Plant.** Damaging shots reduce power by half, with successive shots. Disabling shots stop the vehicle and the support equipment (although this will function for a further 10 minutes on emergency power reserves). Destroying shots remove the engine from the hull and leave the hull open to depressurisation.

**Weapon.** Damaging shots may (1) jam the weapon, (2) jam the turret at a fixed position, and (3) reduce the weapon's accuracy - choose randomly from these effects. A disabling shot will knock-out the weapon and give the gunner 2d hits, if in an open turret, 1d hits if enclosed. Destroying shots remove the vehicle's deck.

### Notes

When a breach occurs, a scramble to the emergency life-support equipment will commence. Dexterity or less must be rolled to grab one of the surgical masks with a small (aerosol sized) bottle of air hanging from it, and turn it on; it lasts for 30 minutes. Characters may attempt to



Starbase is a bi-monthly department devoted to Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# IMPERIAL TROOPER

by Nic Weeks

The Imperial Trooper is a highly trained and efficient fighting unit, forming an important part of the military structure of the Imperium. Effectively the 'strong arm' of the Imperium, they perform the role of the infantry as well as undertaking a number of patrol and policing duties on Imperial run planets and starports. Imperial marines and ship's troops, although being attached to the Navy, use the same equipment and techniques as the regular troops and may be considered an extension of such. Specialist units also exist, carefully and expertly trained, to enable any given body of men to cope with almost any situation on the battlefield. The policy of training units of about six men into compact and efficient teams, but to be easily capable of acting as part of a much larger company or battalion was adopted just prior to the Fourth Frontier War. This has since proved immeasurably valuable, although the training involved takes slightly longer than conventional methods. Different units include infantry (six riflemen); heavy weapons (one two-man weapon with four riflemen - each man being trained in the use of the heavy weapon assigned); sniper (six men trained with high-velocity, long-distance weapons); as well as maintenance, demolition, seeker/scout and a number of others. Selection for the Imperial Forces has, as a result, become stricter although it is

now the only type of Imperial Troop Force.

One of the most important aspects of the efficiency of the troops is the attention paid to the standard equipment with which they are issued. The trooper is kitted out in full body length mesh-cloth armour (acts as mesh +1) which allows good freedom of movement. Over this is fitted reflex-plate section armour. Less flexible but more hard wearing and durable than the normal reflex, it gives protection to the more vulnerable parts of the body (reflex +1).

Of particular note is the standard helmet, the most interesting feature of which is the Computer Assisted Visualising Unit (CAVU). This allows the wearer Graphic Display Spot Sighting (GDSS), infra-red or light intensification, Sight Zeroing Facility (SZF), and, in particular, Video Compressed Image (VCI) allowing up to a 270 degree field of view (-2 DM on stealth, surprise, etc). A small comms-unit allows medium range transmission and reception. Small tanks attached to the side of the helmet allow the user normal operation in thin, tainted or dense atmospheres (acts as combo mask) and each tank lasts for approximately 52 minutes. Spare tanks are stowed in the back pack.

Also included is a thermally heated sleeping bag, one-man cover up, shovel/axe, magnetic compass, mobile medikit, three sets of wrist locks, a one cell torch, three signal flares, knife, 20m of line, grapple and a pair of line handlocks, twenty day ration supply and cuisine pack.

Weaponry will vary, although all are trained in the use of laser weapons, conventional projectile weapons and blade weapons and carry one of each type. The laser weapon is always the foremost used with the 'slug' weapon - usually being of the 'fold away' type and stored in the back pack.

When on board ship, troopers dispense with the large power pack of the laser weapon in favour of a smaller belt-slung pack that has enough power for approximately fifteen shots. Troopers may easily recharge from power points on board the starship. A reflex-plate backplate covers the back in this situation to provide further protection.

The Imperial Guard is directly responsible for the protection of the Emperor and his family. Formed of some 200 men, 175 of whom form the Imperial Guard, the remaining 25 form the Imperial High Guard.

The Imperial Guard is carefully selected from the elite of the Imperial Troops and trains for another twelve months. They are fitted with by far the most sophisticated equipment in the Imperium. The power pack for the laser weapons they use is approximately half the size of a conventional P60 pack and carries enough power for 115 discharges. The Imperial Guard is easily recognisable by their silver reflex-plate armour (acts as reflex +2).

The Imperial High Guard is the elite of the elite. It is they who actually guard the Emperor. A sign of their position is their main weapon - a high intensity laser rifle that requires no pack (it is powered by Tyrellian crystal) and is good for nearly 50 discharges. The Imperial High Guard also carries laser pistols, laser swords and a specialised secondary weapon, a gauss rifle of enhanced ability and accuracy. The Imperial High Guard is also easily recognisable by the gold reflex-plate armour worn (reflex +2).

The troopers provide the players with a 'liaison', so to speak, with the Imperium, as well as a useful tool for the referee. Their formidable armoury and array of skills, as well as being more realistic, might also deter some players from turning entanglements with the law into a shooting match. It should be remembered that the troopers enforce Imperial law, and while the players follow that law, troopers may well come to their aid. Some of the players may even have been troopers themselves during some part of their military service.

Game details have been left deliberately vague. However, in terms of the generation of Imperial Troopers a number of guidelines should be followed.

The trooper should have a skill level of at least one in each of the following: laser weapons, a conventional projectile weapon, a blade weapon, unarmed combat and survival. Other skills may be added depending on the scenario. The UPP, in general, should be just above average but it is important that none of the characteristics give a disadvantage to any of the weapon skills.

Depending on how the troopers are used in a scenario, certain characters could be fleshed out with far greater detail. For example, a trooper who is captured and interrogated by the player characters.

The possibilities, as usual in *Traveller*, are endless, the only limit being the players' imaginations. □



# BALANCING ACT

## Why Rules and Role-Playing Don't Mix

by Mike Lewis

Playing characters with a strong emphasis on developing a three-dimensional identity is much lauded amongst 'serious' role-players. The use of realistic, long and complex rules is also considered the height of real role-playing. This attitude is strange since one directly opposes the other – role-playing is hampered by realistic rules and realistic rules leave very little room for role-playing to develop. Thus, it is hardly surprising that many people find it difficult to achieve a true and satisfying atmosphere in a game. To put this problem quite simply, the rules get in the way.

Consider the situation in a typical role-playing game. An event has just occurred which needs some form of adjudication, the rules are brought out, consulted with the correct air of reverence, dice are rolled and the outcome of the decision announced. Yet the moment this happens the atmosphere which has been carefully built up during that session, and which derives from the role-playing aspect of the game, is destroyed. The

moment a player is asked to roll a die or the GM pauses to consult the rulebook, the players are taken from their fantasy world and thrust rudely back into the real world. At this point, the whole game experience created by the interaction between GM and players ceases, and the game becomes just that – an exercise using bits of paper, dice and metal figures.

The more realism and accuracy a rules system strives to create, the more complex and detailed the rules become, the harder it is for the GM to remember all the necessary rules, and the greater the rules system intrudes into the game. One possible solution is to reduce the game system to something on the level of *Tunnels & Trolls*, or *Fighting Fantasy* – simple rules which are easily remembered and quick to play. Is *T&T* a better system than, say, *Chivalry & Sorcery*? No, they are both very unrealistic, as they both attempt to quantify human characteristics and abilities in terms of dice rolls.

Surely, the best method of

gaming then, is to have no rules system. Nothing would interfere with the players' enjoyment of the game and the GM would be saved a lot of time and trouble (not to mention money!) over the rules. The GM makes decisions based on a 'free kriegspiel' system – basing the outcome of any action upon his judgement of an appropriate result and his world view – an ideal solution, easy to adjudicate, with no arguments over the 'rules' and with everybody happy.

Unfortunately, this 'ideal' system (in all but a few exceptional cases) would prove to be impossible to put into practice, simply because of the weight of responsibility it placed on the Game Masters' shoulders, and the feelings of suspicion which are bound to arise. How can the players trust all the GM's decisions? How can they be sure that the GM is unbiased and that he will rule equally in all cases? Would you like to face an angry player who demands to know why his character has just died – all he did was to fall

off a cliff! When Harry's character did that last week, he lived through it. How do you explain to him that you've since realised your last decision was wrong, and that your world view has now changed? Or that you made a mistake last time – without your players losing faith in you GMing abilities? Then there are the 'rules lawyers' – the players who insist on quoting you chapter and verse verbatim from the rulebook. 'You can't do that! It says on page 234, paragraph 6, under Exceptions that . . .' Under a 'free kriegspiel' system they would question every decision: these players would be the death of most GMs!

There has to be a mid-point, however, somewhere between the two extreme approaches, which offers a chance for enhanced role-playing, yet includes enough hard-and-fast rules to keep the average player happy. This intermediate state can be achieved in any game, under any games system, simply by experimenting a little, and altering the way in which rules





decisions and the players' actions are handled. Here are a few suggestions:

1. If there is a very high chance of character success in a given situation, allow that successful action to take place without a die roll. This may sound like heresy – what are die rolls and rules for, if not to limit the characters from doing things? I am not suggesting that you should allow all characters with more than a 50% chance an instant success, that would bias things far too heavily in the players' favour; just if the situation is a mundane and ordinary one which only slows down the game (eg looking for firewood, attempting to light a cigarette, etc).

It is not advisable to use this option when the success or failure of an action is particularly important to the campaign, or the character concerned. A side effect of this is that it does give player characters a slightly better chance of survival – not always a bad thing!

2. If you are unable to remember a rule during the middle of a game which is flowing particularly well, and is building up a good atmosphere, do not break the mood by checking up on the rules. Instead, trust in your own judgement, taking into account all the factors of the situation and your own knowledge and experience of your campaign. Once you have GMed even just a few sessions, you pick up an instinctive feel for the game and rules system, which will allow you to make snap decisions in a realistic fashion.

Note, however, that this should not be done when a player character is in danger of dying, as the player will tend to harbour ill feelings if it turns out later that your judgement was wrong! Although this idea does sound a little like cheating, or even just sheer laziness, on the GM's part, it isn't; the rules are not that important a part of the game that they cannot be ignored once in a while. Strict rules playing belongs in games like *Monopoly*, not in the free and open-ended experience that forms a role-playing game.

3. Try not to rely too heavily on dice and random encounter tables for your encounters during an adventure. While a random encounter can liven up a flagging games session – there being nothing better than a quick fight to arouse people's interests – you can

get too much of a good thing! If the rules say you should roll for encounters once every three turns, try not to take them too literally. Several times I've seen parties of adventurers surrounded by wandering monsters who seem to swarm in from every direction. All this type of constant encounter really achieves is to distract the players from their current task in the game, to slow the game down and to eventually create a very muddled and unstructured campaign.

I have always found it better to prepare a set of pre-planned encounters, and to introduce these at appropriate points in the course of play. This also enables you to deliberately distract the players from the main part of your campaign if you have a strong reason to delay them. Random encounters then become sub-plots, which can introduce characters to new and important NPCs, reward them with items they will need in their main quest, or split the party up and set them against each other. If used carefully and with some consideration, random encounters can add much more to an on-going campaign than the mere thrill of a quick fight with a wandering monster.

4. React to your players. Role-playing is a two-way exchange; interaction on several levels is essential between the players and the GM. Do not be afraid to alter the scenario you are running in response to some player action. If the adjustment produces a better game, and a more satisfying and enjoyable outcome for the players, then it is worth doing – even if it means radically altering your plot. In the same way that rules can be ignored, amended or even rewritten, so commercial scenarios can be altered.

Rather than following a scenario plot exactly, always be on the look-out for tie-ins between the scenario and your own group of player characters. If you are playing a game such as *AD&D* which uses character classes, then the types of character in the player party are going to have a major effect on the scenario's outcome. Some scenarios may have a vital clue in them, or an essential piece of equipment, which can only be reached by someone with the skills of a thief. So, any party without a thief present is going to have problems in playing through the scenario, or is going to miss out on a lot of the action and enjoyment to

be gained from it. Adapt the scenario ideas, content and difficulty to match your party. It isn't just character powers that are important, also objects, religions and any phobia they may have. It is also important to be able to adapt the scenario in mid-game – if the players think of a clever and ingenious way through a trap or 'dead-end' you must be able to think on your feet and react. Spontaneity is a vital part of all good role-playing.

5. In even a small group of players, many GMs adopt the idea of each player taking an action in turn, so that each member of the group gets to do something in the game. This is not a bad idea, groups can easily be dominated by one or two loud and vociferous players who will tend to get an unfair share of the action. Yet, the very concept of a fixed turn for each player goes against the goals that an FRP game is trying to achieve – that of an intricate and detailed narrative, a 'living novel' as some have called it. Allotting a discreet action to each of the player characters in order reduces the game flow to that of a boardgame. Each player can make a move, roll the dice and then they sit around until it is their turn to 'go' next. You simply cannot create a satisfactory, flowing role-playing atmosphere within such artificial constraints.

The answer is to let the game progress naturally, with each player only taking an action when they have to, and when it is realistic for them to do so within the game. This can be extremely difficult for a GM to achieve without a central player character dominating all the action and players with, perhaps, less powerful characters being left out. No-one likes sitting around watching someone else have all the fun and make all the decisions. In order for this system to work effectively, producing a smooth flowing game without discreet intervals of time, and yet to involve all the players present, or to make them feel they are involved, takes a lot of practice and puts a lot of pressure on the GM. You must be aware of all your players at once and try to divide your time between them equally. If a player is just sitting there and looks as though they are feeling left out, make them join in. Use an NPC to drag them into the game, to force them to make a decision.

If the players are no longer

just sitting around the table waiting for their next turn, idly playing with dice, spilling beer cans, etc, but are actively involved in the game all the time, because they can never be sure when they have to make a decision, the game flows better and creates a greater sense of atmosphere.

The above points are only a few suggestions which arise from my own experience of running games. There are many more ways of removing the rules from the game, and creating a more realistic role-playing feeling. One possible idea is to have a form of 'secondary GM' who would be responsible for the NPCs within the game and it would be he or she that role-played them rather than the GM. This would take a fair amount of work off the GM's shoulders in that he no longer has to concentrate on role-playing his NPCs, but can concentrate on the game's flow and the players' actions. While the NPCs could be improved by having a good role-player devote all of their attention to the various roles required, adding depth and feeling to what are often little more than names, this would require a lot of work between the GM and his 'NPC master', as they would both have to work closely together to keep the campaign flowing realistically without inconsistencies between their two approaches. Yet it would be a great challenge to most role-players to play the parts of all those characters, and I feel it would definitely benefit a large group by freeing the GM from a lot of unnecessary work.

I have actually run games of my campaign *Gilkemmen* in a totally 'free kriegspiel' fashion, the most notable being a run at *Stabcon IV* a couple of years ago. It has proven to be successful, the major problem being character/player identity. The players seemed to find it hard to relate to just a character description of their characters, without the usual characteristics and other stats. Hit points appear to be a major problem area; few players like being told that their character is 'feeling weak' without them knowing exactly how many hit points they have left. It's a survival instinct I suppose!

Try to experiment with your own rules system. If you avoid slavishly following rules and the dictates of others then you'll find your games much more enjoyable and fulfilling. You'll even find them more fun – which is why we play the things, isn't it? □

**1. Captain S Logad**

Pilot/Navigator/Captain. Pilot-3, Navig-2. UPP 8A6B99

Age:25



Logad is unshaven and generally looks in need of a few hours sleep. This all contributes to the fact he looks nearer 35 than his actual age. Passengers are not normally able to see him since his job is demanding, although they may arrange for appointments – having to wait 1-6 hours before being seen. Logad will be polite at all times and will refuse any attempts at bribery.

**4. Mr F Franz**

Medic/Steward. Liason-3, Medic-2, Steward-1, Dagger-1. UPP 675A77

Age:23



Franz will be with Jason when the characters board the Silver Wolf. Chubby, but still youthful, it will be apparent from his manner that he resents being junior to Jason: he will take jobs from him to give himself more responsibility. Franz is determined to become Chief Steward on a big liner and constantly works at this. In addition to his duties as steward, he acts in the role of ship's doctor.

**2. Engineer Skatt**

Mech-1, Elec-1, Eng-3, Auto Pistol-1. UPP 997765

Age:31



Grey-haired and slightly wrinkled of face, the passengers will see very little of Skatt, their first brush with him being during the welcoming dinner on the first night. He prefers to lurk in his beloved engineering section, although is keen to relate tales of old missions to anyone prepared to listen (and stay awake long enough). A typical story involves surviving on unsociable planets or getting a crippled ship home on half power...

**5. Zod**

Auto Pistol-2. UPP E88463

Age:22



Zod, an ex-boxer, has been hired by the 'patron' to keep a close eye on the characters and the crate, his main purpose being to stop him stealing it. Although not particularly bright, he is well built and fairly strong: his briefing will prevent him being tricked to any great degree. Although he is to make sure that the box is not damaged in jump, this will not get in the way of the players investigating it.

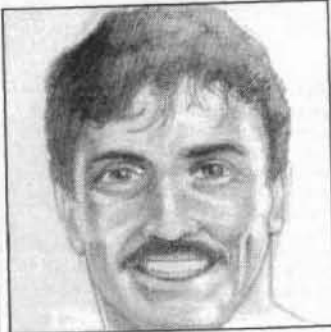
Zod has been instructed to stop anyone (apart from one recognised person) touching the box

before they reach their destination.

**3. Chief Steward Jason**

Steward-2, Body Pistol-1, Carousing-2. UPP 877A96

Age:28



Jason is an amiable character and is the first person to greet the characters when they board ship. Dark and good-looking, he is also efficient, not to mention scrupulous (and therefore not open to bribes). His attitude towards Franz leaves it in no doubt that he regards him as his junior. Jason is an interesting conversationalist, being able to talk about a wide variety of subjects, although his preferred topic is cooking (he is an accomplished chef). He is always armed with a body pistol.

**6. Duncan McFerd**

UPP 876A45

Age:47



A very quiet 'non-entity' of a person – not that it matters since he exits after one and a half days. Taciturn, the characters shouldn't run in to him as he will keep very much to himself. His past has been a continual drift from one shady job to another: he is currently unemployed.

**A UNIQUE TRAVELLER ADVENTURE BY GRAHAM MILLER****INTRODUCTION**

The characters have been contracted to deliver a crate containing a new scientific discovery to laboratories on a nearby planet. The crate has been booked to travel on the Silver Wolf, a subsidised merchant scheduled to depart shortly. This method of transport has been chosen for reasons of insurance (the broker will not accept liability for alternatives) and the characters are needed to ensure the box arrives in one piece at its destination (to scare off rivals, spies or whatever). Although the contents of the crate are not fully described, the general impression given by the characters' patron (a slightly crazed scientist type) is that the discovery could be of some importance.

**GM's Notes**

No specific planets for the journey have been selected for this adventure and you should choose two suitable ones from one of the sectors in your campaign (or create two planets if this is a one-off). Throughout the adventure the destination is referred to as 'the next planet'.

**PERSONALITIES**

The adventure depends greatly on the characters' dealings with the cast of NPCs on board the Silver Wolf. GMs should make careful notes as to the personalities on board and where they are likely to be at certain times.

**REFEREE'S INFORMATION**

All non-player characters on board the Silver Wolf are working for the Imperial TV Company, making the next series of 'Candid Camera' (a TV show where practical jokes are played on members of the public and filmed using hidden cameras, later being shown on the show). The entire week-long journey in jump is being filmed using hidden cameras. The GM should ensure that a 'normal' ship-board atmosphere is maintained throughout. Rumours about drug-running may also be used to enhance the effect.

Characters may, naturally, wish to bring weapons and armour on board the ship. Full military gear would be unthinkable aboard a 'pleasure' cruiser – Jack is perfectly acceptable as is Mesh (although the latter will turn a few heads), but nothing heavier. Franz may be bribed to allow weapons onto the ship – blades will cost Cr250 each, pistols (of any type) Cr750.

Violence on board ship will be curbed by the most expedient method. Characters barging into occupied staterooms demanding confessions, etc, can expect to see the accused hit the panic button. The two stewards will arrive shortly afterwards armed with auto pistols, followed a few minutes later by any able-bodied passenger who feels like helping out. Of special note is the ship's locker (Jason's room, A Deck) which has a fingerprint lock designed to respond only to Company representatives. This is also fitted with a heat sensor.▷



7. Ms Zola Quarx

UPP 8B7B96

Age:20



A typical sultry young pop starlet, Zola flaunts everything – clothes, money, and mostly herself. She is dressed in the latest, most outrageous fashion, and will be wearing a different garment each time the characters see her. Her reactions are extreme – a roll of 8+ will seem to be a roll of 10+, similarly, on a roll of 6– she will order her bodyguard, Drago, to remove the offending person. Check her reaction each day, but for each day of friendship there is a DM of +1. Zola is on holiday on this voyage and is celebrating in style. Should

anyone decide against turning up to her party mid-week, she will snub them for the rest of the voyage.

10. Mr T Betler

UPP A89975

Age:30



Betler is an ex-Marine captain – a very successful one until he was thrown out for drinking on duty. He is very bitter towards the Marines and anyone sympathising with him will get a +2 reaction modifier (and a similar penalty if they don't). He still upholds his innocence over the matter, maintaining that he took the bottle from a younger marine to 'save him from himself'. Anyone talking to Betler will get his full story.

Age:32

UPP 9D8789

8. Drago

Auto Pistol-1.

UPP DAC445

Age:43



Drago is Zola Quarx's bodyguard and is well suited to the task, his qualifications including being an ex-wrestler. Of heavy build, most of his muscular development seems to have sagged to his stomach – nevertheless he's a capable and forceful bouncer. Not overly bright, Drago has had brushes with the law and has a criminal record (although not for anything serious). He is very wary of being conned and thus, should anyone engage him in conversation, they will find his replies limited to grunts and non-

committal sounds. On the few occasions he does speak, he is very wary and alert.

11. Mrs Gren



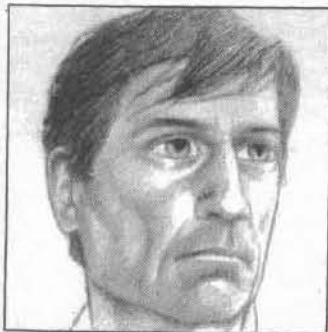
Mrs Gren is a big game hunter bound for the next planet for its bountiful game reserves. She tries very hard to be a social climber and is particularly able at talking about absolutely nothing. She drinks only expensive cocktails and laughs in a loud, high-pitched voice at her own jokes. Check against character intelligence (roll INT or less) to see whether or not this facade of worthless charm is penetrated – a failed roll indicates a character is taken in. Gren's rifle, telescopic sights and ammunition are in the

ship's locker.

9. Mr G Anderson

UPP 78AD68

Age:28

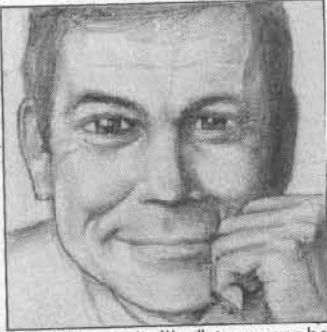


Currently serving in the Merchant service, Anderson is in the process of clinching a deal with a planet two jumps away. A shrewd businessman and quite unscrupulous in his methods, he will try to present the image of an honest businessman, although his weasly appearance detracts a little from this deception. He'll deal with any apparently sane person, tending to shun anyone making accusations, creating a disturbance, etc. Anderson is formally dressed, although his suit looks a few years out of date.

12. Mr R Slynger

UPP 678758

Age:37



Slynger is a businessman taking a year-long holiday around all the sights of the sector. His stateroom contains all the usual paraphernalia that a tourist carries (anti-grav swimming ring, holographic recorder, computerised phrase book of local dialects, etc). Anyone engaging in long conversations with him is liable to be asked back to have a look at his holographs. These are typical sights like the triple sunset on Orcist, the pyramid circles on Thisbe, asteroids burning up in the Regina night sky, etc. He enjoys

socialising and will talk to anyone he deems normal (reaction roll +2).

The Box

The box the players have been commissioned to look after will be immune to all attempts to prise it open, cut it open or blow it up. It is psionically shielded and contains the following: an anti-grav module, several coloured smoke canisters, a short range communicator and a remote control device.

In the course of the adventure, should the crew or other passengers be told about the strange antics of the box, they will become very curious and will want to see it for themselves. When they arrive, however, everything will have returned to normal, any smoke being removed by the air conditioning. A crew member will proceed to disarm the character reporting his antics before locking him up, with a note on the door proclaiming the inhabitant as 'Dangerously Insane'. Franz will use anaesthetic to render unco-operative characters unconscious.

EVENTS

**Day 1.** Just after lunch, a character will find the strangled body of McFerd in their stateroom. If the Captain or any other crew member is told, they will just advise everyone to lock their doors at 'night'. (The 'body' was in a low berth and the actor made up to look like the body is now in the same low berth.) The referee can now choose either the player who over-reacts the most, or someone at random. That night this same character will see a dark figure leave the room. As the character rolls over, he or she will hear the rustle of paper and feel cold steel on their cheek. A note is daggered to their pillow. It reads in block capitals 'YOU NEXT', written with the Imperial equivalent of a biro, ie untraceable.

**Day 2.** This day will pass without any strange occurrences, giving the characters a chance to interview everyone about yesterday's events.

If any character is psionic, than at least three people will wear shields and will object most strongly to being asked to remove them. (Invasion of mental privacy, etc). Meals will be served on time, and everything seems to go well. At the evening meal Zola Quarx will announce that everyone is invited to a party. Sure enough, that evening in the port recreational area, music will play and the drink will flow. About half an hour into the party Mrs Gren will collapse. Franz will instantly appear on the scene and carry her to the sickbay. No 'medical laymen' will be allowed to help (ie the characters). Poison will be found in the glass from which she was drinking (added afterwards in all the confusion). Before the party finally disperses, people will start talking about a psionic computer possessing people and making them do these things. The two stewards will suppress these rumours. On returning to his/her stateroom, the character who found McFerd's body will find a note 'ENJOY THE LAST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE'. Again it is written in block capitals with an untraceable pen.

**Day 3.** In the morning it will be announced that Mrs Gren died of poisoning during the night. Either the character watching the box or Skatt will ask the other characters to come and look at it. Skatt will then disappear. The box is floating 1m off the ground and will move if pushed.

Once every 5 game minutes roll on the table see what will happen. If the effect rolled is already in progress, it will stop. The smoke is non-toxic and coloured, and will not continue for more than 15 minutes. Noise means that strange buzzes, whistles and clicks will be audible but not deafening. If the box speaks it will be very condescending about the entire human race, apart from one man whom it calls the creator.

Die Roll	1-2	3	4	5	6
Effect	Smoke	Noise	Nothing	Float	Speak



## SMILE PLEASE

If the crew is told about any of the other effects, they will tell the characters to surround the box with blast panels and wait for the jump to end. If anyone tells a crew member about the speaking box, this crew member will definitely want to see it. However, when he arrives in the hold the box will cease all abnormal functions and appear as a perfectly normal box. The character who reported it will be locked in his stateroom, with all lock-picking devices and weapons removed. A notice is placed on the door, it reads 'Mentally unstable: do not enter'. Only the Chief Steward and the Captain will know the entry code which should be about 10 digits long. If no-one falls into this trap, remind them that such goings-on should not go unreported! That night loud screams and thuds will be heard from the other staterooms. Upon investigating, they'll see that the main commotion is in the starboard recreational area. Here they'll see some passengers grouped along three prostrate forms on the floor. One is Betler, the ex-Marine, still holding a blood-stained axe. Franz is crouching over the body of Slynger, the tourist, and Zola Quarx lies unheeded, but still breathing, a little apart from them. As Franz takes Slynger to the sickbay to treat his neck injuries, the story emerges. Betler got an axe from its emergency bracket on the wall. This alerted Franz who went to the sickbay to get a tranquiliser. As he came out of the door, Slynger came running in, chased by Betler wielding the axe. Betler tried to decapitate Slynger, but was jabbed by Franz's tranquiliser syringe after the first blow. Ms Quarx, who had watched all this from her door, fainted and banged her head. Everybody slowly drifts back to bed, taking care to lock their doors.

**Day 4.** In the morning, all the talk over breakfast will be about the events of last night. The most persistent rumour is that Betler was possessed by a psionic machine, and that in that state he could have killed Mrs Gren as well. A death threat will be given to the 'mentally unstable' character, or, failing this, to the one who found the body of McFerd. It will be written in goat's blood and will make some reference to the box. The crew will repeat their warning to lock all doors at 'night'. Before lunch, three pistol shots will be heard from Mr Anderson's stateroom. When the characters arrive, Franz will be there, attending to Mr Anderson who has blood-stained bandages around his upper left arm and chest. He appears to have passed out, and Franz will refuse any offers of medical assistance from the characters. Anderson

will be taken to the sickbay. This is all, of course, just a piece of good acting, blanks were used and the bandages were prepared beforehand.

**Day 5.** As normal as is possible. If the box is investigated, it will try to charge anyone who comes near it, but these attacks are always avoidable. That night, one character will hear his door slam shut. If he opens it to investigate, he will see a figure standing in the light from the door. As he turns round, the character instantly recognises him. It is McFerd, he looks very pale and has red marks round his neck.

Upon seeing that he has been observed, he disappears into the shadows. It should be stressed that the characters found the dead body of McFerd, and know that he is irrefutably dead. However, in appearance and manner, the apparition was identical to McFerd.

**Day 6.** The breakfast-time chatter is rife with stories of McFerd. During the morning, however, Franz will ask the characters to go down to the hold, as Skatt is calling on the intercom. When they arrive at the box, a black cloud will be hanging over it. As they approach, it will start to speak. It will start with its domination of Betler, then continue with the murders of McFerd, Gren and Slynger, through Betler. When Betler finally got caught, however, its right/wrong circuits finally cut in and it was aware of the error of its ways. It hadn't wanted to kill at first, but had soon grown to like it. It just wanted to say that it was deeply sorry, but it didn't know if a computer could be tried in court or not. If the crew and passengers are called in at this point, they too will believe, and release anybody who was previously thought to be mentally unstable.

**Day 7.** Today the jump will end. About an hour after returning to normal space, the launch will be heard to detach and reattach. The port iris valve will slide open, and a man of normal build and neat black hair will leap out. He is about 30, 6ft tall, and any watcher of Imperial TV will recognise him as Fred Sobak, presenter of Candid Camera. If the characters recognise him (roll average of social and education or greater), they will instantly realise what is happening. Anyway, he will greet them with these words, 'Smile please, you're on television. We do hope you will come along to the studio this evening to see yourselves on "The Box"'. □

## THE SILVER WOLF

The Silver Wolf is a 500-ton custom built ship. It is fitted out with Jump drive F, Manoeuvre drive C and Power plant G giving it a performance of Jump 2, 1G acceleration. Deck plans show interior layout only, showing accessible areas for the players.

### KEY

#### A Deck, Living Quarters

1. Bridge. Only Captain Logad will be found here during normal operation.
2. Captain's Stateroom. Also contains a remote control unit and a modified short range communicator (both concealed).
3. Engineer's Stateroom.
4. Computer, Model Z.
5. Franz's Stateroom
6. Jason's Stateroom. Con-

ains the ship's locker.

7. Corridor. A hatch (down) leads to B Deck, area A.
8. Passenger Recreation Lounge.

9. Passenger Staterooms. Characters' rooms should be in the central block. There are 16 staterooms in all.

10. Galley. Jason and Franz have keys to this area.

11. Sick Bay. Franz (only) holds the key to this.

12. Launch. Piloted by the Captain, the launch is used for boarding or leaving the vessel. There are 26 couches fitted.

**Note.** Areas 1-7 on A Deck are 'crew only' areas, entrance to them being gained via iris valves controlled by ID cards held by the crew.

#### B Deck, Engineering.

1. Jump drive
2. Power plant.

3. Manoeuvres drive.

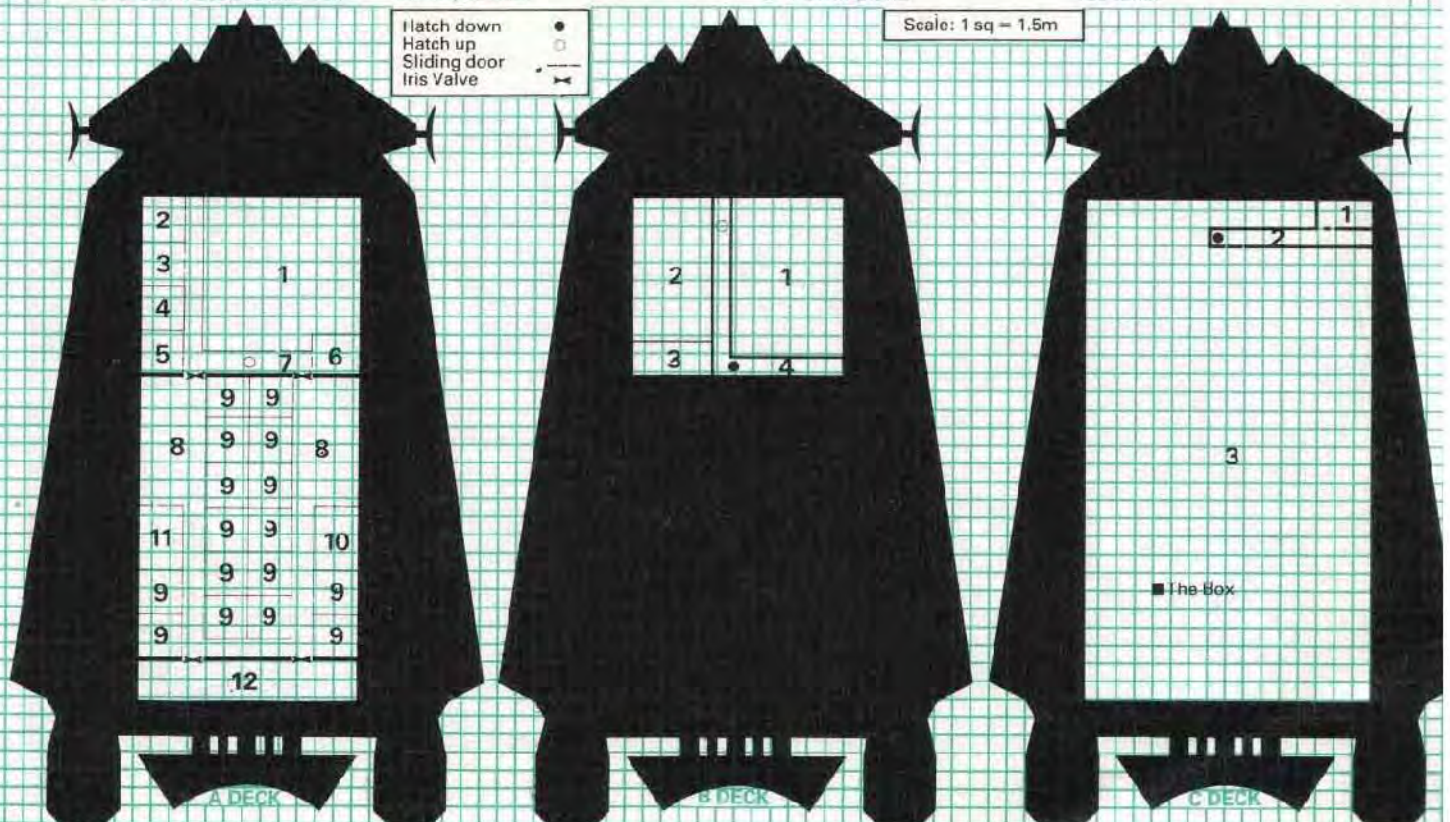
4. Access Corridor. A hatch leads up to A Deck, area 7 and one leads down to C Deck, area 2.

#### C Deck, Cargo and Low Berths

1. Low berth section. 10 low berths contained here.

2. Access Corridor. Hatch leads up to B Deck, area 4.

3. Hold. The main feature is 'The Box' (qv). Cargo capacity is 180 tons.





Starbase is an alternate monthly column for Traveller enthusiasts, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# THE OTHER IMPERIUM

Civilian Organisations in  
Traveller  
by Michael Scott

The Starbase item in this issue reminded me of thoughts I had some years ago, early in the life of Starbase. On reflection things haven't changed that much. New organisations are a popular submission to the Starbase desk, but with few exceptions they tend to be of a military nature – 'special forces', divisions and departments (often secret) of the Army, Navy or Scouts. Such organisations are useful in Traveller adventures, but what about the 'other', civilian Imperium?

All published adventures and magazine articles barely scratch the surface of such a large polity as the Imperium. There is enormous scope for every conceivable human (not to mention alien) institution, society and endeavour. The imaginative Traveller enthusiast should try not to be channelled into the same old grooves such as saving the universe from Zhodani domination. Adventure plots do not have to be of galactic significance in order to work.

In a future issue I will be returning to the subject of civilian organisations, with a set of examples and their use in adventures. As I see it there are two large bodies of possible source material – science fiction literature, which often provides ready-made or easily adaptable ideas, and the real world present and past, which of course suggests numbers of organisations required or at least possible in human society which can be adapted to the future. Human nature may or may not change through the millennia, but there is ample scope in the variety of worlds possible in Traveller to incorporate virtually any idea – particularly in such a campaign setting such as GDW's Imperium with its 'loose' style of Imperial government (each world is left to get on with its own affairs within certain restrictions). It is important to match the type of organisation with the type of society, of course. There may be trading or government restrictions; ethical, moral or doctrinal taboos may be in force. It is unlikely, for example, that

Michael's 'Intercredit' would be found on a world practising extreme communism or a barter system (other than at the starport). The Police Confederation would not be represented on worlds with low population and low law level (since there would be no police force in all probability). Conversely a few worlds may choose not to belong to an organisation. Worlds controlled by a mega corporation might be such a case, where corporation staff police look after their own affairs and ignore off-world records.

And so to Michael's selection. If in the next month or so any reader cares to submit further organisations to Starbase, I will consider them along with mine for the future issue on the subject. –BMcW.

In addition to such well documented organisations as the Traveller's Aid Society and the Imperial Megacorporations, there are many other organisations which are large enough to span interstellar space and operate throughout the Imperium. Some of the more interesting of these are described below. While the examples given are all restricted to the Imperium, most of them have analogues in other political units.



## Intercredit

Due to the time taken to transmit information between stars, most of the money carried between stars by individuals is in the form of Imperial currency, which is convenient but highly vulnerable to theft. Intercredit offers an alternative. For a subscription of Cr200 per year, any reasonably reputable person can obtain an Intercredit account and card. The card is the key to the whole system, as contained on it are all the details of the subscriber's account. For security, the information on the card is in a supposedly unbreakable code, and the card is keyed to the owner's genetic pattern and cannot be used by anyone else.

Using the card, the subscriber can deposit or withdraw money at any Intercredit facility. These are found at all A class starports, B class starports on worlds with population 5+ or tech level 12+ and C class starports on worlds with population 8+ or tech level 15+. They are not as widely available as most customers might wish due to the

expense of establishing and maintaining them.

Should the card be lost or stolen, a replacement can be obtained from any intercredit facility within four weeks. In the interim, the facility will advance living expenses to the subscriber.

(Referees may feel the Cr200 per annum to be too small a charge for such a deluxe service! They may wish to give some thought to some other reasonably simple fee system, such as Cr10 per transaction, that reflects the cost more realistically –Ed.)

## The Imperial Police Confederation

Most planets in the Imperium are signatories to the Treaty of Deneb, under which the police of one planet will apprehend and extradite suspects wanted for major crimes on another planet. Given the vast number of planets in the Imperium, only the most major criminals, wanted for such crimes as mass murder are hunted beyond nearby planets. In game terms, for most major crimes roll 3+ (perhaps more in some cases) for the character who committed the crime to be wanted on nearby planets, DM-1 per parsec from the planet where the crime was committed. If caught, the character will be extradited by the first available transport, escorted by two police officers. (The key point here is 'major crimes'. Bear in mind the cost of three starship passages out, and two back, to the extraditing planetary government –Ed.)

## The Mercenary Monitoring Corps

This is an Imperial organisation which is responsible for ensuring that mercenary units obey the Imperial rules of war and the conditions of their tickets, and also for administering repatriation bonds. The MMC is administered by the Sector or Subsector Governor's office (ie a Civil Service duty). Normally an MMC detachment is assigned to both sides in a mercenary conflict. In extreme cases where the MMC is opposed by force, they can call in major Imperial military units to back them up.

## High Passage

High Passage is an Imperial funded non-profit making corporation which issues the universally recognised starship tickets described in the basic Traveller rules (despite the name, it issues high, mid and low passages). While captains often sell passages on their own ships without the intercession of High Passage, it issues the only tickets recognised on all starships.

High Passage offices are found on all worlds with A or B class starports, and on worlds with a class C on 5+, class D on 7+ and class E on 10+. At these offices, starship tickets can be bought at the standard price or sold for 90% of standard price. Starship pursers who can show that the ticket was received in exchange for a passage can obtain the full value of the ticket. Cut-price ticket shops can often be found near High Passage offices on populous worlds, typically buying tickets for 92% and selling for 98%. (But watch out for forgeries! Also note that some worlds even with A or B class starports may not encourage off-world travel, and offices would not be found there –Ed.) □

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# WORDLY WILES

## Social Customs in Traveller by Anna Prince

There is one rather glaring omission in the *Traveller* rules. They tell you how to generate planets, and the animals which live on them, but nothing is said about the society of the human inhabitants.

True, the characters' most basic questions are answered: Can I carry my gun? Do the inhabitants have anything more powerful?

In the planetary stats, only the government type gives some flavour, but it is so vague that it needs much fleshing out. For instance, a company-owned planet could be a completely open society, where slavers come to trade and anything is permitted; or a closed one, with unlicensed trading forbidden and people arrested for not having green hair.

I fear, though, that the unwritten assumption behind most *Traveller* material is that every society is identical to twentieth century America. (An honourable exception is *Adventure 9, Nomads of the World-Ocean*, but that, unfortunately, will give harried GMs no clue about how to produce un-American societies for themselves.) However, society changes radically even in a few centuries: read a Jane Austen novel to see how much it has altered in the last couple. Despite this, it is easiest to assume that the Imperium matches our society. (A convenience which gives play a recognisable background.) But the Imperium is an abstraction: the worlds within it will vary widely.

Worlds many months' travel apart will inevitably differ from each other more than any two nations do on Earth today.

At this point, the harried GMs I mentioned before will probably be groaning, 'Not another load of irrelevant details to work out before my players get down there and start shooting people!'

Yes and no.

Before going any further, I must make it clear that if you play *Traveller* with a lot of *Mercenary* or *Snapshot*, and little else, then this article may contain little of interest to you, since neither type of game depends on plotting.

Otherwise, yes, I am suggesting GMs spend time working out more details: but no, they are far from irrelevant. They will make creating scenarios easier, as well as giving your players more pleasure.

People enjoy interacting with other people. And that, from the first request for landing permission to the last backward shot, is what *Travellers* will be doing.

Presumably one of the reasons you are all role-playing is that you enjoy the otherness such games make possible; and another is the chance to live-out a novel. A science fiction novel makes possible a special kind of otherness, so that players who move from one bland intergalactic Hilton to another are missing a most enjoyable element of the

game. Starports may be alike, but the worlds on which they are set will not be.

Where are GMs to find all these societies, though? On Earth, of course, since this is the only planet we know.

It will not be necessary to create every world in great detail. If the players will only be passing through, then a brief phrase or even a word may be enough. 'Xenophobic', 'Chinese-type bureaucracy', 'Duelling common', 'Native sophonts kept as slaves', 'Consider it rude to pay compliments'. And so on. You may get ideas here from the planet's stats, as you start asking yourself how certain apparent inconsistencies happened.

On the other hand, you could reverse what the stats seem to be indicating. There is no reason why a high-tech, high law level world should not also have a religion which requires them to eat their leaders. Or even visitors . . .

As you read this, you may already have had some ideas. But over a whole subsector, even the most fertile imagination begins to feel arid. For a sector, you will certainly need help.

Fortunately, help is available. SF books will be useful. For instance, civilised cannibalism was used in *Stranger In a Strange Land*. But disappointingly, far too many SF books present people who, when the technological gloss is stripped off, are just like us.

Anthropology and history books are much better sources. Of course, it is not good enough just to transport medieval Japan into space and hope for the best. The trick is to mix and match.

The range and variety of the solutions humans have found to the problem of living together in groups, is staggering. But to make an alien world seem as strange as it should be, try joining customs which have never, on Earth, been found together.

This can be done even in the short descriptions. 'Exchange gifts before trading. Discuss money only in church'. Such customs are almost guaranteed to have *Travellers* offending the locals, resulting in many chances for mayhem.

Presented with such challenges, sensible parties will soon begin questioning the starport staff before they meet any natives of the planet, or will seek out library data. Such information will be available, but need not be complete. It might even be deliberately misleading. It is best, though, to give the players enough true information to make them feel confident, while withholding a couple of key facts.

Setting up the worlds on which you intend to place a scenario will be more difficult. The more details you must place on a world, the harder it becomes to keep them consistent. It is very helpful if you can find someone, who does not play in your group, with whom you can

discuss your ideas.

Each important world must have a solid foundation, but it would take hours of work to create a self-consistent, functional society. Fortunately, there is no need to do so. History is littered with examples.

You will probably want to read up on society before you base a world on it. Children's books are best for basic groundwork, and should be available from the library. But remember that they generally avoid discussing sex: an omission which gives a distorted idea of any society.

An example would help.

Let us imagine a world based on classical Athens. It is slave-owning, philosophical, Imperialist, inhabited by warrior-citizens who denigrate women, laud homosexuality, expose unwanted children and have brought art to a high peak. They are mildly contemptuous of foreigners, are polytheistic and live in a democracy.

Add to that list a custom which forbids people to name or refer to the recently dead; imagine that they are rude to their friends while being polite only to enemies, and you already have several scenarios suggesting themselves.

The slaves could be a native life-form an Imperial charity is trying to protect, or might be rebellious androids buying imported guns. Either way, it would be easy to involve the player characters.

Perhaps they have arrived to seek the Only Man Who Knows The Answer. If everyone on the planet thinks he is dead, the players could take a long time to realise why people are uninformative, always polite, and keep attacking them.

So the small effort of drawing the outline of a society has, in return, given rise to a plot and a couple of potential subplots. Clearly then, creating a social background is more than icing the cake: it is, or should be, a vital part of producing a subsector.

Players should spend more time thinking than rolling dice. Who can I trust? How do they manage that? What happened to the last ship which landed here? Where do the Bilg go in the summer? Each scenario should present its players with several problems like those. If it does not, the designer is not making full use of the infinite variety of worlds available in *Traveller*.

One final thought to worry players. Some worlds, outside the Imperium or on its fringes, may have quite highly developed psionic powers. An insult to the wrong person might have any number of painful results. Imagine a cursed ship which, though mechanically sound, has a high chance of misjumping. It could be a long task even reaching a world where the curse might be lifted. Survivors would, if nothing else, have learned to be polite to witchdoctors. □



# LONE DRAGON

## INTRODUCTION

Referees running this adventure will need *Starter Traveller* and *Book 4*, and are advised to have *Book 5*. Use of *Striker* rules may also be desired. Characters with a wide range of technical and weapons skills will be usable in this adventure.

The referee should, of course, familiarise him or her self thoroughly with every section before play begins. However, it is vital that very little of this information be freely available to players; they should gain some small advantage (and interest) from researching details as matters progress.

## THE PATRON

The scene is a rich, populous planet with fairly relaxed laws. A news-sheet carries a small advertisement:

**Wanted:** *Adventurous, capable individuals, preferably with military experience or technical skills, for short-term employment. All legal, good money. Videophone...*

The number is that of a rented answering service. Following this trail will bring the party to a meeting in a private room in a high class hotel, the following afternoon. There, they (and any NPCs the referee might provide to strengthen the party) will meet an aristocratic man in his early 30s.

He will introduce himself as 'Lord Jallion', and will state his problem. He needs cash – quickly – which he knows he can most easily obtain by means of a jewel-gathering trip to his home world. Unfortunately, that world is currently in a state of political confusion, and banditry is rife; although Jallion can get his ship down easily enough, he will need guards. This is to be the party's job.

Jallion admits to being no expert at tactics, so if the players accept the job, he will discuss equipment requirements with them. He can say that his ship has two double turrets; the ventral weapons – a sandcaster and a beam laser – are fine for ground attack, but regrettably useless when the ship is on the ground, while the dorsal turret is fitted with a missile tube, capable of being used for long range air defence but unsuited for close range or low level work, and a more versatile beam laser. Because the matter is urgent, the expedition must kit up and leave within 24 hours (local time), but Jallion has contacts in the local arms business, and a personal working budget of Cr10,000, which should allow the party to request most reasonable types of weapon or military gear. However, if anyone suggests taking any ship but Jallion's own, this patron will veto the idea, saying that his planet's bureaucracy bars alien vessels from the area he wishes to visit, and will react with overwhelming force to any such intrusions.

The only further details Jallion will provide are that his ship carries a light air-raft – actually a four-seater – and that the position to be defended is a large island, open to approach by air or sea, and large enough to permit extensive ground combat; the opposed opposition are well-equipped and unpredictable.

The payment offered for this mission is negotiable; around Cr8,000 per head is reasonable.

## Referees' Notes

Inquiries in the twenty-four hours available before take-off are unlikely to discover much about Jallion or his origins; the receptionist at the hotel *might* confirm the name, and comment that he acts as a real aristocrat, and has few visitors. Heavy bribes to the receptionist – or a successful probe of the hotel's well-guarded computer – might obtain a view of the patron's papers, but the only data on those that he will *not* have mentioned is the man of his home planet – Koa.

'Street-level' inquiries are unlikely to pro-

## A Traveller Scenario for 4-7 Characters by Phil Masters

duce many results, apart from confirming Jallion's claims of contacts in the arms trade. Officials at the starport know only that Jallion arrived two days ago, apparently alone, flying a large, streamlined yacht. Heavy bribery, or skilled computer work, might again obtain the name 'Koa' from official documents.

If, and only if, the party think to consult a library computer after obtaining the name, they may view the 'true' data on the world (see *Background*); note that Jallion's ship's computer has a different entry.

Jallion's UPP is 6A77AD, and his skills are: Pilot-1, Navigation-1, Admin-2, Medic-1, Foil-2, Laser Rifle-1. He is aged 33 standard years.

## FLIGHT AND ARRIVAL

On arrival at the starport, the party will be directed to Jallion's ship – a 300-ton trader/yacht, totally unmistakable in that it has been painted with a gaudy but striking dragon design; its name is the *Lone Dragon*. Once aboard, the party may soon note the opulence of the fittings, and some obvious engineering points; the heavy 'keel', housing anti-grav manoeuvre units, and the high-placed bridge, giving excellent viewing facilities.

Jallion will waste little time in getting the ship aloft and into jump space; only then will he declare that his course is for Koa, a jump-1 trip. He will also make some tactful remarks about the vessel's extensive electronic systems. Key units, such as the computer and the jump controller, will only perform certain functions for permitted individuals, who are recognised by voice patterns, handprints, retinal identification, and so on. Even if some hypothetical hijacker by-passed those, Jallion has 'associates' who may not care for him much, but who would care about assaults on a Koan noble and theft of Koan property.

In the subsequent week of travel, Jallion will say little of his plans. He will describe the ship's destination as a rocky island, a few hundred metres in each dimension, occupied by a small group of primitive tribespeople who are very loyal to himself. The aim of the trip is to gather a load of 'gem shells' – rare and beautiful crystalline shells, the armour of a small Koan sea-creature which somehow concentrates silicates out of sand or sea water. The tribe will have gathered a small stock, but they will have to be put to work to find more, while Jallion and the party watch for bandits, terrorists, and the like. The tribe speak only a language unique to Koa; he can interpret, but they are a simple and superstitious folk, with many taboos, and some fear of strangers; the party is forbidden to make more contact with them than is *strictly* necessary.

The party have a week to look around the ship; party members with appropriate skills may note some interesting features. Firstly, the air-raft is a standard model, but has been painted up in a 'dragon' design to match the ship. Secondly, the laser in the dorsal turret and the sandcaster in the ventral turret both show signs of having been worked on; a character with high intelligence and mechanical skill *might* realise that they had been switched round. Thirdly, the vessel has no

fuel scoops, no provision for fuel scavenging, and a 'highly tuned' power plant and drive that would behave dreadfully if fed unrefined fuel (double penalties for such). Finally, the ship is capable of excellent performance in atmosphere, including VTOL manoeuvres; a special programme in the computer would allow a character with Jet Aircraft skill to operate the controls.

The ship's computer has an entry for the destination:

**KOA** (Koa/Dartho-D566632-7-0604). A minor, non-industrial world, within the Imperial borders but semi-autonomous, the ruling elite having reached special agreements with the Imperium. The Koan government restricts contacts and trade; association with a Koan patron is essential before travel to this system should be considered. TAS Amber Zone.

## Referees' Notes

Only *careful* checking by a character with Computer-2+ will have any chance of discovery that this entry has been edited, and that the original form is irrecoverable. If challenged on this, Jallion will deny any knowledge, claiming that a 'colleague' who has previously flown the vessel must have been responsible. He will add that the entry as given is, in fact, accurate; presumably, the colleague edited out an inaccuracy.

## ARRIVAL

When the *Lone Dragon* returns to normal space, Jallion will again be brisk, commenting that the local guard systems will treat him as non-hostile, but that discretion is always best. He will take the vessel in for a vertical landing on the previously-described island (point 1 on *Map 1*), where it will soon be surrounded by respectfully prostrate natives.

Jallion will *insist* on leaving the ship first, possibly displaying a degree of amused contempt for the natives. He will wear a rather ornate style of armour (actually equal to mesh with integral reflex, with a helmet with built-in short range radio), a foil (in scabbard) and a lightweight powerpack for the laser rifle he carries. After some minutes in incomprehensible discussion with the villagers, who will exhibit immense awe and respect, he will summon the party.

There are about 100 locals of various ages. They display only tech-0 tools (wooden clubs, stone daggers, and 'pseudo-bamboo' huts), and fish from small wooden canoes. If necessary, the adults can all be regarded as having Brawling-1 skill.

The villagers have a 10kg stock of gem-shells, but Jallion wants at least 50kg (off-planet values are around Cr8,000 per kilo); the natives can gather about 5kg per day. The referee may find players seeking to convert some of the ship's ten basic-type vacc suits for sub-aquatic use; this could be done, given appropriate skills. Each individual so equipped could locate 1kg of shells per day, but would run the risk of suit failure (probability according to the care and skill levels applied, at the referee's discretion). Dangerous animal encounters are also possible, with a one-in-six chance in any given hour. One or two (equally common) species would be involved:

Eel-like *Killer* 400kg; Hits 6d/5d; +1 Bite for 3d+1; Attacks automatically; Speed 2.

Invertebrate *Pouncer* 40kg; Hits 4d/1d; Four attacks as –1 cudgel for 1-2 pts each; +2 on surprise rolls; attacks if gains surprise, withdraws if itself surprised, or if taking 6+ damage.

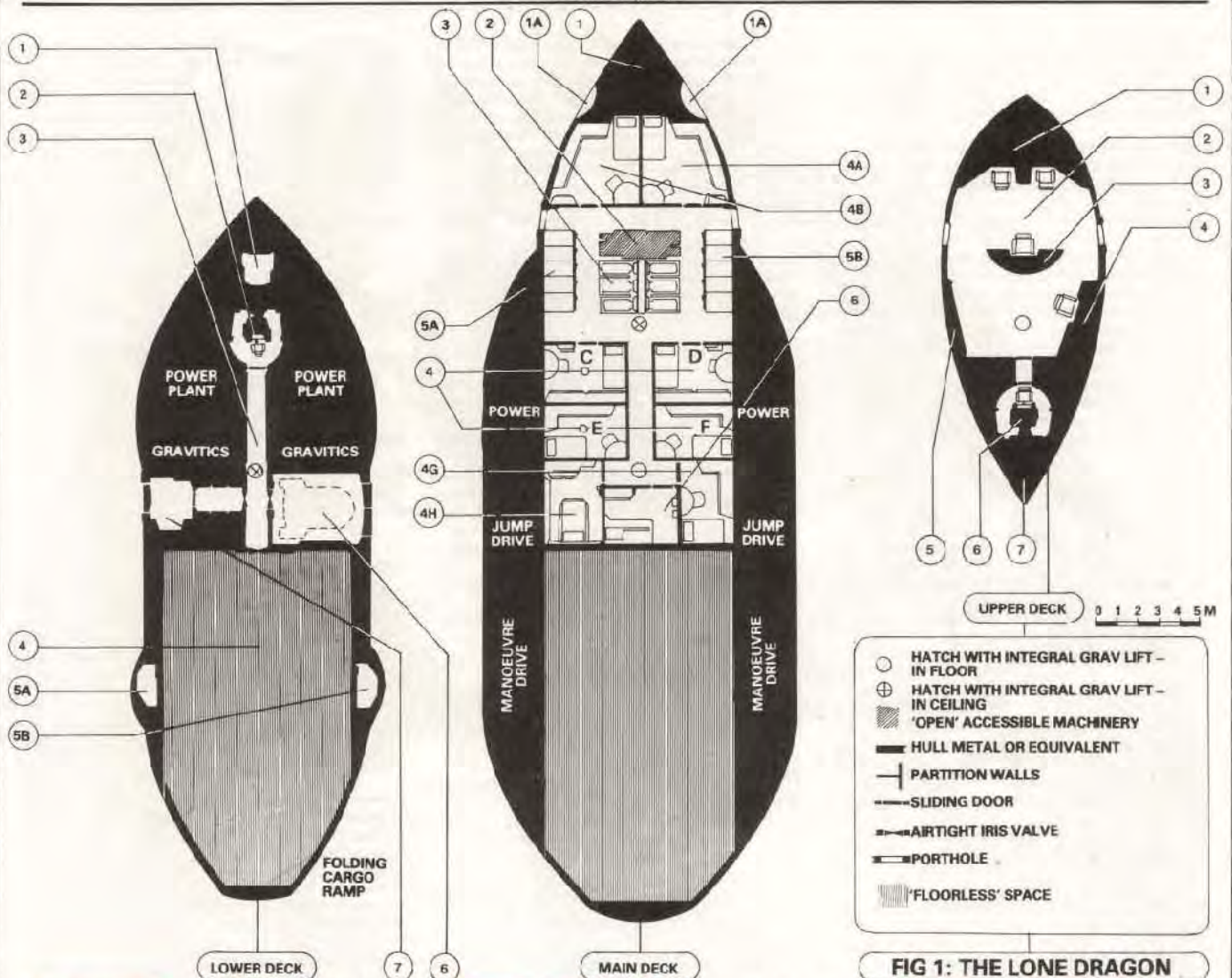
Both species are solitary and non-edible.

## The Guard

Jallion will leave details of the guard system to the party, but he will point out that the ship's dorsal turret carries a usable laser. He will veto any ideas that involve keeping the



# LONE DRAGON



**FIG 1: THE LONE DRAGON**

ship airborne, on the grounds that this would attract undesirable attention, but he will admit to the occasional air-raft patrol as being innocuous enough.

## LONE DRAGON

High Guard statistics for this 'armed trader-yacht' are as follows:

*Lone Dragon* MYN-31323S1-020000-20002-0  
300 tons; Batteries bearing 1, 2, 1; TL=14  
Batteries 1, 2, 1; Crew=8  
Fuel:100. EP:3. Agility:2. Cargo:51  
Passengers:2

**Construction:** 'Dragon' class vessels are constructed by GSBAG to the special order of the Koan nobility, hence 'limited volume' standard design techniques are applied. Most models have minor variations.

**Hull:** 300 ton 'needle' with extensive aerodynamic surfaces.

**Crew:** Nominally 8; pilot, co-pilot/navigator, two engineers, two gunners, medic, steward.

**Electronics:** Ichiban Model/2bis main computer with extensive security features, both 'bolt-on' and incorporated into the comprehensive software package by ProbeLogic Systems LIC. Terminals on bridge and in all cabins, the latter also linked into an Ichiban recreational games system. Independent security systems by Interstellarms-Ward LIC.

**Armament:** Dorsal double turret with beam laser and sandcaster. Integral fire control. All standard Interstellarms LIC equipment. Ten missiles (6 nuclear, 4 HE) and five sand canisters are carried.

**Craft:** One light air-craft.

**Fuel Treatment:** None.

**Drives:** All standard GSBAG systems, giving jump 3 and 2-G. These, and the (factor-3) power plant, are all sophisticated, if temperamental, designs.

## Key (Figure One)

Movement between floors on this vessel is achieved using sophisticated (and expensive) 'grav-lifts'. In the event of power failure, metal ladders built into the grav-lift shafts may be used. All controls follow standard patterns; ship's gravity is set to 1G, and may be cut off fairly easily from the bridge, but more delicate adjustments would require extensive engineering work. Emergency iris valves can seal off the lift shafts in emergencies. External doors and hatches may only be opened to vacuum if the computer receives a safety override command from the bridge.

## Upper Deck (Bridge)

1. Pilot/co-pilot console.
2. Bridge.
3. Navigation/master computer console.
4. Main engineering console.
5. Secondary Engineering/Damage control display board.
6. Dorsal turret controls.
7. Secondary scanner units.

## Main Deck

1. Primary scanners. (1A: Main scanner aerials.)
2. Computer CPU.
3. Emergency Low Berths (accommodate 10).
4. Staterooms. Jallion will take 4A. 4G is equipped with basic medical facilities, scanners, monitors, etc; 4H is linked by special intercom to all the rest of the ship, and is normally the steward's berth.)

5. Lockers. Hold ten basic-type vacc suits, weapons racks, etc.
6. Galley. Holds food concentrates, automated kitchen equipment, etc.

## Lower Deck

1. Forward landing leg bay.
2. Ventral turret controls.
3. Access way.
4. Main Hold (occupies two decks).
5. Aft landing leg bays. (A: port; B: starboard).
6. Air-raft compartment.
7. Personal airlock.

**Notes:** A vessel built to this standard would probably cost around MCr190-200 (including the extensive anti-gravity units, which occupy 26 tons of space, and the special aerodynamic fittings, which take up another four); this does not include the cost of the luxurious interior decor, or the special locking and security systems.

Two non-standard computer programmes are carried in the data banks, both specific to this vessel;

**Avionic Control** - Space 3, Price 3.5. Allows the craft to be flown in atmosphere as a jet aircraft, by any person with Jet Aircraft skill.  
**Gun Guidance** - Space 2, Price 2.5. Allows operation of either turret by character without Gunner skill. *Target* must be run simultaneously; *Gunner Interact* and *Selective* cannot be run simultaneously.

Other programmes carried are: *Predict 3*, *Gunner Interact*, *Target*, *Selective 2*, *Multi-Target 2*, *Launch*, *Auto/Evade*, *Anti-Missile*, *ECM*, *Manoeuvre*, *Jump 1*, *Jump 2*, *Jump 3*, *Library*, *Navigation*, *Generate*, *Anti-Hijack*.



**BACKGROUND**

Jallion has been a reasonably honest patron, but he has not mentioned everything. To begin with, the full standard library entry on his home world runs as follows:

**KOA** (Koa/Dartho-75666D4-9-0604) A minor non-industrial planet, within the Imperium but autonomously governed by a powerful theocratic aristocracy, with Imperial-Koan relations governed by treaty. The general level of technological development on Koa is believed to be quite low, but the planet's aristocrats are in limited contact with Imperial culture, and are known to purchase quantities of high technology equipment. Data on Koa is limited, however, as the Koan government restricts trade to licensed and controlled dealings, most transfers of cargo taking place in orbit above the planet, or in other systems reached by Koan freighters. The Imperium accepts the Koan right to impose such restrictions. TAS Amber Zone.

The full story is different again. The Koan nobility was founded in about 610, during the Civil Wars, by an alliance of the world's already-powerful theocratic nobility and a fugitive pirate fleet. The latter supplied a large arsenal of sophisticated military equipment; the former supplied a political base and a glibble peasantry. Careful building from this base has enabled the aristocracy to set themselves up as virtual demigods, ruling vast estates peopled by superstitious and fearful serfs.

When the Imperium contacted Koa, the local lords refused to accept either the obligations of normal Imperial membership, or the restraints of interdiction. They threatened to declare any Imperial personnel landing on the planet to be demons, raising the peasants against them and making the world ungovernable. They also took care to create limited trade links with the Imperium, using their existing ships and others purchased with the resources of an entire planet.

The Imperium has – so far – grudgingly accepted the situation, although cautious attempts are made to discourage trade with Koa. This has proved difficult, however, as a number of merchants are happy to accept the restrictions placed on those receiving Koan trading permits from the 'God Lords'. Exports of jewellery, gem shells, minerals extracted from primitive mines by peasant labour, organics unique to Koa and rare foodstuffs have paid for a fleet of four *Dragon* class trader-yachts (including the *Lone Dragon*) for running light cargoes to other systems as well as frightening the peasants and simple joy-rides, seven *Dragonguard* System Defence Boats for seeing off unwelcome visitors, three standard-type ninety-five ton ground-to-orbit shuttles, and various other useful gadgets.

No political system is indestructible. Cracks have appeared in the Koan lords' unity, and there is dispute over policy. Jallion is, in fact, a renegade Koan aristocrat: the *Lone Dragon* has been appropriated rather irregularly. Jallion fled Koa a few months ago, and has spent the time since having minor work done on his vessel to improve its usefulness in ground defence, and in various other, private tasks. Now, his cash has run low and he is gambling that a quick trip to his own estates to raise more will succeed; the Koan lords hate showing disunity, particularly in front of the peasants, he has friends in the local guard forces, and he left the whole scene in some disarray.

This judgement is a serious miscalculation. An orthodox, authoritarian group has attained ascendancy on Koa, and having detected his ship when it arrived in system, will act to capture or destroy him.

**Koa System**

The referee should take note of certain facts in running this scenario. Two *Dragonguard* class boats are always in low orbit around the

planet, two more are generally grounded for routine maintenance, and the other three are usually patrolling the system's gas giants. These vessels have standard military detectors, and will intercept, interrogate, and usually chase off any unauthorised vessel entering the system. (Authorised vessels include a number of licensed merchants, mostly free and far traders, who are very discreet in their activities, wishing both to avoid Imperial displeasure and to remain on good terms with the Koan lords, whose exports provide them with large profits.) The boats are crewed by junior nobles, all of whom are carefully selected for their loyalty to their elders and general incorruptibility.

**Koan Troops**

Koan forces represent more of a heavy-handed security force than an army, although their fanatical courage and obedience make them useful troops. Organisation is rather loose, although hierarchy is clearly defined. Command is exercised by the aristocracy; their soldiers are recruited from young peasants, chosen for strength, toughness, loyalty, and fanatical devotion to the 'gods', but not for intelligence. Most guard/police work is done by 'Heaven Warriors' with moderate weapons training, but youths of really extreme loyalty and slightly greater degree of intelligence may be chosen for the 'God Guard' – the aristocrats' personal body-guard.

**IRONMONGERY**

A variety of unusual devices and craft appear in this scenario; the notes that follow describe each in turn, with appropriate data.

**System Defence Boats**

These have *High Guard* statistics as follows:

**Dragonguard Class**  
SDB-26058D1-C30000-20002-0; 200 tons  
Batteries bearing 1, 3, 2; TL:13; Crew:8  
Batteries 1, 3, 2; Crew:8  
Fuel:20 tons. EP:16. Agility:5.

**Hull:** 200-ton flattened sphere with integral armour.

**Crew:** 8.

**Electronics:** Computer model 4fib. (Treat as model 4, but gains +2 on saves vs malfunction after hits).

**Craft:** None.

**Fuel Treatment:** Integral fuel scoops. No refinement facilities.

**Drives:** Power plant B and Manoeuvre 5 give 5G thrust. No jump capability.

**Armament:** Factor 12 armour. Forward triple turret with beam laser and two missile tubes; aft triple turret with sandcaster and two beam lasers.

**The Grav Sleds**

The Koan nobility uses a large, armed, open-topped air-raft design in a military-cum-police role. This has the following characteristics:

**Price:** About Cr900,000

**Top Speed:** 200 kph.

**Passengers:** 12.

**Crew:** 2 (Pilot, co-pilot/gunner).

**Cruising speed:** 125 kph.

**Cargo:** Personal military gear only.

**Armament:** Two heavy tac missiles on launch rails, plus low power laser target designator for same; fixed forward-firing gun equal to gauss rifle with integral auto-loader mounted under nose.

**Note:** These vehicles are painted in a colourful 'dragon' design similar to Jallion's ship (as are the SDBs). The planet's peasantry will regard any vehicle lacking such marking as the craft of an evil demon.

**Neuronic Whips**

These are tech 12+ devices using a complex electron resonance effect that triggers electrochemical reactions. They resemble bulky pistols attached to small power packs, and produce a field focussed into a tight beam; on Koa they are known as 'wrath scourges', as their function is to induce pain.

On most worlds, neuronic whips are banned for moral reasons; as their military usefulness is severely limited, there are rarely any practical objections to this. On Koa, however, they are carried as marks of rank, and see useful service with nobles seeking to keep the peasantry cowed. *Traveller* statistics are as follows:

Defender's Armour					
Nothing	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat Battle
0	0	0	0	-1	0 -4
Range					
Close	Short	Medium	Long	Wound	Inflicted
+2	+2	-2	no	Special	
Required Dexterity		Advantageous Dexterity			
Level	DM	Level	DM		
7	-1	9	+2		

**Note:** 'Pistol' skill is applicable to this weapon.

A note on armour: the only real defence against the whip's field is heavy radiation shielding – as provided by battle dress – but an all-enveloping metallic conductor – such as reflect – provides some limited defence against this weapon.

**Effects:** The neuronic whip triggers every nerve in the victim's body, producing brief paralysis and a sensation often compared to being eaten by red-hot ants. The practical result is temporary incapacitation, lasting 1-2 rounds if the hit was at medium range, 2-7 otherwise. In addition, the victim suffers a cumulative -2 on morale throws for the rest of the fight. Repeated experience of the field effect may cause permanent psychological damage.

**Power Pack, Data:**

**Weapon Weight:** 900 grams

**Power Pack Weight:** 1000 grams

**Shots/Pack:** 30

**Length of Weapon:** 185mm.

**Base Cost\*:** Cr2300

**Spare Power Pack:** Cr800

**Recharge Cost:** Cr100

**Recharge Time\*\*:** 5 hours

\*When available, which is rare. Black market costs are higher and vary widely.

\*\*Requires a high-energy power source; a ship's power plant is one possibility.

**SPECIAL COMBAT RULES**

**Space**

If the space combat occurs in the course of this adventure, referees will probably find the *Starter* rules more useful than the *High Guard* system. In such a case, the following notes and special rules apply.

A. Koa has Earth-type density (D=1), and an atmosphere providing resistance equal to sand against laser fire up to a few miles from the surface.

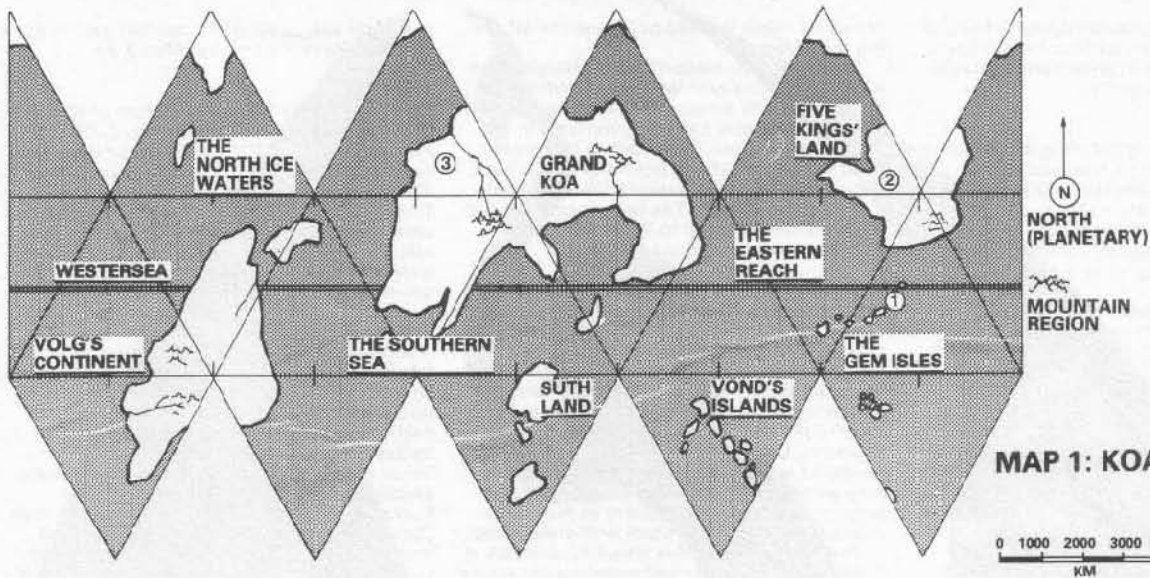
B. The SDBs will use nuclear missiles (small tactical devices) in combat; these do the standard 1d hits. The HE missiles carried by the *Lone Dragon* do 1d-1 hits, if used. Both types accelerate at 10G.

C. Sandcasters are assumed to produce 100 mile (160km) diameter clouds of particles, giving -3 on laser fire, up to 100 miles from the launching ship, with its move vector at the time of use. These are subject to gravitational effects.

D. *Dragonguard* class SDBs are crewed by individuals with skills of 2 in their work. They have all standard combat computer programmes, their fibre-optic back up computers have +2 on all saves against malfunction. The heavy hull armour of the *Dragonguard* craft gives opposing laser fire a -2 hit DM, and reduces the number of hits inflicted by opposing missiles by one.

**Note:** From the Koan viewpoint, nothing in this incident is likely to justify activating their planetary defences, which are sited in extremely well-protected positions in various mountain regions round Koa, particularly

LONE DRAGON

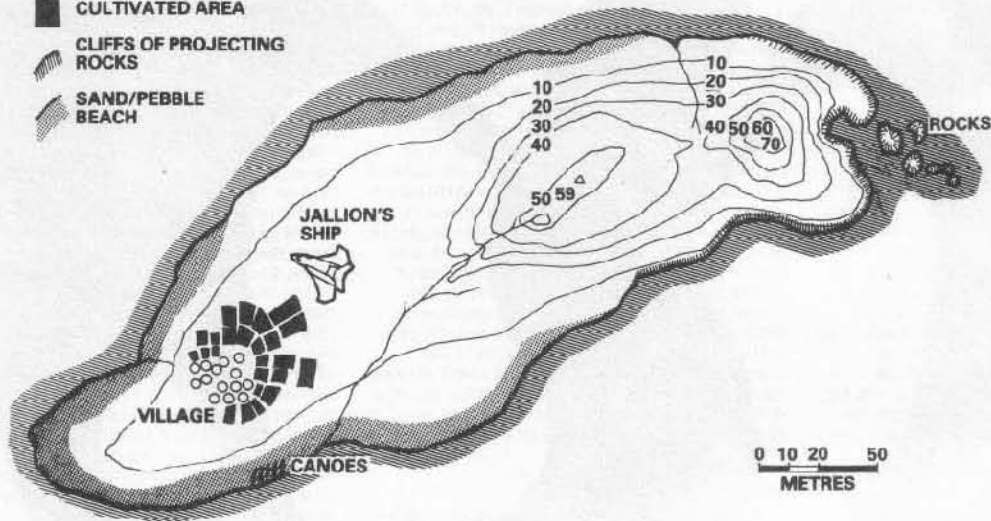


MAP 1: KOA

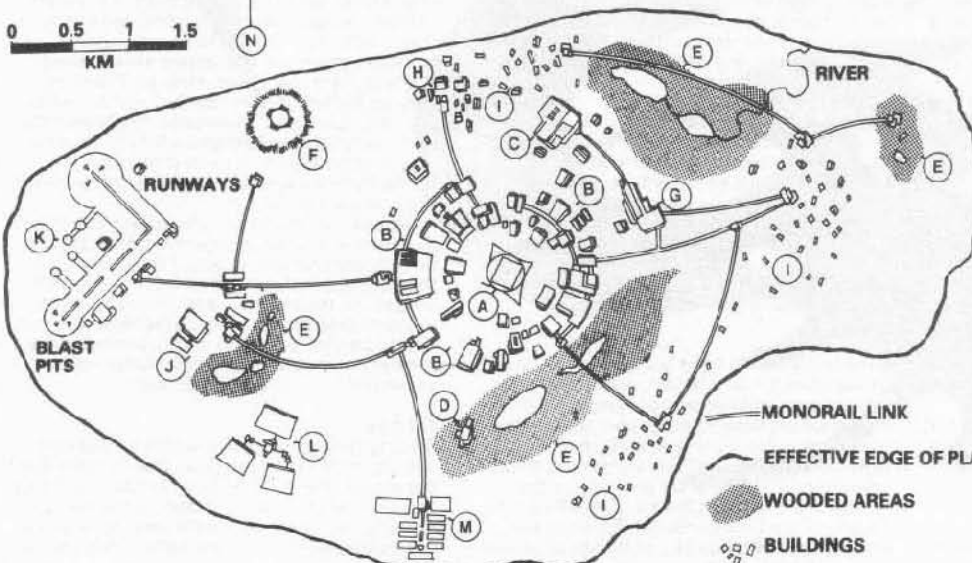
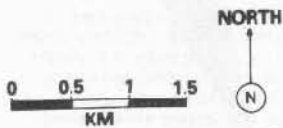
KEY  
CONTOUR LINES 10M INTERVALS

- CULTIVATED AREA
- ▨ CLIFFS OF PROJECTING ROCKS
- ▨ SAND/PEBBLE BEACH

MAP 2: THE ISLAND



MAP 3: PALACE OF THE GOD LORDS



KEY

- A Central Meeting Hall
- B Sports and Recreation Halls, etc...
- C Computer/Clerical Centre
- D Palace of the Council Chairman
- E Ornamental Parks
- F Fusion Power Plant (Behind Earth Bank)
- G Hospital Complex
- H School
- I Mansions
- J Heaven Warrior Barracks
- K Spaceport/Airfield
- L Secondary Power Plant - Solar Panel Complex
- M Greenhouses



round the capital. These are designed to prevent major assaults on surface installations, and include batteries of short-range missile launchers and fusion guns.

### Ground

Any land-based battles occurring in the course of this adventure can be resolved using *Book 1/Mercenary* rules and a little referee's initiative. The following notes apply.

A. Koan forces are armed as follows:

**Nobles:** Mesh + Reflex (cf Jallion), short-range comm, IR goggles, foil, laser rifle, neuronics whip.

**Heaven Warriors:** Mesh, short-range comm, IR goggles, ornate staves (treat as cudgel), SMG with three magazines, four tech-14 HE grenades, iron rations for one week.

**God Guards:** Cloth + Reflex, short-range comm, IR goggles, jewelled dagger (value Cr250), laser carbine, neuronics whip.

Nobles' skills are noted later. Heaven Warriors have SMG-1, Cudgel-1, while God Guards have Laser Carbine-2, Neuronics Whip-2, Dagger-1. The former have average UPP value around A79515, the latter around A8A728.

B. Koan organisation is loose. Each assault will be led by a grav-sled carrying the noble, five God Guards as his personal bodyguard, and six Heaven Warriors, while the other craft carry twelve Heaven Warriors each. Heaven Warriors have +2 to morale while the noble survives, +4 if he is nearby, but -4 if he is incapacitated or killed. Vehicle crews halve these benefits but have the same penalty; God Guards never need check morale. All non-nobles have limited initiative.

C. The grav-sled gunner may fire one weapon per round at a +1 skill DM, two at -1, or all three at -3. If the co-pilot is incapacitated, the pilot may fire one weapon per round at -1. The pilots have skill Air-Raft-2; if they are incapacitated, the co-pilot may make a bumpy but safe landing on a roll of 8+ (DM +1 for every thousand feet of altitude). The craft have guns equal to gauss rifles set to full auto fire with effectively unlimited ammunition, and missiles equal to a RAM-GL +2, using the HEAP factors but with the Additional Damage from HE Rounds rule applying.

D. Attacks on air-rafts and grav-sleds may affect various components: roll 1d12 - null-g modules, 3 - crew (select which randomly), 4 - passenger, 5 - one weapon, 6 - controls (out of control for 1 round; 50% likely to crash). Weapons capable of multiple hits may make multiple rolls on this table. The Koan grav-sleds have six null-g modules (rather than the standard four). All mechanical components are armoured as cloth.

E. The *Lone Dragon's* beam laser has effectively unlimited range; it uses auto-cannon range factors, no armour DMs, and gunner skill as a positive DM if anyone thinks to run a gunner interact programme on the ship's computer. It also uses the group hits by shotgun rule, and its hits do 15d damage.

The only weapons likely to affect the ship (other than the SDBs' armaments) are tac missiles. These treat the vessel as unarmoured, but only have an effect on a 2d roll of 8+.

### Use of Striker Rules

It is possible, although by no means essential, to use this scenario as the basis of a *Striker* skirmish, particularly if a small group of player-characters acts as a recruiting agency for Jallion and raises a mercenary band for him; another player, or the referee, may act as the Koan commanders. *Striker* Book 2 contains extensive rules to cover such possibilities; the following special notes also apply. Koan nobles have morale factor 12 and high initiative; God Guards are all elites, but have only average initiative; vehicle crew, Heaven Warriors etc. are organised as Long Service forces, but have low initiative. Non-noble Koans have an additional morale modifier of +2 if a live noble is within 7cm, but suffer a permanent -5 modifier if their com-

manding noble is killed or incapacitated during the battle.

The Koan grav-sleds must be 'designed' as tech-14 vehicles with weapons to match. They are lightly armoured (value 6 steel) and open-topped, and have no avionics for economic reasons. They carry a low power laser with no weapons potential which functions both for target designation and direct-line communication. The tac missiles carried have warheads equal to 15cm HEAP CPR rounds, and a maximum 1km range.

### THE FIGHT AND AFTER

The first attack will come shortly after dawn on the third morning of the party's time on the planet. Three grav-sleds will come in fast and low to use the cover of the rising sun; one 'command sled' and two 'ordinary' groups will be involved. This force will be led by Lord I'Kath (UPP 6888AE, age 28, skills - Air-Raft-1, Leader-1, Carousing-1, Foil-2, Laser Rifle-2, Medic-1), who will seek to disable Jallion's ship as soon as possible, but who is wise enough to deploy his infantry as quickly as possible if the defenders look well-entrenched.

The Koans expect this attack to succeed. If it should fail, another will appear eight hours later, consisting of eight grav-sleds - one 'command sled' and seven Heaven Warrior groups. The leader this time will be Lord Volmion (UPP 6978AE, age 41, skills - Foil-2, Laser Rifle-1, Neuronics Whip-1, Admin-2, Tactics-2, Leader-1, Survival-1, Hunting-1), who will be more cautious than I'Kath, but just as ruthless, and just as aware of the advantages of knocking out the *Lone Dragon*.

Both commanders will know Jallion slightly, and will hold him in contempt; their attitude to the party will be even more arrogant. Should the second attack fail, the Koan lords will contact the *Lone Dragon* after about an hour, demanding surrender and threatening to annihilate the island. This threat is deadly serious; a few minutes later, a pair of SDBs will appear and circle the island, and their nuclear missiles are quite capable of such destruction. If the party flees at any stage, these boats will move to capture or destroy the *Lone Dragon* immediately; they will start from fairly low orbits over the planet. (Note that the yacht will need at least 15-16 rounds to reach a safe point for a jump.) A third boat, and a *Dragon* class yacht, will be able to lift from the Palace of the God-Lords after 2-3 hours.

### The Villagers

As soon as the first attack appears, the natives will panic, rush around blindly, and eventually take cover in their huts, where they will probably remain until starvation forces them out. These religious primitives will be impossible to deal with subsequently, having witnessed gods in unthinkable conflict, and some may even decide that the party are really demons, but will be too scared to do anything about this.

### Jallion

The party's patron will also over-react. He did not expect to be attacked on Koa, and the subsequent nervous strain will cause him to become highly indecisive. He will convince himself rather easily that the first attack will not be followed up, and he will tell the party little without being pressured. However, he will become highly subjected to the demands of a forceful party member.

### Capture

If the party lose a fight but survive, they will be separated from Jallion, disarmed, and treated with indifferent contempt. They will be put under heavy guard, and eventually transported from the island (1) in a cargo grav-carrier. They will first be taken to a rather spartan military base (2) and, soon afterwards, from there to the capital of Koa, The Palace of the God-Lords (3). This has the appearance of a wealthy non-industrial town on a high plateau in a mountain region, but

the party will be held in a spartan gaol in the Heaven Warrior barracks (*Map 3, K*).

### The Palace

This community has a population of about 550 aristocrats, 700 God Guards, 2,000 Heaven Warriors, 400 specialists (mechanics, courtesans, etc), and 2,000 menial servants. The social hierarchy is rigid and unquestioned. Transport around the site is either by small, fast monorail cars, or by lightweight electric 'buggy' (carrying up to four people), as most of the open spaces are grass or gravel covered.

### The Position

A captured off-world party represents a problem for the Lords, given the complex political situation. The aristocrats theoretically make all decisions in council, but in practice such parliaments are rare; for convenience, day-to-day decisions are taken by a twelve-man 'inner council', which actually wields considerable power; it is this group which has become highly authoritarian, and which took the decision to attack Jallion. Opinions on most matters vary widely within the nobility, but the present inner council is composed of ten hard-line traditionalists - including the chairman - and two 'moderates', who believe in flexible response to circumstances. The 'Palace' as a whole contains perhaps sixty or seventy hardliners, two hundred and eighty moderates, thirty or forty 'progressivists', who seek better relations with the Imperium for various reasons, and about a hundred of the military forces are generally 'hardline'; most of the yacht pilots are 'progressive'. There are perhaps sixty or seventy more aristocrats away from the 'Palace', hunting, running private estates, or commanding garrisons, but if these had strong political viewpoints, they would be at the Palace.

The nobles will consider various solutions to the problem posed by the party, ranging from the hardliners' favourite - immediate execution - to straightforward release. The moderates, who are currently backing the hardliners against the 'dangerously impetuous' progressivists, will fear that either course might bring trouble from the Imperium, and after about four days will support a compromise - lobotomy to induce partial amnesia, followed by release. As the state of medicine on Koa is relatively primitive, the party will therefore have to escape, or lose three points of Intelligence, two of Education, one of Dexterity, and one randomly-determined level of skill.

### Escape

A number of possibilities are open here. A progressivist sympathiser in the military forces might offer aid in return for help in freeing Jallion - actually a progressivist extremist - from captivity in one of the Lords' mansions, but such generous characters should have limits to their resources. Heaven Warriors may be fooled or diverted, but not bribed or coerced. 'Licensed' merchants might ship the party off-planet in exchange for bribes, or in repayment of favours from progressivist Lords, but they will be desperate not to offend the powers-that-be.

Escape into the Koan wilderness could be dangerous. Animal encounter tables should be prepared by the referee if the party tries this, but the real danger comes from Lords - who know the terrain - and from peasants, who will take the party for demons, and attack if they survive a morale check. Nonetheless, the option is open, and might enter into an extended version of this scenario.

### Off Koa

A party that escapes this world is probably safe, but the referee is quite free to consider the possibility that the Koan Lords could hire forces to neutralise or recapture the party; equally, the Imperial Secret Service is probably interested in any stories about this annoying world. □



Starbase is a bimonthly column featuring readers' ideas for Traveller, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# BATTLE STATIONS

## Ship Combat Damage by J Evans and E Wilson

The damage system in the *High Guard* ship combat rules is very simplistic in some respects. For example, a pulse laser firing on a dreadnought could, in theory, inflict hundreds of thousands of tons of damage, and a type T meson firing on a tiny fighter rolling exactly the same roll could only do a couple of tons of damage. Therefore we have devised this damage system as an alternative.

### Procedure

1. Roll 'To Hit' using the *High Guard* tables.
2. Roll 2d6 on *Table 1*. Moving across from the result, the number in the correct column for the weapon USP is taken.
3. Add the result to the roll of a d6 and find the total in the left hand column of *Table 2*. The figure in the right hand column besides it is the tonnage of damage done. If this exceeds the total tonnage of the target ship, then it is completely destroyed.
4. If the value is not larger than the target ship's total tonnage, then one roll is made in the correct part of *Table 3*.

5. The area indicated by this roll then has the previously found damage tonnage destroyed. If the damage is done to a computer, spinal mount, drive or to the bridge (avionics) and less than 50% of this is destroyed, then *Table 4* is consulted to see if the system is still operative. If the damage has been done to an area that is already partly destroyed, then the remaining tonnage of this area receives the damage. If the damage is done to a totally destroyed system, indicated by the exterior hit section of *Table 3*, then this does not count and instead it is inflicted on a system indicated by a roll on the interior hit section.

6. If the weapon being used is a particle accelerator or a nuclear missile, then the tonnage of damage indicated is taken on an area indicated by the radiation damage section of *Table 3*. Then stages 2 and 3 are repeated, using only one die instead of two on *Table 1* to give material damage, done to an area found by rolling on the exterior damage section of *Table 3*.

7. If the tonnage of damage exceeds the tonnage of an area and the hit was an exterior hit, then another hit location roll is made, this time on the interior explosion table. This is to simulate the effect of a large explosion. If the remaining damage exceeds the tonnage of the interior system, then this is also completely destroyed and another area is selected on the interior hits table. This procedure is repeated until all the damage has been used up.

8. You will notice that crew casualties are not given on the interior and exterior explosion tables. This is because any explosion would cause casualties; therefore a percentage of the total crew

is killed equal to the percentage of the ship destroyed. Thus a 400 ton ship receiving 100 tons of damage would have 25% of its crew killed. Note that this also applies for radiation damage.

If a drive, spinal mount, computer or the avionics of a ship are hit, and more than 50% of the system is destroyed, then it will not function. If, however, less than 50% of the system is destroyed there is a chance of it functioning. For all systems mentioned (here drives include power plants) roll 1d6 and use the result in the correct column for the percentage of the system destroyed.

If the damaged system is a drive, and a \* is shown, then the drive functions at half value. MIN indicates that the drive functions, but at minimum value. KO indicates that the drive is completely non-functional.

If a computer is the damaged system, and a \* is shown in the table, then either the ship drives or weaponry can be used, but not both at once. If MIN is given, then only one of the two again can be used, and this time at half value. If KO is indicated then neither can be used. Note that turret weapons can always be used, but without computer guidance they fire at -5.

If the avionics are damaged then the ship functions at half agility and acceleration for a \* reading, and no agility and minimum acceleration for a MIN reading. If KO is given then the ship cannot manoeuvre.

If the spinal mount is damaged and a \* is shown then it functions at the USP halfway between A and its own. If MIN is given it functions at USP A. If KO is given it cannot function. □

Table 1

Dice	USP Weapon Code																											
Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	
2	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
3	0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
4	0	0	1	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
5	0	0	2	3	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
6	0	0	2	4	5	7	9	10	12	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	
7	0	0	2	4	6	8	10	12	15	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	
8	0	0	3	4	6	10	14	16	18	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	
9	0	1	3	5	7	11	16	18	20	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	
10	0	1	3	6	8	12	18	22	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
11	0	1	4	6	8	13	18	22	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
12	1	2	4	6	9	15	18	22	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	

Table 2

1	1	13	45	25	250	37	4000
2	2	14	50	26	300	38	5000
3	3	15	60	27	350	39	7000
4	4	16	70	28	400	40	8000
5	5	17	80	29	450	41	11000
6	6	18	90	30	500	42	13000
7	7	19	100	31	1000	43	15000
8	8	20	120	32	1500	44	18000
9	9	25	140	33	2000	45	21000
10	10	30	160	34	2500	46	24000
11	11	35	180	35	3000	47	27000
12	12	40	24	36	3500	48	30000

Table 3

3A. Exterior Explosion Damage	
2 Fuel	Use for lasers, energy weapons, non-nuclear missiles, nuclear missiles and particle accelerators doing material damage.
3 Turrets	
4 M-Drives	
5 M-Drives	
6 Bays	
7 Fuel	
8 Fuel	
9 J-Drives	
10 Turrets	
11 Spinal Mount	
12 Spinal Mount	

**Note:** On all parts of this table, if the indicated item is not present on the ship, then another roll is made on the same table.

3B. Interior Explosion Damage.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Fuel	Fuel Purifiers	Staterooms	Power Plant	M-Drives	Turrets
2 Fuel	Low Berths	Screens	Power Plant	M-Drives	Bays
3 Fuel	Low Berths	Boats	Power Plant	M-Drives	Bays
4 Fuel	Staterooms	Boats	Power Plant	J-Drives	Spinal Mount
5 Fuel	Staterooms	Bridge	J-Drives	M-Drives	Spinal Mount
6 Fuel	Staterooms	Bridge	J-Drives	Computers	Spinal Mount

Use for meson guns and any weapon totally destroying an exterior location. The avionics of a ship is the flight control equipment in the bridge. It makes up the tonnage of the bridge.

**Note:** Any hit on a screen bay or turret renders it useless.

3C. Radiation Damage.

1 Avionics	Use for particle accelerators and nuclear missiles.
2 Crew	
3 Crew	
4 Crew	
5 Crew	
6 Computer	

**Note:** If the damage exceeds the ship tonnage, then ignore the excess.

Table 4

	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%+
1 OK	*	*	*	*	MIN
2 *	*	*	*	MIN	MIN
3 *	*	MIN	MIN	KO	KO
4 *	MIN	MIN	KO	KO	KO
5 MIN	MIN	KO	KO	KO	KO
6 MIN	KO	KO	KO	KO	KO

trounging up to the nearest figure above each.



# DEAD OR ALIVE

## The Bounty Hunter as a Career in Traveller by Diane and Richard John

The volume of crime in the Imperium and the fragmentation of law agencies, coupled with the relative ease of space travel and the restrictions on speed of communication means that the likelihood of capture is relatively low. One answer to this problem would be a permanent Imperial or galactic police force of mammoth proportions using sophisticated technology. A cheaper alternative is to offer a reward for the capture of an offender, leaving the task to bounty hunters, thus the only expense incurred by the government depends on results, not lengthy pursuit.

### Authorisation

Warrants and rewards will be offered by legitimate governments at the planetary, subsector and Imperial levels. Less legitimate bounties may be offered by megacorporations, wealthy individuals, etc. The size of a bounty, for an individual or group, will vary according to the severity of the crimes, previous success in evading capture, who is offering the bounty and how badly the offender is wanted.

### Categories

There are four major categories of bounty:

1. **Alive.** A reward for the capture of the wanted individual.
2. **Dead or Alive.** A bounty permitting the return of a dead offender for a lesser amount than one who is alive. (Eg. alive: Cr2000, dead: Cr1000.)
3. **Dead or Alive.** A flat rate reward for the offender or the offender's corpse.
4. **Dead.** This is reserved for the most dangerous criminals who have usually been sentenced to death *in absentia*. The reward is for the execution of the felon. It is frowned upon by the Imperium and most central authorities. Many planets consider the 'execution' of the felon on their soil as murder.

### Collection of Bounty

This may be achieved by delivery of the prisoner, corpse (or a suitable portion thereof), or some form of pre-specified proof of death to any office or base (eg Scout base) stipulated on the declaration of reward.

### Organisation

Anyone may take up hunting criminals for the rewards offered. Therefore, in order to lend some degree of organisation and respectability to an occupation whose practitioners may be worse than those they hunt, several corporations have been formed and the Imperium has laid down a code of conduct and instituted an organisation of its own. The private corporations offer training, equipment, intelligence, etc. In return for 30% of the bounty taken.

The best hunters, ie the most successful, honest, law-abiding and with the fewest corpses for their name, have the option of applying for an Imperial Warrant to hunt criminals for reward. Issued under the somewhat obscure Imperial Edict 97 (see *Supplement 8*), the holders of this warrant receive extensive training, equipment, access to the information in the computers of the sub-sector and sector offices of the Imperial co-ordinators, and are permitted to pursue those restricted bounties offered by Imperial authority for certain offenders. The terms of these are often strin-

gent, such as the capture alive and unharmed of an individual or group who will stop at little to evade capture. Although frequently extremely dangerous they are equally remunerative. Warrant holders will receive aid and co-operation beyond that which a bounty hunter might ordinarily expect from planetary governments and agencies. Warrant holders (and, to a lesser extent, those employed by corporations) are required *not* to take Category 4 bounties, or those offered by private citizens or megacorporations (this latter restriction does not apply to corporate hunters), to bring in prisoners alive (whenever possible), not to break local laws and to co-operate with local police, etc. An element of control can be maintained by rescinding the warrants and/or repossessing the ships of persistent offenders.

Characters generated on other tables (eg Army) who take up bounty hunting may apply for a warrant. Registration fee is Cr10,000, following a rigorous investigation into the character's past; the warrant will be issued on a roll of 10+, DMs to be decided by the referee in view of the character's past record. The investigation will take 1d6+2 months. Successful applicants must pay 10% of their yearly income for as long as they wish to use the warrant (this applies to those generated on the tables to follow). After a year a warrant holder may apply for a type H Hunter starship, roll 8+, DMs as for gaining the warrant.

### Character Generation

Entry to a bounty hunting corporation as an assistant hunter is on a roll of 6+, DMs +1 if Social Standing 6- and +2 if Intelligence 8-. There are no restrictions on race; there is no draft.

Survival on 7+, DMs +2 if INT 9+.  
Position on 9+, DMs +2 if EDUC 8+.  
Promotion on 9+, DMs +1 if EDUC 8+.  
Return on 4+.

Those wishing to apply for an Imperial warrant may do so after three terms, having first attained the title of Master Hunter. Success is on a roll of 10+, DMs +2 if EDUC 8+, +1 for SOC 8+. Successful candidates spend the rest of that term undergoing Imperial training. Throw 5+ on 1 die for each of the following: Pilot 1; Legal 1; Poison and Antidotes 1; Investigation (Stipulate: Research-1, Identification-1 or Examination-1); Hypo-gun-1; Security-1; Forgery-1; Holster Skill-1.

### Titles

1. Senior Hunter
  2. Master Hunter
  3. Senior Master
  4. Subsector Co-ordinator
  5. Sector Co-ordinator
- Imperial warrant holders may add the prefix 'Imperial' to the title.

### Automatic skills

On entry: Gun Combat-1; Subsector Co-ord Admin-1; Sector Co-ordinator Soc 1.

The following skills may be rolled for under the *Book 1* system or by allowing 3 rolls for the first term and 2 for subsequent terms with 1 skill for position and promotion.

### Personal Development

- 1 +1 STR
- 2 +1 DEX
- 3 +1 INT
- 4 Unarmed Combat-1
- 5 +1 END
- 6 Gun Cbt-1

### Service Skills

- 1 Security-1
- 2 Survival-1
- 3 Hunting-1
- 4 Bribery-1
- 5 Vehicle-1
- 6 Stealth-1

### Education

(Only After 2nd Term)

- 1 Forgery-1
- 2 Communications-1
- 3 Vacc Suit-1
- 4 Escape and Evasion-1
- 5 Computer-1
- 6 Disguise-1

### Advanced Education

(EDUC 8+)

- 1 Pilot-1
- 2 J.O.T-1
- 3 Navigation-1
- 4 Intelligence-1
- 5 Medicine-1
- 6 Engineering-1

### Mustering Out

Bounty hunters seldom retire or leave their occupations entirely, they simply go freelance. Warrant holders must serve at least two terms after they receive Imperial training prior to freelancing. Bounty hunters should be encouraged to continue skill acquisition via any system favoured by the referee to reflect the professionalism affected by corporate and Imperial trained hunters. Material benefits represent equipment acquired for personal use (often through a corporation at discounts). Cash benefits represent accumulated reward money.

### Material Benefits

- 1 Middle Passage
- 2 Weapon
- 3 High Passage
- 4 Tools
- 5 Weapon
- 6 Combat Armour
- 7 Type H Hunter

### Cash Benefits

- 1 10,000
- 2 10,000
- 3 40,000
- 4 40,000
- 5 70,000
- 6 100,000
- 7 200,000

**Die Modifiers:** Imperial Warrant: +1 on Material table, +2 on Cash. 'Rank' 5, +1 on Material, +1 on Cash. These are not cumulative.

### Benefit Descriptions

**Combat Armour:** As *Books 1 and 4*. (Note: The wearing of this in many places is going to cause much comment, warrant or no warrant.)

**Weapon:** Any weapon from any source permitted by the referee. Value *not* to exceed Cr5,000.

**Tools:** Any kit of tools as described in *Book 1* or *Supplement 4* or a kit containing tools suitable for circumventing security arrangements and so on.

**Type H Hunter:** A variant of the ubiquitous Type SN. This is acquired on a form of co-ownership basis with the character's former corporation. It is acquired along with a debt of half the value of the ship, payable over an almost indefinite period (the character may not dispose of it without the company's permission until she pays off what she owes. The debt amounts to MCr18.91. Warrant holders have free use of the ship in the same manner as the Scouts.

### Skill Definitions

Refer to the following for definitions for the above skills:

*Book 1* - Bribery, J.O.T, Navigation, Medic, ENG, Pilot, Comp.

*Book 4* - Survival, Gun Cbt, Vehicle  
*Supplement 4* - Hunting.  
*Scouts & Assassins* - Unarmed Cbt, Stealth, Disguise, Intelligence, Escape and Evasion, Poisons and Antidotes.

*Merchants & Merchandise* - Security; Legal, Hypogun.

*SORAG* - Holster, Investigation.

### TYPE H HUNTER

H-1122111-010000-100000-0 MCr37.3; 100 tons; Crew: 1; Passengers: 2/4/6; Low: 4; Cargo: 3 tons; Agility: 0; Marines: 0; fuel scoops and purifiers; 1 triple turret (1 pulse, 1 send).

The type H is identical to the standard type SN except for the following alterations:



## DEAD OR ALIVE

### Major

The airlock in area 16, the reinforced walls around areas 14, 15 and 3, 4 requires 500 damage from energy or explosion weapons (bulkheads require 1000) to pierce a hole.

An electrifiable hull helps deter rescue attempts.

### Minor

Both the cabins are intended for double occupancy and have suitable fittings.

Area 8 contains a fresher.

A galley and pantry are located on the main deck as is a two ton hydroponics room with equipment for a wide range of specially grown fruit and vegetables.

Located in the engineering dept is a workshop with around Cr15000 worth of tools including oxy-acetylene welding gear.

A sick bay containing basic medical supplies and space for retrofitting an autodoc.

Areas 3 and 4 form the owner's cabin and office. In the latter is a computer terminal with facilities for full-length 3-D holograms of wanted felons and equipment for scanning fingertips, retina patterns, etc to confirm the identity of suspects.

Area 7 is the lounge/eating area. The two comconsols are primarily for entertainment. Area 10 is the hydroponics room.

Area 11 is the galley and ship's pantry/freezer area.

Area 14 contains 4 low berths for the transport of prisoners. Area 15 contains cell facilities for prisoners who can't be transported in cold sleep.

Area 16 is the airlock and EVA room.

Area 17 is the ship's locker (note sliding door not present in the type SN).

Area 18 is the air raft bay.

Area 19 - Gunnery.

Area 20 - Workshops.

Area 21 - Sickbay.

Area 22 - Sensors.

### Ship's Computer

The ship's computer is a standard Model 1/bis. If the recommendations in Marcus Rowland's *Database* article (WD48) are available to you, they should be implemented. (This gives a CPU of 6 and program costs should also be reduced in line with this.) The following programs are standard and are included in the cost of the ship to the character: *Jump 1 and 2* (jump governor is fitted), *Manoeuvre*, *Auto Evade*, *Navigate*, *Target*, *Return Fire*, *Launch*, *Library*, *Watchdog*.

*Watchdog* is a security program used to protect an empty ship. In addition to anti-hack functions it can be set to electrify the outer hull, fire ship's weaponry at anything entering a preset radius, activate drives or radars as anti-personnel weapons and operate other protective devices. Authorised personnel are recognised by portable computer signals or voice transmission codewords. [Note: *Watchdog* is illegal at Imperial spaceports due to its dangerous nature. Space: 2, Price: MCr1.1.]

Additionally, *Hunter*, a program which contains all known information on wanted criminals (including 3-D holograms, retina patterns, biometrics, etc, and the ability to compare an individual before it with its records of a particular criminal) is available. It

can be updated free of charge at any Imperial or corporate offices. The program takes 2 CPU spaces and costs MCr0.3.

### Ship's Security

This is controlled via the *Watchdog* program by the computer. All the doors and iris valves to the containment facility, the drive room (13), ship locker, air-raft bay, owner's quarters, bridge, gunnery and valve (12), will only open to a verbal command word from an authorised person.

There are surveillance cameras in location 14, 15 and on the ceiling next the valve at location 12. These can be monitored by the computer or from any comconsol. They are protected by transport plasteel hemispheres. The hull may be electrified (3d damage).

### Weaponry

The triple turret comes complete with pulse laser and sandcaster rack. The laser can be set to automatically fire on any ship which fires on the type H. In the presence of several targets the nearest will be attacked first; DMs -2 to hit, no skill DMs.

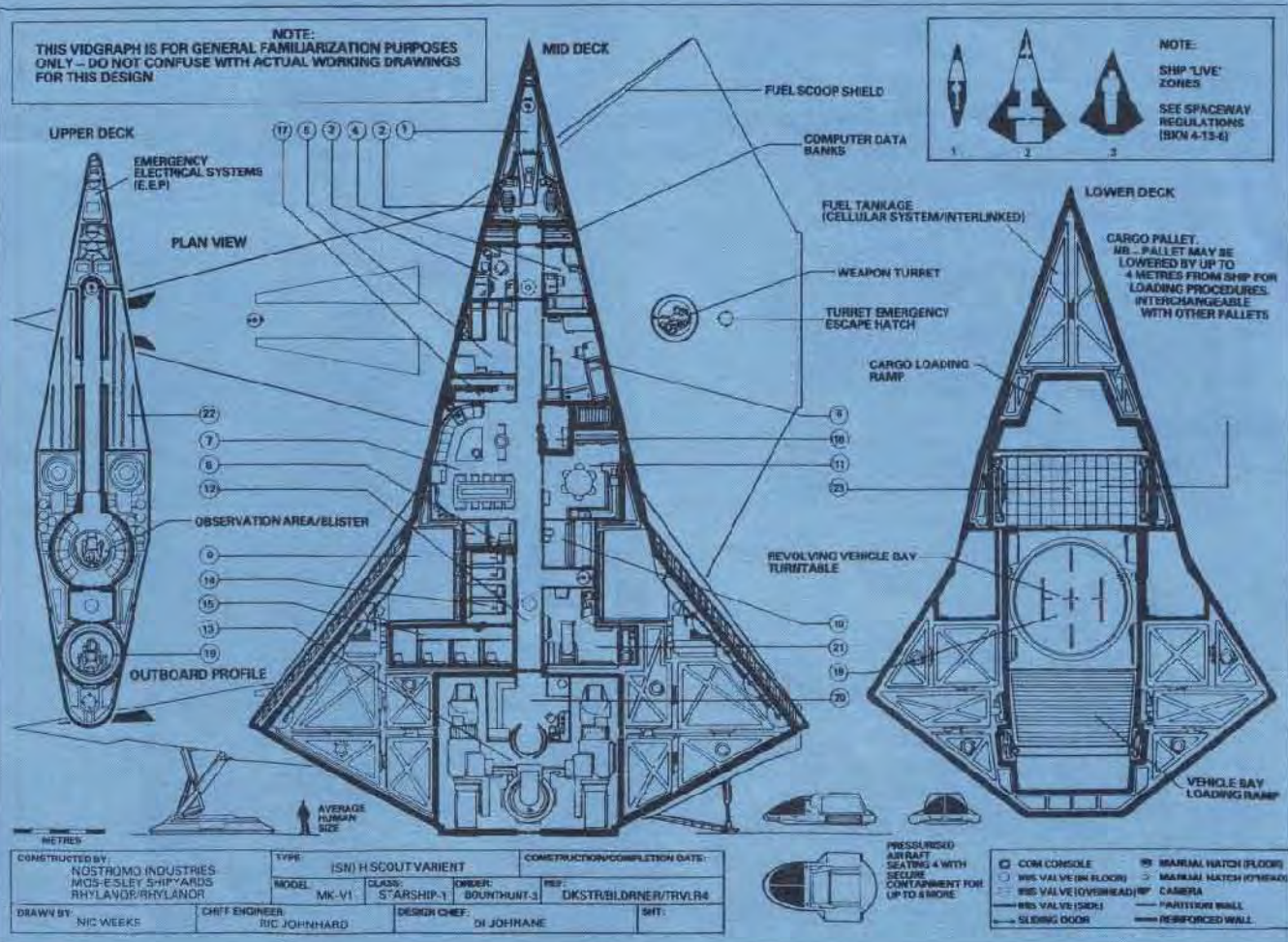
### Ship's Vehicle

This is a Ling Standard pressurised prospector's buggy modified for the carriage of prisoners. It performs as an air-raft and costs Cr62,000.

### Gravitics

The ship has standard inertial compensators and 1G floor field. However, the field in the containment area can be increased to 6G in the event of an escape attempt. □

## TYPE H HUNTER (SN VARIANT)





Starbase is a bimonthly department for Traveller enthusiasts, edited by Bob McWilliams.

# AVIONICS FAILURES

## Losing Your Long-Range Eyes by James Cooke

All ships possess avionics of some description; they may range from a simple Basic Sensor Package in a merchantman to a permanent ECM system in a warship. These, like computers, are affected by radiation damage, but there is no system which actually covers their failure in the *Traveller* game.

This article introduces such a system. It may mean extra work for the referee, but it can add more depth to a campaign or adventure. For instance, the players may own an old and failing Far Trader, whose avionics are about as reliable as the autochef... or consider the Scoutship that finds itself navigating in the dark, when what was once its sensor package is now a smoking panel in the corner...

Avionics are usually accessible from the bridge and require the removal of several inspection panels if they are to be repaired. The time for a repair varies with the seriousness of the fault. The time required to fix it should never be less than about 20 minutes, taking into

account fault-finding and the like.

Avionics failures are not always evident, either. The players' set may fail, taking a positive result as being false information, with no one being any the wiser. Eventually, periodic maintenance or experience would reveal the fault; however, it does provide several interesting possibilities for the referee in the short term. Remember, at space combat ranges all they know is what their sensors tell them.

Avionics are delicate and may fail for a number of reasons. Roll for failure when any of the following situations arise:

1. The ship receives a radiation damage result from the combat tables which need not actually cause damage, or is subject to a heavy dose of radiation from any other source.
2. Emerging from jump. Electromagnetic disturbances which will result on emerging from E-space, can cause a unit to fail.
3. The set is shot at, heavily jarred or

strained/overheated.

There are several other basic reasons for failure and these should be adjudicated by the referee as and when they arise.

### Roll for Failure

Basic roll is 12+ on two dice. DMs:  
 +1 per previous repair done by crew on that set.  
 +1 per point of radiation damage in combat.  
 +1 per ten points of damage if shot at etc. (Cumulative, roll each time hit.)

If this roll is successful, proceed to the *Failure* table. A natural roll of two causes a problem which is due to calibration and may not be fixed by the player. Likewise a 12 result is also unreparable.

By Imperial regulations, a ship not possessing a Basic Sensor Package (BSP) of some description is not fit to fly, and it will have its 'Fitness To Fly' papers withdrawn until such time as the unit is repaired or replaced. The fine for flying without a BSP is Cr1d x 10,000 and possible confiscation of ship if lack of such a unit led to a dangerous situation.

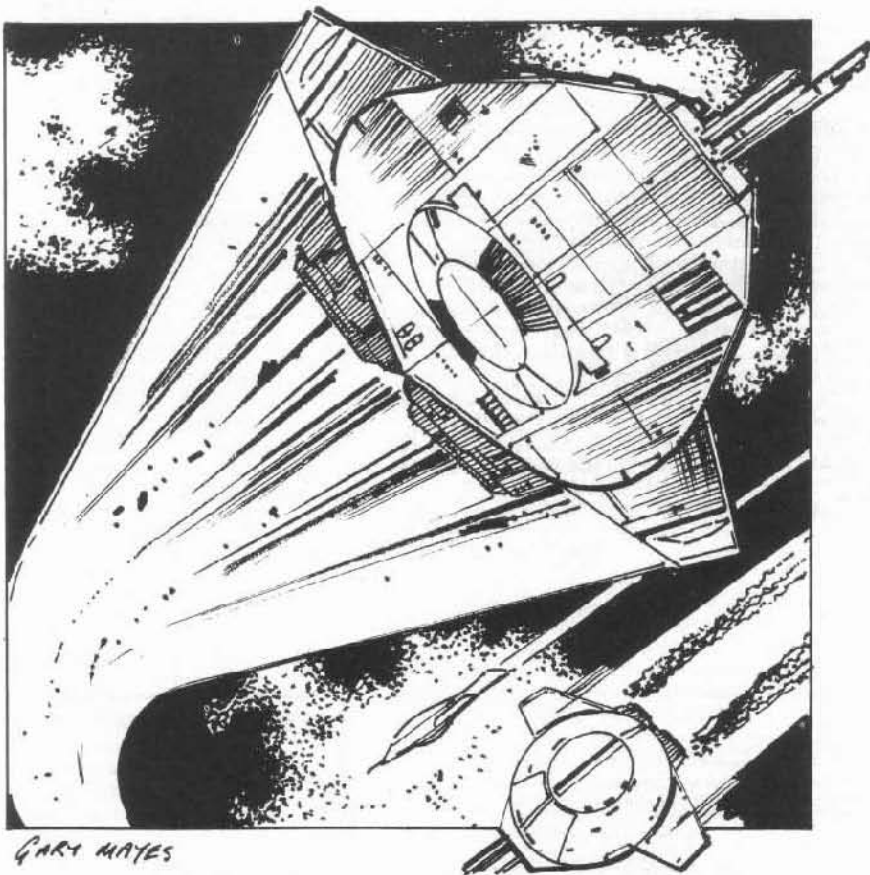
### FAILURE TABLE (Roll 2d)

Result	Problem	Cost to Fix (Cr)	Roll to Fix
2	No major problem - bad resolution	1d x 100	-
3	Occasional conflicting information	1d x 500	8+
4-5	Aerial problem - no signal	1d x 1000	8+
6-7	Range reduction	1d x 5000	9+
8-9	Erratic signal - display flickers	1d x 1000	8+
10	Reduced effectiveness (eg ECM)	1d x 1500	9+
11	False information	1d x 10% cost	10+
12	Complete failure	2d x 10% cost	-

The 'roll to fix' has the following DMs: +1 per Electronic skill level or +1 per Mechanical skill level if the problem is with the aerial. If fixed by starport maintenance personnel the time required, including testing and calibration, is 1-3 days, and all accumulated pluses so far are halved. If the set is fixed by a crew member, then for each time it subsequently fails add the number to the result roll, for example, for two previous repairs by crew members, add +2 to the 'roll to fix'. The DM for reliability should be recorded by the referee from game to game for future avionics failures.

In order to compute the cost of the repairs due to 'false information' or 'complete failure', the Basic Sensor Package, with which all ships are initially fitted, is assumed to cost MCr0.25 per 100 tons of the ship. This cost is figured into the cost of the bridge in the design stage.

The 'cost to fix' only applies when someone is called in to repair the set, such as the starport maintenance division. The 'roll to fix' applies when players are attempting to fix a failure themselves. On the 'roll to fix', the player must have some experience in the relevant area in order to try (Electronics-1 is usually sufficient). □









# TOWER TROUBLE

## Referee Only

### Module 1: Introduction

This is a *Traveller* scenario for 3-6 criminal characters, statistics for which appear in Module 3. Referees will need *Traveller Books 1-4* or *Starter Traveller* and *Book 4, Supplement 1, 1001 Characters* and *Supplement 4, Citizens of the Imperium Adventure 8, Prison Planet*, may also be useful.

## Players

### Module 2: Introduction

It's been a few months since the last big score, and your money is getting low. There are only two alternatives: (1) find an honest job, or (2) find a dishonest job. Of the two, the latter seems more suited to your talents and experience. As luck would have it, such a job seems to be available.

You all know of Leon Arkoff, an independent criminal active in and around the Sol Subsector. He's an ingenious planner, though not a man of action, who prefers to recruit teams of criminals to carry out his projects. Most of his operations are risky but profitable, and he's never been arrested.

Each of you has been contacted through underworld sources, and given a non-transferable Middle Passage to Terra, if you don't already live there. You are asked to meet in the lounge of the Copernicus Plaza Hotel, on Luna, a few days after your arrival.

## Referee Only

### Module 3: The Heavy Racket

Violent crime in the Imperium is not necessarily the province of an easily-defined criminal subclass. While some individuals devote their whole lives to crime, others drift into it through laziness, greed, or desperation. Criminal argot for professional armed robbery is 'the heavy racket'.

The characters below may be used by the players or as NPCs. The descriptions include one unusual statistic, Rep, which is reputation amongst criminals, as used in *Traveller Adventure 8*. There should be six characters; one of whom should own a starship. Italicised data is reserved for players running characters. Information in inverted commas will be revealed when Arkoff introduces characters:

**Achmed Smith**, Terra (Australia)/Sol, 77A995, Rogue, Rep 10, Age 47, 7 terms. Cr2,500, Blade, Forgery kit (TL12), Jack, Streetwise-3, Computer-2, Forgery-2, Gambling-1, Blade-0, Vacc-0.

*Smith is a con-man and forger, specialising in computer crime and business frauds. He has numerous black market contacts on the American continent.*

'This is Achmed Smith. He's one of the boys who sold the World Trade Centre to the Vegan Ambassador. Achmed, you'll be buying supplies for this job, and helping with the hit.'

**Wade Harper**, Terra (Belt)/Sol, 777887, Belter, Rep 5, Age 34, 4 terms. Cr22,000, Body pistol, Jack, Seeker. Pilot-2, Gun Cbt-1, Vacc-1, Navigator-1.

*Harper engages in smuggling or crime whenever mining is poor. His ship is fitted with a beam laser and sandcaster, and concealed ECM and radar jamming equipment (TL 11). The ship has false registration papers and insignia, and a second transponder modified to give a fake ID signal.*

'This is Wade Harper. Wade'll be in charge of the getaway.'

**Joan Walker**, Terra (LA)/SOL, A99976, Ex-Marine Sergeant, Rep 10, Age 33, 3 terms. Cr4,750, Snub pistol, Cloth, 2 high psg. ACR-2, Brawling-2, Demolitions-2, Air/Raft-1, Battle Dress-1, Blade-1, Tactics-1, Snub Pistol-1.

*Since leaving the service Walker has discovered that crime pays better than mercenary work. She has been involved in armed rob-*

beries and contract killings.

'Meet Joan Walker. She did demolition work for the Titan Databank heist, and rubbed out the squealer afterwards. Joan, I'm sure we'll need your talents.'

**Piet Bolinski**, Terra (Britcit/Sol, B9A443, Other, Rep 10, Age 48, 7 terms. Cr350, Switchblade (as dagger), Jack, Brawling-3, Dagger-2, Revolver-2, Ground Car-1.

*Bolinski is a reliable, unimaginative and exceptionally ugly thug.*

'This is Piet Bolinski. Piet, we're sure to need muscle on this one.'

**Obelia Malmsey**, Ember/Sol, 956D87, Ex-Navy Captain, Rep 5, Age 48, 7 terms. Cr3,400, Revolver, Hand computer, Jack, Electronics-3, Pilot-2, Navigation-2, Computer-2, Gunnery-2, Vacc-1, Revolver-0, Rapier-0.

*Obelia was court-martialled after a black market racket she organised was betrayed by a police informer. Her lawyer secured an acquittal, but took all her money. She wants to steal enough money to buy a Far Trader. She is suspicious of anyone she doesn't know.*

'Meet Obelia Malmsey, who's a newcomer to this racket but already has a pretty good track record. Obelia, I think we'll run into alarms on this job. You're the best person to handle them.'

**Patti Jordani**, Terra (Luna)/Sol, 7CC777, Rogue, Rep 5, Age 23, 1 term. Cr2,100, Dagger, Lockpicks, Unarmoured. Jack-O-T-3, Streetwise-2, Brawling-0, Dagger-0, Vacc-0.

*Patti is a well-concealed trained psionic, strength 7, with the following powers: Clairvoyance 3, Awareness 4, Special; Luck (this power is controlled by the referee). She is a burglar and pickpocket, and has participated in various confidence rackets, but has no criminal record.*

[Referee: The 'Luck' power gives a beneficial 1d6-1 modifier on all rolls to hit, saving throws, etc, and a 1d6-1 negative modifier on rolls to hit Patti.]

'And this is Patti Jordani. Patti, I've heard that you're a born improviser. That's a skill we may need on this job.'

## Players

### Module 4a: The Terra System

Terra/Sol

Primary: Sol G2 V

Orbit 3: Terra A867A69 F B

Moon: Luna F20076C F N Research Lab. Colony

Orbit 5: Belt F00066B E Colony

### ISS Survey Update 1105.231, Terra System - Extract

'... The Terra system is occupied territory, garrisoned by Imperial forces. All starships entering the system must dock at Terra orbital spaceport for inspection and customs checks. There are three important inhabited areas plus several minor colonies.

Terra itself is the third planet of Sol, and is the birthplace of the Solomani race. Some experts believe that it is also the birthplace of all Humanity, and the ancestral home of the Vargr. There are 11.6 billion inhabitants, the majority concentrated in great urban conglomerations (megacities) and arcologies.

Luna, Terra's moon, is one of the most densely populated moons in the Imperium, a long-established colony with 8.65 million inhabitants.

The Terra Belt is an important mineral source, colonised and supporting 4.5 million inhabitants.

Because the system holds so many colonised areas, and because Earth has many habitable zones, most Terran personnel records include a note of birthplace within the system, as well as the normal Planet/Subsector record.

The system holds many impressive feats of pre-starflight engineering, including N'York, LA, and Britcit megacities, the enigmatic pyramids, and the amazing Orbital

Tower, which is an awesome monument to technological obsolescence.

-From *Terra on Fifty Credits a Day*, Spool 1

## Referee Only

### Module 4b: The Terra System

The Terra system is garrisoned by Imperial forces who are prepared for terrorist raids. Incoming passengers are subject to careful searches, and will be arrested and questioned if they try to smuggle weapons or suspicious materials.

A roll of 10+ (+ Streetwise, -1 per kg smuggled) is needed to get through Terran customs with any illegal equipment, regardless of concealment methods. Bribes will not be accepted, since all officers are continually monitored. Arkoff has police contacts who will warn him if anyone is arrested. He will then contact characters who have entered successfully and set a new rendezvous in another hotel, a day earlier than planned. He will make no attempt to rescue captured characters, who will eventually be interrogated (using advanced and virtually infallible electrohypnotic techniques), convicted of any previous crimes, and sentenced to appropriate imprisonment on a penal planet (see *Traveler Adventure 8*). Arkoff is already a wanted criminal, and isn't worried about the police learning that he is planning another operation. Once the team know the details of his plan he will be prepared to abandon it (and the team) without hesitation, if anyone is arrested.

Arkoff will not appear in person until the day of the meeting. He is a portly bearded man, with instantly forgettable features:

**'Leon Arkoff'**, Capitol, 677BA9, Ex-Bureaucrat, Rep 30, Age 59, 9 terms. Cr271,500, Body Pistol, Mesh, Travellers. Admin-3, Computer-2, Leader-2, Recruiting-1, Pistol-1.

'Arkoff' is actually Benjamin B'haal, a retired SuSag executive. He found his pension inadequate, and turned to crime as an additional source of revenue. He has a good disguise kit (concealed in another suite) and only puts on his 'Arkoff' appearance for meetings with criminals. He is wanted by the police as Arkoff. B'haal is a good actor, and characters will think that he is a native Terran.

On arriving in the lounge he will approach all the player characters (and any NPCs), telling them to come to suite 1105 at 18.00 hours.

When everyone has arrived Arkoff will turn switches on a communicator unit (actually a bug jammer) then introduce those present, mentioning names and vague personal details. Once introductions are complete Arkoff will explain his plan, using a chart (Fig 1) as a visual aid. After the meeting Arkoff will see the team out, clear up, spray all rooms with solvent which removes fingerprints, and leave by another exit.

## Referee Only

### Module 5: The Terra Tower

Terra is one of the few worlds with an Orbital Tower, a rigid structure running from the equator to a synchronous orbit and on out to a counterweight 100,000km from the equator. Towers are a cheap way to move loads to and from orbit, but their construction is extremely expensive, and uneconomical if grav units are available. The Terra Tower was built after the discovery of fusion, and was nearly complete when the gravity nullifier was invented. The government decided to finish construction, and ultimately the orbital section of Terra starport was built around the Tower. Starships landing on Terra pay a Cr8,000 surcharge, above normal landing fees. This fee isn't charged at the orbital port, and is an inducement to use the Tower.

The base of the Tower [a], on a mountain in Ecuador, is a big transit terminus, with monorail lines, air/raft parks, and hotels. It has some Extrality privileges, such as the availability of duty-free goods, but is still subject to Terran law. The complex has its own

police, and there is a Marine base nearby.

The Tower [b] is made of monomolecular cable filaments embedded in foamed plastic, and carries two magnetic induction tracks [c] resembling vertical monorails. The run from the ground station to Terra port takes six hours. Halfway to the port is a communications relay platform [d].

Terra port is in a geosynchronous orbit 36,000km above Ecuador. The section attached to the Tower is just a small part of the complex, which has several independent orbital facilities. This section has three main levels; [e] Docks, [f] Accommodation and administration, [g] Engineering, communications, and Tower travel terminus. The port has its own Marine garrison, as well as a private security force.

From the port the Tower runs up another 64,000km, to a small asteroid [h] which is pulled outwards by centrifugal force, keeping the Tower rigid. It carries communications relay equipment serving the entire visible hemisphere, with a small crew of engineers.

At irregular intervals the Navy base on Terra ships components to the dockyards at Terra Orbital Port. They range from electronics modules and computer CPUs to laser exciters and other weapon assemblies. The value of shipments varies between 4 and 8.5 Megacredits.

The shipments are escorted to the Tower base by a platoon of Marines with a G-Carrier escort, and another unit takes over at Terra port. In the capsule, though, there can only be room for a few guards.

Arkoff intends to find out when the next shipment is due then take over the 18,000km relay station, stop the capsule, and capture the components. Many problems must be solved to make this possible, but Arkoff thinks that the team he has recruited can succeed. While most of the shipment will probably be military components, unusable by civilian customers, Arkoff has underworld contacts who can find suitable markets. They will demand a 40% fee; Arkoff wants a 30% share of the remainder but will finance the robbery. The team (including NPCs) can expect to share up to 3.6 Megacredits if the robbery is successful.

Arkoff can be bargained down to a minimum 25% share, but the 40% marketing fee is fixed. Once negotiations are complete Arkoff will suggest that the team separate, take local shuttle flights from Luna to the Tower, then travel down the Tower and stay in ground terminus hotels while gathering information and finalising plans. He has already booked a suite in one of the hotels, which the team can use as headquarters. He wants to meet there the next day at 11.00 hours, and explain more about the plan.

The Luna to Tower run is a commuter service which isn't subject to full customs control. Passengers must show papers when buying tickets, but a strict scrutiny will only occur on a roll of (SOC + 3) or more. Arkoff will use his real name and papers, other characters must make whatever arrangements they prefer. The shuttle run lasts three hours, the ride down the Tower another six.

## Players

### Module 6a: Tower Shuttle Capsules

The Tower shuttle system is essentially a vertical monorail. Each car is fitted with its own drive units, life support, grav system, and compensators. The capsules have seven decks (Fig 2), with entry on the lowest passenger level.

1. Airlock.
2. Foyer and spiral staircase to upper decks.
3. Control room.
4. Engineering compartment.
5. Cargo compartment, accessible from 4 or via an external hatch.
6. Three identical decks, each seating 16 passengers. Each seat has a clear outside view through photochromic ports, and is equipped with its own video, music, and comm facilities.
7. Restaurant and bar.



The capsule has a crew of 2; the operator and a steward.

#### Referee Only

##### Module 5b: Tower Shuttle Capsules

All capsules are in continuous contact with the ground terminus computer, which notes speed changes. The operator has a comm link to the terminus, transmitting through the superconductor cables of the Tower. These communications links will not be affected by normal jamming. Automatic hatches between the decks of the capsules are designed to slam close if there is a significant drop in air pressure. They can be opened manually in  $d6+2$  rounds. The engineering deck is the only accessible area when the capsule is docked at the 18,000km station. The hold protrudes below the station hull, the upper decks protrude above it. Stewards on these shuttles have Brawling-2 and Medical-1, operators have Engineer-2 or 3 and Electronics-1 or 2. The operator has an emergency vacc suit, the steward has a five-minute emergency air mask.

#### Players

##### Module 7a: Phase 1 – The Data Heist

Arkoff needs several items of information, including the exact date and time of the next shipment, station plans, and details of the operation and maintenance of the Tower. He wants the team to find out as much as possible about these topics by making friends with Tower employees, by observation, or even by taking jobs on the Tower staff.

Arkoff believes that the Navy must notify Tower control several days before a shipment, to allow rescheduling of traffic. He wants the team to penetrate the ground terminus computer centre and plant a 'tapeworm', a specialised program which will nullify the normal security procedures of the computer and allow Arkoff to interrogate it through normal comm links. The computer centre probably has extremely tight security, so careful preparation is essential. Arkoff has already discovered that the centre is somewhere off West Sector Plaza, a public precinct on one of the lower levels of the ground terminus. He hasn't been able to uncover any additional information.

At this stage, and throughout the operation, Arkoff will provide funds (within reasonable limits) to buy any special equipment the team may need.

If the team is caught the whole plan must be abandoned. The Navy would probably use an alternative route or start to fit the components at their ground base. Extreme caution and complete secrecy are essential.

#### Referee Only

##### Module 7b: Phase 1 – The Data Heist

Arkoff has budgeted Cr35,000 for equipment. The referee should use the normal rules on the use of Streetwise skill, Carousing, Forgery, etc, to determine the results of contacts with the black market and other illicit activities. Some items, such as battle dress and energy weapons, are unavailable on the black market. Most other items are available but delivery time will be 1d6 days.

When all is ready the team will probably want to penetrate the computer centre, or bribe someone who works there to plant the program. If the latter choice is made the person selected will appear to accept the bribe and take the program, but will actually report to his superiors as soon as he enters the complex. There is a standing Cr25,000 reward for the discovery of such breaches of Tower control security.

The computer complex is on the lowest level of the terminus, on a side corridor off a public pedestrian precinct (Fig 3). The complex has reinforced walls equivalent to starship bulkheads. The most important areas (the control room and memory banks) are buried in several metres of concrete and shielding.

1. Locked door marked 'Employees Only'.

Openable by lock-picking (Roll  $8+$ , +Mechanical, +JOT), or by the use of a standard pass-key which is issued to all employees.

2. Iris valve, monitored by a video camera, fitted with a security card lock. A special security pass with a holograph picture and magnetic coding must be used to open this valve. Passes are issued to programmers, technicians, and engineers assigned to the complex, and to clerks who work in the outer offices. The valve locks can be picked on a roll of  $10+$ , but anyone picking them would be seen through the camera.

Characters must copy a genuine pass to enter. While a pass might be stolen by mugging someone, any report that one is missing will cause a full-scale security alert, with everyone entering the complex being identified by fingerprints and retinal patterns. New passes will be issued after 4d6 hours, and anyone trying to use the old type will be held for questioning.

3. Guard room. Guards are typical police, wear mesh armour, and carry snub pistols with AP ammunition. The guard inspects passes before letting anyone enter, and makes a quick search for weapons. He won't react to legitimate equipment. A guard in room 5 monitors this room through a video camera. When the guard in 3 is satisfied he will press a concealed button, opening a valve to room 4.

4. Airlock fitted with explosive sniffers. If explosives are detected the room floods with tranquilliser gas, which will leave characters unconscious for 16-END hours. Either guard can activate the sprays.

5. Guard room. Another guard inspects security passes and issues colour-coded badges, appropriate to the rank shown. Red badges (clerks, most guards, some technicians) allow entry to rooms 6-10. Silver badge wearers (programmers, operators, engineers, guards, and some technicians) can also enter the main computer room (11). Gold badge wearers (the senior programmer, the chief engineer, and two technicians) can enter another chamber holding the CPU and store (14). Everyone in the complex knows gold badge wearers by sight, and will react to imposters. The guards are on a strict schedule, and know each other by sight. The badges contain ID circuitry, and anyone trying to enter an unauthorised area will set off alarms.

6a, 6b, 6c. Clerical offices, containing computer terminals and files. The terminals are model 1 computers, linked to the main computer. These offices are manned by day, empty by night. The terminals are switched off and locked at night. Roll  $5+$  to pick the locks,  $4+$  (+Computer) to reactivate terminals without an alarm. These terminals can access the main system, but a roll of  $10+$  (+Computer) is needed to load the tapeworm program into the master computer, or to obtain any information from it. On a roll of 4-alarms will activate. The filing cabinets are locked and hold nothing significant. All office terminals have printers.

7. Maintenance office, manned at all times. This office holds plans of the Tower, engineering schedules and other useful information. Silver badge wearers have unrestricted access to these documents.

8. Automated canteen. Personnel must not smoke, eat, or drink outside this room, since ash, crumbs and liquids could seriously damage terminals. Anyone breaking this rule will be stopped and questioned. The room holds 0-3 genuine personnel at any time.

9. Washroom.

10. Store room (Stationery etc).

11. Programming centre. The room is domed, with a 6-metre ceiling. The focus of the chamber is a huge cylindrical hologram tank, surrounded by computer terminals. This tank can be used to show computer projections of any part of the Tower, in microscopical detail. It normally shows an overall view of the Tower.

The main computer is a modified type 7

unit with extra storage capacity, running every aspect of Tower operations. There are  $d6+1$  operators in the room, who normally use the terminals around the tank. There is another terminal (12) to one side, fitted with a printer and facsimile equipment. Terminals are always live, but a roll of  $4+$  (+Computer) is needed to log on to the system without setting off alarms. Roll  $7+$  to load the tapeworm program, on 4- a failure will sound alarms. More information can be extracted on  $6+$ , without any risk of sounding alarms. It takes two minutes to make each attempt, plus another 1-2 minutes if a printout or diagram is required. Data available includes the following:

Plan of Tower (Figure 1)

Plan of Tower monorail car (Figure 2)

Plan of computer centre (Figure 3)

Plan of midpoint relay station (Figure 4)

Maintenance schedule for next 12 days

A senior security guard is stationed at a desk (13), but most of his attention is focused on a bank of video monitors. On a roll of  $10+$  (roll every 5 minutes characters are in room 11), he will get up and look around the room, and any suspicious actions may attract his attention. Another guard stands outside a lock leading to chamber 14.

14. CPU and store. These units are a series of grey armoured plastalloy boxes, containing blocks of cryogenically-cooled superconducting circuitry, and are useless to adventurers. Any attempt to enter this room will lead to detection and the failure of the plan.

Leaving the complex is much simpler than entering. Characters need only walk out, returning badges to the guard in room 5 as they leave. If this step is omitted, roll for the guards reaction. On  $11+$  he will activate the gas sprays when the intruders are in room 4, otherwise he will simply ask characters to return the badges.

#### Referee Only

##### Module 8: Phase 2: Plans

The tapeworm program will let Arkoff break into the computer  $2d6+1$  times before it is detected. The next shipment will be on Thursday (an obsolete date system still used on Terra), the week after the tapeworm is planted.

If the team has a maintenance schedule, Arkoff will know that a fresh team of engineers is sent to the midpoint station every Tuesday, staying for a week. He can also discover this information through one use of the tapeworm program or by bribery. If no plan is available, Arkoff will use the tapeworm again, to obtain a plan and notes on the 18,000km station's facilities [Module 9].

Using these notes, plus any diagrams they have obtained, the group must draw up a robbery plan. A few possibilities follow, with notes on their feasibility and likely consequences.

A. Block the track, so that the capsule will crash as it enters the station: this is just possible, if the team can use the station computer to close the docking flaps. Roll  $11+$  (+Computer, +Electrical) to do this. If this method is used the capsule will be travelling at 6,000kph when it hits the barrier, and will be completely destroyed. The shipment will disintegrate. The crash will be equivalent to a powerful missile strike in the station; on  $4+$  all air will be lost, on  $11+$  the Tower will be severed, with the lower part falling to Terra with an impact force equivalent to a multi-megaton nuclear explosion.

Note: Arkoff will point out the flaws in the plan if no one else does.

B. Use the tapeworm to override the traffic control system, and make the capsule stop in the station: The attempt must start at least 20 minutes before the capsule enters the station, to allow for deceleration. Roll  $9+$  (+Computer, +Electronic) to take control at the first attempt, with a progressive  $-1$  modifier on each subsequent attempt as time is lost. After five failures the capsule will be unable to stop.







Once the capsule is controlled those below it will automatically stop the capsule at the correct position for entry through its airlock.

**C.** Destroy the traffic control system: Each capsule has an operator who will take manual control, and carry on at reduced speed until one of the terminals is reached. If this method is combined with a barrier, as in (A) above, the capsule and shipment will be destroyed but the station will not be endangered.

**D.** Cut power lines along the track, to stop the capsule: note that the Tower and station are not in weightlessness; there is .2g acceleration downwards at this altitude. Anyone going EVA to place charges risks falling, and must remember to be clear of the tracks whenever a capsule passes. If the lines are cut at exactly the right moment all the capsules on track will decelerate, and the correct capsule will stop in the station:

Roll 8+ (+ Demolition) to cut the cables, 9+ (+ Computer, Electrical) to choose the right moment. If the first roll succeeds but the second roll is failed, the money capsule will stop 20d6 kilometres from the station (1-3 above, 4-6 below).

While these plans are discussed Arkoff tends to remain quiet, leaving the team to work out details unless he sees an obvious flaw. Since he intends to stay on the ship during the robbery, he will oppose any plan which involves committing it before the shipment is secured, and will point out that Tower control will detect it as it approaches the station. The earlier the ship is committed, the more time for an interception by the Navy. He suggests using the tapeworm program to delete names from the list of engineers scheduled to work on the station, replacing them with team members.

If the characters listed in Module 2 are used as NPCs they will have the following viewpoints:

Bolinski doesn't have any worthwhile opinions.

Smith and Malmsey will favour plan B.

Harper favours any plan which minimises the risk to his ship. He will agree about the risk of approaching the Tower before the robbery.

Walker will criticise any plan, especially those areas involving the use of force. She tends to prefer violently unsubtle strategies.

Pati Jordani will go along with the majority, but will have 'a bad feeling' about plans A and C.

## Players

### Module 9a: 18,000km Station

See Figure 4.

**1.** Central core of Tower; five monomolecular cable bundles surrounded by foamed plasteel (**2**). Magnetic induction tracks are built into the plasteel.

**3 and 4.** Platforms. **3** is for ascending, **4** for descending capsules. These platforms are equipped with retracting docking flaps which make an airtight seal at floor and ceiling levels when a car has stopped in the station, to allow the platforms to be pressurised. Tower traffic is one car every 3 minutes, in each direction.

**5 - 7.** Communications relay control equipment.

**8.** Computer, model 3b.

**9.** WCs.

**10 and 11.** Dormitories.

**12.** Galley.

**13.** Commons.

**14.** Workshop (mechanical).

**15.** Workshop (electronic, electrical).

**16.** Traffic control equipment. This unit links various systems sensing the movement of traffic along the Tower and regulating the speed of cars.

**17.** Suit store. Contains emergency vacc suits for all personnel, and two normal vacc suits for outside maintenance.

**18.** Store room. Food, clothing, medical supplies.

**19.** Hangar. A pressurised compartment housing a small Grav-Truck (**20**), equipped with manipulation for routine servicing work around the Tower.

## Referee Only

### Module 9b: 18,000km Station

See Module 9a and Fig 4 for full details:

**3 and 4.** Each platform is monitored by a video camera, linked to the traffic control equipment (**16**). Any attempt to move a docked capsule without retracting the flaps causes severe damage. On 6+ the capsule hold will depressurise, on 9+ one or more capsule ports will blow out, on 11+ the flaps themselves will rupture, exposing the platform to vacuum.

Throughout the station all computer terminals are linked to the communications system. Anyone who reaches any terminal will be able to warn Terra of a robbery.

**13.** Commons. There is a socket for a computer terminal in one corner, which isn't shown on the plan. All genuine engineers assigned to the station know that this socket exists, and that it can be used to connect a hand computer to the main computer.

**15.** Workshop. There are enough parts in this room to build a powerful transmitter.

**17.** Emergency suits hold an hour's air, and give protection equivalent to jack armour. They have simple radio units but no other facilities.

**19.** This compartment can be pressurised, but to save air it is usually left empty. A docking adaptor allows entry to the grav truck without a suit. However, the truck has no airlock and everyone aboard must wear a suit if its hatch is to be opened.

## Referee Only

### Module 10: Phase 3 - Tower Heist

Engineers assigned to the midpoint station must report to Tower departure control at 09.00 hours, boarding a capsule and leaving at approximately 09.30 hours. The engineers routinely carry tools, luggage, and other equipment for these assignments, and characters won't be stopped or searched unless they are obviously carrying weapons.

The capsule will reach the station 6d6 hours before the scheduled arrival of the money shipment. In addition to the team it will carry several real engineers, who should be taken from the list of pregenerated scientists in *Traveller Supplement 4*, to give a total of 12 passengers for the station.

Once the group reaches the station the referee should move the real engineers to random positions, as they unpack or start work. As team members go into action the engineers may see that something is going wrong, and try to warn Terra. They may also try to fight the team.

Provided there is no warning, the shipment is escorted by two fire teams, a total of eight Marines, with no other passengers or cargo carried. Each guard is equipped with combat armour, complete with vacuum seals and 4-hour air tanks (see *Book 4, Mercenary*), and carries a machine pistol, a snub pistol, two flechette grenades, two HE grenades, and a cutlass. One guard in each fire team carries a medical kit which includes vials of combat drug. As soon as the capsule starts to decelerate they will assume that something is wrong, and move to positions giving a good field of fire - on the staircase with a view of the airlock door, behind passenger seats, etc. The operator isn't paid to be a hero, and will try to stay safely out of a fight. Stewards aren't carried on these runs. The shipment is packed in twelve 100g steel cases in the hold.

If there is warning of the attack before the capsule is despatched, the Marines will be wearing battle dress and carrying gauss or laser rifles. The shipment will travel by an alternative route.

As soon as the capsule starts to slow, the Terran ground controllers will know that something is wrong, and the Navy and Marines will be alerted.

## Referee Only

### Module 11: Phase 4 - The Getaway

Arkoff will board the ship shortly before the team enters the station, carrying a case containing navigation programs and personal

effects. If there is a player character pilot he will advise picking up the team twenty minutes after they start to intercept the capsule. If the pilot is an NPC this will happen automatically.

The station isn't equipped to dock a ship, so to save manoeuvring time the team must capture the shipment, load it into the Grav-Truck, and fly out to the ship.

If this plan is followed the team in the truck will run into a problem. A traffic controller will insist that the ship waits until a liner has docked. As the truck leaves the station a Marine G-Carrier (armed with a VRF gauss gun) will approach. This is one of several assigned to patrol the Tower when a shipment is due, and happens to be close enough to respond to the emergency. The players may decide to fight or run.

The G-Carrier is a standard design (as *Traveller Book 3*, 2nd edition, or *Striker Book 3*). The Grav-Truck has full armour (equivalent to that of the G-Carrier), but is unarmed and slower than the G-Carrier. After d6-1 minutes the ship will arrive, engage the G-Carrier, and take the team aboard.

The Navy can put d6-3 ships in combat range of the getaway ship (a roll below 1 indicates no ships). On a 1d6 roll of 1-4 they are fighters, otherwise they are system defence boats.

Arkoff has Navigation programs to travel to Barnards, scoop refuel, and jump on to Agidda. He has arranged to meet his contacts on Agidda and sell the shipment.

During this fight characters will probably get on each others nerves (Walker, in particular, has an extremely aggressive character if run as an NPC), and some fights will probably occur. It is possible that someone will decide to steal part of the shipment without waiting for Arkoff to sell it. All the cases are marked: 'Maximum Security - Anti-Theft Devices Fitted'

If any case is opened without a special key a thermitic bomb will ignite, reducing its contents to worthless slag. Cases can be opened without the keys on 11+, (+ Demolitions, + Electronics). Arkoff's contacts have appropriate keys.

Arkoff has overestimated the value of the shipment, and the parts are worth 4.8 Megacredits. After the transaction is complete the team will be left with Cr2,016,000 to share.

**Note 1.** If this amount of cash will seriously upset a campaign (for example, if there are only two or three survivors), some of the charges may 'accidentally' go off without the cases being forced open.

**Note 2.** All the components are designed exclusively for large-scale military systems, and will not function correctly in any normal civilian vessel. For the purposes of this scenario a military ship is designed using *Book 5 (High Guard)* rules exclusively. A *Book 2* design (eg a Scout or Merchant), even one using *Book 5* components, will not function correctly with these parts installed.

Once the shipment has been sold Arkoff will disappear, changing to his B'haa identity and catching a flight to Prometheus. Other characters will receive their agreed shares, and must make their own way off-world.

## Module 12: Sources

This scenario was largely suggested by various articles and stories about Orbital Towers, in particular:

*The Fountains of Paradise* - Arthur C Clarke; *The Web Between the Worlds, Beanstalk, and How to Build a Beanstalk* - Charles Sheffield. The Tower described is a fairly modest design, sharing some of the features described by both authors.

The criminal element was largely suggested by the novels of Richard Stark (Donald E Westlake), in particular: *Butchers Moon, The Outfit, Killtown, Run Lethal, The Steel Hit and The Green Eagle Score*. These novels are strongly recommended to referees who wish to incorporate violent crime into a campaign. □

Starbase is a bimonthly column for players of the Traveller game, edited by Bob McWilliams.

## 3-D SPACE

by Bob McWilliams

The Traveller rules and official campaign background make use of a two-dimensional subsector map system; the Imperium and its surrounding regions are in effect a 2-D 'slice' of our galactic locality. There are good reasons for adopting this approach – it makes mapping simple to carry out, and astrological relationships, travel distances and so on are easy to understand. Of course space is not two-dimensional, but this is science fiction and designers of RPGs can take liberties with the real universe.

Nonetheless, the third dimension can be added fairly painlessly to produce a reasonable limitation of volume as well as distance. For those of you not committed to the official campaign I offer the following ideas based on my own Traveller campaign setting. As with any type of rules additions, you will have to decide whether the benefits outweigh the burden of additional work. I'm in no doubt myself!

The system I have adopted keeps the one parsec wide hex. 3-D is achieved by 'stacking' a column of hexes on top of one another, the hex becoming one cubic parsec in volume compared to the standard 2-D hex of one square parsec in area (Diagram 1). In order to continue using the standard Traveller subsector map (TAS Form 1), the subsector remains 8 parsecs 'wide' by 10 parsecs 'long', but becomes 10 parsecs 'deep' as well. Rather than consisting of 80 square parsecs, it now consists of 800 cubic parsecs.

In my case a sector now becomes 8 subsectors, arranged two wide by two long, by two deep (Diagram 2). The reason for reducing the number of subsectors per sector (from 16 to 8) becomes clear when you consider the number of potential sites for star systems.

In the 2-D sector there are: 16 subsectors each of  $8 \times 10$  parsecs =  $16 \times 80 = 1280\text{PC}^2$ .

In the 3-D sector there are: 8 subsectors each of  $8 \times 10 \times 10$  parsecs =  $8 \times 800 = 6400\text{PC}^3$ .

### STELLAR DENSITY

The average density of a 2-D subsector

is going to be one system per two hexes, since the rules suggest a system is present on a 1d6 roll of 4, 5 or 6. In practice, the overall density may be less due to the presence of rifts, etc – perhaps as low as one system per three or four hexes. The main reason for deciding on a given density in game terms is the need to make most systems accessible to starships with Jump-1 or Jump-2 drives – not that all systems need to be accessible in all directions, just as long as most systems can be reached by at least one route. Apart from the fact that Jump-1 and 2 ships are the most likely types to be available to players, jump fuel takes up so much of the ship's volume at the larger jump numbers, the sector economy would suffer considerably if most connexions were Jump-3 or 4.

A 2-D hex is adjacent to six other hexes, but a 3-D hex is adjacent to no less than twenty other hexes if we count diagonal movement as adjacent. I count Jump-1 movement as being anything from a fraction of a parsec up to 1.5 parsecs, Jump-2 as being 1.5 to 2.5 parsecs and so on. From this we can easily make up a 3-D jump chart that caters for combinations of horizontal and vertical vectors by using good old Pythagoras' Theorem (Table 3). Just for comparison, Table 4 shows the much more restricted travel possibilities if Jump-1 is limited to one parsec, Jump-2 to anything between one and two parsecs, and so on. I don't use this version because it negates much of the reason for using 3-D space. Jump distances are arbitrary values for a fictional drive system, so I don't feel I am mutilating the basic concepts of Traveller too much.

Back then to stellar density. In our (real) stellar neighbourhood, the stellar density is about one star per ten cubic parsecs. Of course, many systems are binary or larger multiples. Working from the Traveller Book 6 System Features Table, the average number of stars per system works out as 1.444. Thus to get the average of one star per ten cubic parsecs, you need an average of one system per 14.44 cubic parsecs. A roll of 11 or 12 on 2d6 would give a one in thirteen chance – near enough for game purposes.

However, I use a basic chance of one in six (ie one system per six cubic parsecs), assuming my area is denser than normal. This provides more than adequate Jump-1 connexions and it is in fact quite rare to find any system that is more than Jump-2 from at least one other system. Diagram 5 shows a small but typical part of one subsector in this campaign area by way of illustration. Remember that each hex is ten layers deep, so there could well be more than

one system in the column. Theoretically there could be ten, but five is the most I have encountered so far, and of course, at a base chance of one in six per cubic parsec, the average number of systems per column ought to be 1.66.

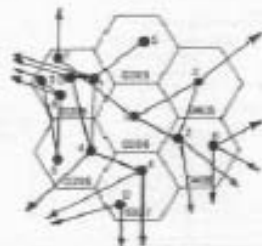
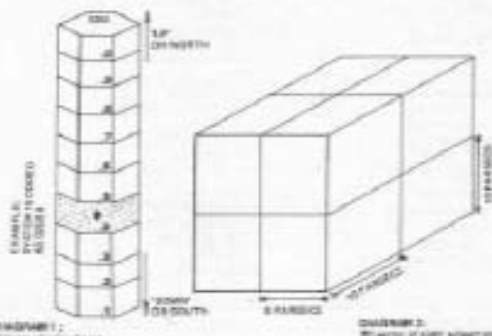
All that is needed to denote 'depth' is the addition of a decimal place and relevant number to the hex reference. Thus 0.305.5 indicates, in my case, the system is the fifth level up, since the bottom level is '1' and the top is '0' (Diagram 1). I have drawn in (on Diagram 5) all the Jump-1 connexions – you can work out Jump-2 connexions yourself using Table 3! One disadvantage is that unless the hexes are pretty big, the standard Traveller mapping symbols are out – but I can live with this since it is all in the system catalogue anyway.

### THE PURPOSE OF 3-D

What, then, are the advantages of 3-D space? Most obvious is the fact that it is a more 'realistic' representation of the universe. Despite the lower stellar density, everything is more compact – there are many more worlds (and hence more opportunities for adventure) within a given distance of a central point. Players will also find that they don't have to keep back-tracking through the same few 'bottlenecks', since there is a larger choice of directions to take. Of course, even in 3-D, certain key 'crossroads' systems will develop, but I have found this to be a bonus. In 3-D these systems become logical subsector capitals, naval bases, X-boat depots, etc.

In the larger fields of politics and strategy, more bonuses accrue. In terms of political groupings, rational development is easy and makes constructing the sector map a pleasure. Different forms of grouping – compact clusters, drawn out 'strings of beads', interwoven structures – can all be catered for. Navy and defence strategy has to cope with threats from all directions. Such a sector would be ideal for a High Guard campaign, or one using the rules and counters from Fifth Frontier War. The image of the player-admiral in his command centre overlooking a 3-D situation display comes nearer to the truth.

If 6400 potential system sites, or about 1650 systems, seems too much to produce, there is no need to tackle it all at once. I only have two subsectors (271 systems) drawn up completely, plus small areas of adjacent subsectors, where important routes loop out and back. Within this region there is more than enough to keep the players busy for years, whether they are criminals on the run, trading magnates or even admirals or subsector governor! □



		HORIZONTAL VECTOR (No. of hexes)					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
VERTICAL VECTOR (No. of hexes)	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	4	4	5	6
	3	3	4	4	5	6	-
	4	4	4	5	6	6	-
	5	5	5	6	6	-	-
	6	6	6	-	-	-	-

TABLE 3: JUMP DISTANCES  
(Jump-1=1 hex, Jump-2=1.5 to 2 hex etc.)

		HORIZONTAL VECTOR (No. of hexes)					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
VERTICAL VECTOR (No. of hexes)	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	3	4	5	6
	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
	4	4	5	5	5	6	-
	5	5	6	6	6	-	-
	6	6	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 4: JUMP DISTANCES  
(Jump-1=1 hex, Jump-2=1 to 2 hex etc.)



# MASS MEDIA

## Communication in Traveller, by Andrew Swift

It is reasonable to assume that man's curiosity and thirst for knowledge of the world about him will never cease. This means that some form of today's newspapers will always be around to pass on the news. As long as the need to be informed is there, then there will also be people who are willing to make money by providing it.

The main factor that governs the way news travels on a planet is technological development. This, in *Traveller*, is represented by Tech Level. This is only a very rough estimate of how developed an area is, and many other factors can alter the appearance of a newspaper. For example, a race of creatures without eyes could not use what we recognise as a newspaper. News may, in this way, be either helped or hindered by the natural abilities of the creatures passing it along.

The speed at which people can communicate and how quickly the rest of the population can be informed of events should be noted. The way a planet's population is informed determines other criteria, such as the length of time a group of criminals could stay hidden on planet before everyone knows that they are there and begin to look for them.

### Up to Tech Level 1

The main method by which news can travel on a planet with little technological development is by word of mouth. News can travel from one town to the next in the form of rumours carried by people who travel the routes regularly, or by a travelling minstrel who travels from town to town, passing on what information he has for the price of a meal and a bed for the night.

Messages could be sent between towns by players if they have the money to pay for someone to travel the distance.

### Up to Tech Level 3

The news will stop being so dependent on word of mouth, since writing should be in its rudimentary stages of development. The accuracy of messages no longer becomes reliant on the memory of the carrier. However, these written messages must still travel by the same methods as before, so they still rely on a messenger service of some kind.

Towns may, of course, employ a town crier who, along with the guardsmen, keeps a watch on the town during the night. During the day, town criers could

well be used by the town hall, or the local ruling body to pass messages and news to the townsfolk. This would probably take place at a strategic point where a large number of people are likely to hear him, most probably the market place or the town square.

### Up to Tech Level 7

The development of an accurate and reliable printing press heralds the coming of what we recognise as the newspaper. Along with this will come the poster, either advertising a local event, or posting notice of a wanted criminal.

This development of 'news' will attract many people who will try to make their fortunes giving the population 'what it wants to read'.



As a planet reaches the later stages of this development scale its communications ability will have stretched into the areas of radio and television. This means that along with the press, a planet will now be armed with the TV reporter who along with his television crew will be covering the newsworthy stories.

News will be big business. If the characters are involved in anything that is considered as a good story they will be besieged by the press, the TV, etc . . .

### Up to Tech Level 10

The super-industries of newspaper and television will slowly become less and less of a monopoly as the microchip industry turns towards the news medium as an outlet. Soon paper will, much to the joy of conservationists,

become an outdated method of displaying the news. 'Credit card' newspaper will become the sole survivor in the media war. Each day the news for that day will be transmitted to the credit card sized receiver, provided that a weekly subscription is kept up-to-date. Otherwise, if the payment is not met, that card's specific code is activated and the receiver shuts itself down until the money is paid.

Once the news is inside the card it can easily be read by pushing it into a decoder (costing about Cr 2000 in its early stages, but as little as Cr 50 on more advanced planets). A standard ship's computer can display the news but it must have the decoding equipment specially built in.

### Tech Level 11 and up.

The more advanced the planet, the more effectively news will travel. Contact lens television monitors to which the news can be transmitted, and which flash important news onto the wearer's actual line of vision; implants at the top of the spine to which the news can be transmitted and then fed directly into the creature's brain so that he actually knows the news as soon as it becomes available, are just a couple of ideas.

These ideas, of course, are based on a race of humanoid creatures with senses very similar to our own, and since this follows an earth-type development it is not going to be an ideal model for all planets.

The first thing to decide is what the creatures who use this form of media are going to be like. If they see into the infrared or ultra-violet spectrums then their papers may be printed in an 'ink' which they can see but normal people may not be able to.

The second thing is the law level of the planet. If it is very high then the governments may keep a strict control over what can be printed by the newspapers (or the government might even own the newspapers and use them to print government propaganda).

Scenarios based on the media can take a great many forms, and the players need not necessarily know these have anything to do with reporters. A few ideas are presented below:

1. The players are contacted by a reporter who wants them to smuggle him onto a planet. He will pay them what seems a very high price for taking him to the planet and landing at a specified spaceport. What he does not tell the players is that the planet is at war and they are smuggling him onto a disused spaceport.

2. Players could be hired by media bosses to report on events that normal reporters will not go near because of the danger involved. But don't forget the danger must be very great for reporters not to try and make a story of it!

3. The players are hired by a reporter to track down a killer who is murdering people so that he can report about the murders. The killings have no link at all and the reporter keeps one step ahead of the players. Occasionally the game-master may leave the odd clue for the players, or subtly hint that the reporter always seem to get to the place of the murder too quickly. □



# THE "RELIANT" LIFEBOAT/LAUNCH

by Thomas M Price

A generic escape craft for SF role-playing games.

A good many *Traveller* or other SF based adventures have the long-suffering characters making use of the ubiquitous "lifeboat" in the course of their travels. The following article details the specifications and operation of one model of lifeboat commonly available. The statistics and descriptions provided are presented for the *Traveller* game system, but can easily be applied to any SF RPG.

## BASIC SPECIFICATIONS

*Manufacturer:* Ling-Standard Products

*Cost:* 14 MCr

*All up weight:* 20 ton

*Max engine thrust:* 1G

Designed for 1 x Atmospheric re-entry or unlimited use as a ship's launch (under Zero-Gee).

*Fuel:* 1 Ton

*Configuration options:*

Mod.1A	2 Crew, 20 low berths	5 passengers, no cargo
Mod.1B	2 Crew no low berths	5 passengers, 10 tons cargo
Mod.1C	2 Crew no low berths,	25 passengers no cargo

There are two configuration options for the Airlock/fresher/equipment locker unit as shown in the diagrams. These are designated as Mod.\*1 or Mod.\*2.

The emergency Low Berths used on "Reliant" model lifeboats are modular long life 2-person berths. The berths are cylindrical, weigh 0.5 tons each, and can operate on internal batteries for 90 days when disconnected from the ship. These cost 100,000 Cr (+ 10,000 Cr for the long life battery) if purchased separately.

## OPERATION : LIFEBOAT MODE

The lifeboat automatically operates in this mode unless manually overridden into the "ship's launch" mode.

Opening the inner hatch starts the automatic power-up sequence, and the

final update dump of navigation data from the ship's computer. Closing and sealing the outer hatch allows the lifeboat to be launched. If no manual launch instruction is received, launch is automatic upon any of the following conditions being met: destruction of the pressure integrity of the parent ship; failure of the parent ship's computer/power plant/maneuver drive during this sequence; 5 minutes elapsed from door closure. The emergency manual launch lever is clearly marked above the main control panel.

Escape from the parent ship is effected by chemical rockets, giving 6G thrust for 10 seconds. This is followed by an evaluation phase for the lifeboat's on-board computer during which telemetry instruments are deployed. During this phase the computer will decide whether the launch was "hostile" (eg, caused by sabotage or an external attack on the parent ship), or a "disaster" launch, caused by a meteor strike or critical ship's system failure. If the parent ship's computer was running ANTI-HIJACK or RETURN FIRE programs at the time of the launch it will assume a hostile launch. If there is doubt, the computer will assume a disaster launch profile.

The lifeboat will commence a mayday broadcast on all standard comms channels. The computer will then ascertain the optimum survival course selection. If there is a choice between two different courses of equal survival probability, the course taking the shortest time will be selected. In uninhabited systems it will head for the nearest habitable planet to land. In an inhabited system it will head for the nearest space facility or inhabited world to orbit; if nothing approaches the ship within 6 hours of orbit being established, the ship will land.

On landing, the ship will avoid inhabited areas and attempt to land in the temperate/sub tropical region of the planet. After atmospheric breaking and re-entry, the ship computer will determine whether the paraglider sail is capable of a soft landing in the atmosphere of that planet. If not, the ship will jettison the powerplant unit to reduce weight and allow a soft landing in a thin atmosphere. The powerplant will fall into the sea (if possible) and the ship will attempt to land within 30 miles of a coast in open ground. If the terrain is unsuitable it will attempt to land in a landlocked lake. When the powerplant is jettisoned, a drag-stabiliser is deployed to preserve ballistic stability.

The paraglider sail is now deployed to enable a soft landing. On touchdown, the sail cables are cut to prevent dragging in high winds. A high visibility marker balloon with a radar reflector strobe beacon and antenna is then deployed on a 300m cable. A dye projector fires a number of "dyeslugs" around the ship, marking the local area with orange dye.

## LONG TERM SURVIVAL

The mean time to failure for the marker balloon is 14 days; however, the strobe

beacon will continue to function for a further 20 days. It should be repositioned at some nearby high point after the balloon fails. The compartment housing the paraglider sail will collect rainwater, which is passed via a filter to the interior reservoir. Locally collected water should be filtered in this way. Ship facilities include heating, lighting, a standard fresher, cooker and sterilisation/preservation compartment. Mean time to failure for ship's facilities (except computer) is 75 days (maximum use) to 300 days (minimum use); these figures are reduced to 8/30 days if the power plant has been jettisoned.

The ship is equipped with 20 survival packs, contents as follows:

- 1 x Filter/Respirator
- 8 x 1 litre cans of water
- 1 x Torch (240 hrs)
- 1 x Ration pack (30 days)
- 1 x Long range radio
- 4 x Rocket flares
- 1 x Survival rifle
- 1 x Waterproof sheet
- 1 x Reel of cord (300m)
- 1 x Rope (50m)
- 1 x Hammer
- 24 x Spikes
- 1 x First Aid kit
- 1 x Machete
- 1 x Monocular
- 1 x Sleeping/shelter bag
- 1 x Packing case + frame
- 1 x Water purification kit
- 1 x Miscellaneous kit: Compass, lighter, fish-hooks, line, gloves, sunglasses, survival manual etc.

The total survival kit fits into a watertight, rigid case 30 x 45 x 55cm, and weighs 25 kg. The frame is strapped to the outside of the case to allow the kit to be carried long distances.

The paraglider sail consists of 900 square metres of metallised plastic; half silvered, half matt black. The sail cables are of 1mm pre-stretched shock cord, of which 400m could be salvaged. The sail also contains 20 battens of various lengths (1/2 to 3m) of 4mm flexible alloy rod. Full instructions on survival techniques are contained on the ship's computer, which has a mean time to failure of 1000 days.

## "HOSTILE" LAUNCH PROFILE

During the evaluation phase, there is no mayday message broadcast from the lifeboat. A decoy, consisting of a missile with an inflatable metallised plastic envelope to give the same telemetry profile as the lifeboat, is deployed. The decoy boosts on an alternative course at a steady 16, broadcasting a mayday message. The ship then proceeds with the engine on minimum emission (50% efficiency), following the "disaster" launch profile with the following changes: a landing option will be preferred and will be attempted immediately (no orbit) in a forested area. No broadcasts are made, balloon deployed, or dyeslugs fired.



An alternative option can be selected on launch, to allow the lifeboat to coast along, hidden among the wreckage of the parent ship. The ship will reduce power to a minimum to prevent emissions escaping. The decoy can be fired normally, if required. This is a manual override option only, and the computer will not choose it on its own. Use of the decoy can be manually overridden/reprogrammed at any time if required.

## EXTREME EVENTS

If the lifeboat is launched in an uninhabited system, with no habitable planets, the ship will orbit the gas giant or follow the wreckage of the parent ship. The ship systems will shut down to the minimum power, the paraglider sail will deploy as a thermo-electric collector, and all crew should enter Low Berths. Mean time to system failure in this mode is 10 years.

If all the passengers are in Low Berths, or the crew are killed/abandon the ship on landing, the computer will decide the person(s) most likely to survive being woken from travelling Low, and will attempt to automatically revive them. This will not happen if the ship is in the minimum power option, unless another ship is approaching and the original launch was "hostile"; or the ship is in an uninhabitable area (under water, etc).

## OPERATION : SHIP'S LAUNCH MODE

In this mode all lifeboat functions are disconnected and the ship will function as a launch. If at any time the emergency manual launch lever is operated, the ship functions as a lifeboat as described above.

## CREW MANUAL OVERRIDE OF COMPUTER DECISIONS

If the manual launch lever is operated, the computer will assume no qualified pilot is on board and will function as described above automatically. Computer decisions and alternatives will however, be displayed on the ship status screen. Computer decisions can be overridden under this option, providing the new course of action does not substantially reduce the chance of survival.

If the ship is launched under crew control, the computer will assume the pilot will make the decisions and will merely display the suggested optimum course of action on the ship status screen.

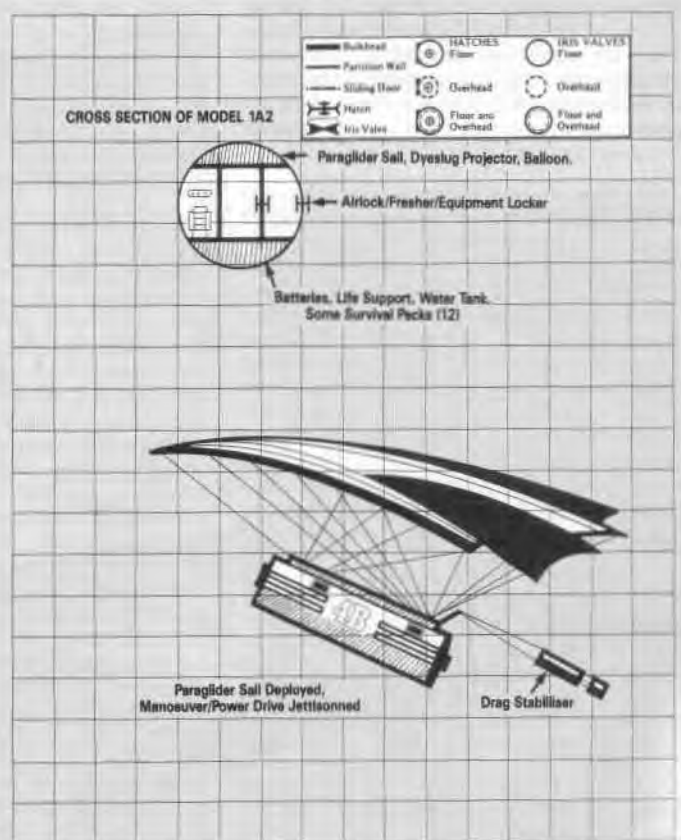
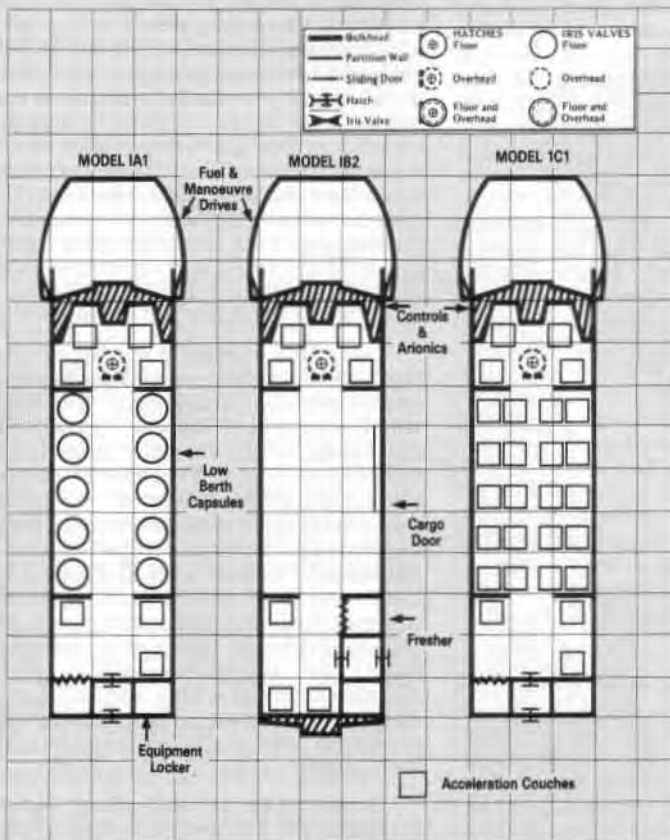
Alternative courses and survival probabilities can be displayed on request. If, however, no instructions are received within 5 minutes of a decision being required, the computer will make decision automatically.

## FINAL NOTES

The "Reliant" lifeboat/launch is a high quality lifeboat preferred by the "quality" end of the market. It is found in a large number of yachts and the more expensive liners. Many smaller firms custom build the basic models of the launch to customers' requirements. These models are generally more expensive as a "first buy" but cheaper second hand (if you can stand the colour schemes ....).

The user can convert the ships from the Mod.1A1 to the other models, but not vice-versa, by buying a conversion pack from the manufacturer. Attempts at moving the airlock/fresher/equipment locker unit or fitting the cargo door should only be carried out by the manufacturer or licenced agent.

Although this is an "up market" product, the "Reliant" is quite common in the Spinward Marches Subsector, as large numbers of the model 1A1 were made available after the crash of the General Atomic Shipping line in 1098.





## Introduction I: The Adventure

This is an adventure for use with 5-8 *Traveller* characters. This adventure is designed specifically for use with scientist characters (and those with scientific skills), so you will need a copy of *Citizens of the Imperium*, and you might find a copy of *Book 4: Mercenary* useful.

Each scientist character involved in the mission can be given a speciality subject reflecting the work that the character has already done in scientific circles. On mustering out, a scientist character can choose one speciality area eg archaeology, astronomy, astrophysics, botany, chemistry, geology, mineralogy, psychology, xenopsychology (alien behaviour) or zoology. You may add any other skills to this list. These specialities are not the same as skill levels, although they can be used in a similar way: a xenopsychologist could get a bonus when trying to use *Liason* skill on a Vargr, or an astronomer could get a bonus when using *Navigation* skill.

## Background 2: The Task

The location of the starting point of the adventure is left to your discretion, but it should be towards the Zhodani-Imperial frontier. Ideally, at least one of the player characters (PCs) should be well-connected within the scientific community. The PCs will be approached by Flynn Spectros, the Assistant Director of the Makin Institute, a research establishment specialising in disease and viral infections. He will explain that the Institute is currently hiring short-contract personnel for an investigative venture into unmapped territory, and that their names have been put forward (by an NPC acquaintance) as reliable and trustworthy. He will ask the PCs to attend an interview with the Institute's Director, Dr Casey Morello.

When the PCs present themselves at the Makin Institute, Morello exchanges a few pleasantries and demonstrates a knowledge of each character's background (he has read their files). He then moves on to the true reason for the meeting.

A survey team investigating the neutral territory between the Zhodani Consulate and the Imperium recently stumbled across a mystery on the planet Syleria. A child - from one of the nearby tribal villages - wandered into the team's base camp and collapsed. After running tests and doing a great deal of computer research, the team doctor determined that he was suffering from Decal Tectitis and a number of secondary infections.

Morello will explain that Decal Tectitis is a very rare disease that affects embryos, damaging the immune system so that children with the disease rarely survive to adulthood, and occasionally causing slight physical malformations (slit-eyes being the most prevalent). Only one previous outbreak of the disease has ever been recorded - and that was in the Sasco star system 170 years ago. Why DT should now reappear on a low tech world such as Syleria, which has no contact with Sasco, is a mystery.

Morello is particularly concerned that the outbreak should not follow the pattern on Sasco, where an entire generation of children was put at risk. Speed is vitally important in dealing with the problem hence the need for outsiders, rather than already-assigned Institute staff, to handle the task of finding the source of the infection and stopping it spreading around the planet. This apparently straightforward task is complicated by the fact that some of the governments (such as they are) of Syleria object strongly to Imperial interference in their affairs... Landing on the world will have to be done via air raft, so as not to strengthen Zhodani influence. Landing permission has not been obtained as yet, so the PCs will have to avoid contact with all but affected native groups until this is forthcoming. Imperial diplomacy may

well be too slow to avoid a disaster - and the Sylerians may have their own reasons for making sure that DT spreads among the primitive tribesmen.

The PCs will be assigned to one of the Institute's Laboratory (type L) ships, the *Tycho Brahe*, complete with an NPC crew (who will take no part in the adventure). The Institute will also supply any equipment (within reason) that PCs feel is necessary. Full copies of all the Institute's library data files will be made available to the PCs as well. The PCs will be paid Cr5,000 per month, with a Cr10,000 bonus if they manage to halt the disease within one month. Furthermore, the Institute will pay for any valid additions to its computer files, giving a further potential bonus of Cr25,000 on completion of the mission.

Morello will, however, fail to mention that the original survey team disappeared without a trace before they could transmit any more details of their discovery...

## Background 3: GM's Explanation

**Silent Runner Project Library Data:** *An Imperial research project initiated during the Third Frontier War, researching into long distance jump technology using controlled nuclear explosions. The project was abandoned when two experimental ships, the *Silent Runner* and the *Storm Runner* mis-jumped and were lost. End Data.*



The outbreak of DT is the direct result of an event some 200 years before, during the Third Frontier War. The *Silent Runner* project did produce a series of space vessels which were capable of Jump-6 or (theoretically) better. The power for such jumps was provided by small, controlled nuclear explosions using the weak nuclear substance curium peractate 205. The project showed great promise, despite the high cost of manufacturing curium 205, until the *Silent Runner* and *Storm Runner* misjumped on their maiden voyages. Research funds were immediately reallocated and both both the ships were logged as 'lost, presumed destroyed'...





The *Silent Runner* crashed on Sasco, in the middle of a desert, and was eventually discovered by a band of nomads, who salvaged many ship components. By doing this they were also exposed to curium 205, which causes the mutations that give rise to Decal Tectitis. The nomads, now carriers of DT, spread the disease to the rest of Sasco, and the epidemic was eventually stopped only by strict quarantine measures. No connection has ever been made between the loss of the *Silent Runner* and Decal Tectitis outbreak.

The crew of the *Storm Runner* survived their misjump and managed to reach Syleria, only to be killed when the manoeuvre drive failed during their landing approach. The tribesmen living near the crash site on Syleria hailed the arrival of the 'star' as a sign of favour from their gods, and took the power plant - which survived intact - as a gift from the gods to be a totem at the centre of their village. Unfortunately, over the years the plant's protective systems have degraded and its radioactive core material has leaked into the environment. It is this build-up of curium that has caused the outbreak of DT.

Over the years the power plant has been decorated and painted to such a degree that it is nearly unrecognisable. The memory of the crash, other than as 'the time when the gods came' has faded from the tribesmen's minds.

The PCs will have to considerable ingenuity to find the source of the outbreak, but to add a further complication, a Zhodani CORE team are preparing the way for a full-scale mining operation. They killed the Institute's survey party in the mistaken belief that they were testing for valuable minerals.

## Background 4: Decal Tectitis

**Decal Tectitis Library Data:** *A rare disease affecting only the foetus in the womb. The only reported occurrence was the Sasco Epidemic in which over 1,000 individuals were affected. The disease causes disfigurement and immune system failure. Causes unknown. End Data.*

DT is unusual in that it involves two separate afflictions. It is originally contracted through exposure to curium peractate 205. This mutates cells and damages the body's immune system. This, in turn, allows viral infections already present to mutate. Adults who contract DT become carriers of the secondary disease, and a slightly more vulnerable to infections than would otherwise be the case (DM of -2 when rolling to avoid or recover from infections), but when DT is passed on by contact with the mother (6+) to unborn children the effect is far more dramatic. The embryo is born with a maximum *Endur* of 6, and a DM of -3 where diseases and infections are involved.

Anyone can become a carrier by exposure to Curium 205, but the full version of the disease (which is also infectious to embryos) can only be contracted by embryos. This complex pattern of infection can result in a very rapid spread of the disease in a primitive culture with a high birth rate. Once a victim has the disease he can be cured on a 11+ (DM -1 per *Medic* skill level). A cured patient will no longer be infective, but will still suffer the effects of immune system damage. Re-exposure to curium 205 will turn a victim into a carrier once again.

## Background 5: Syleria

**Syleria (X765400 TL2) Library Data:** *TAS Red Zone. A minor autonomous world outside Imperial*

*border regions. The planet has no effective single government and no official offplanet trade except with governments of several nearby worlds which supply goods to order. Politically, the planet drifts continually between the Zhodani Consulate and the Imperium, but is currently non-aligned. The planet can be broadly split into two regions: the polar regions are relatively settled, while the tropical areas of the planet are inhabited by tribal groups who resist all attempts to integrate them into any form of government. End Data.*

Syleria is a galactic backwater whose alignment depends on well-greased palms and development aid. It has no trade to speak of, and offworld contact is limited to a small area around a 'starport' in the northern polar region, which is TL4 (in places). This area (and the southern polar region) are where the bulk of the planetary population is found, governed by a variety of petty statelets vying for power, while a single central council handles offworld dealings.

The tropical belt is inhabited by primitive tribesmen. The number of tribes and their distribution is simply an unknown. The 'best' current estimates are 80,000 tribesmen in total, but this figure is a serious underestimate by a factor of at least 100. The tribes have varying degrees of technology, from the very primitive and degenerating cultures (who can no longer produce fire) to relative sophistication at TL1-2.

The PCs will have no trouble in reaching Syleria, leaving the *Tycho Brahe* in orbit with the NPC crew, and descending to the surface in an air raft. The obvious place to land is at the site of the reported outbreak of DT.

## Adventure Data 6: The Site of Outbreak

You should refer to **Module 7: The Map**, in conjunction with this section.

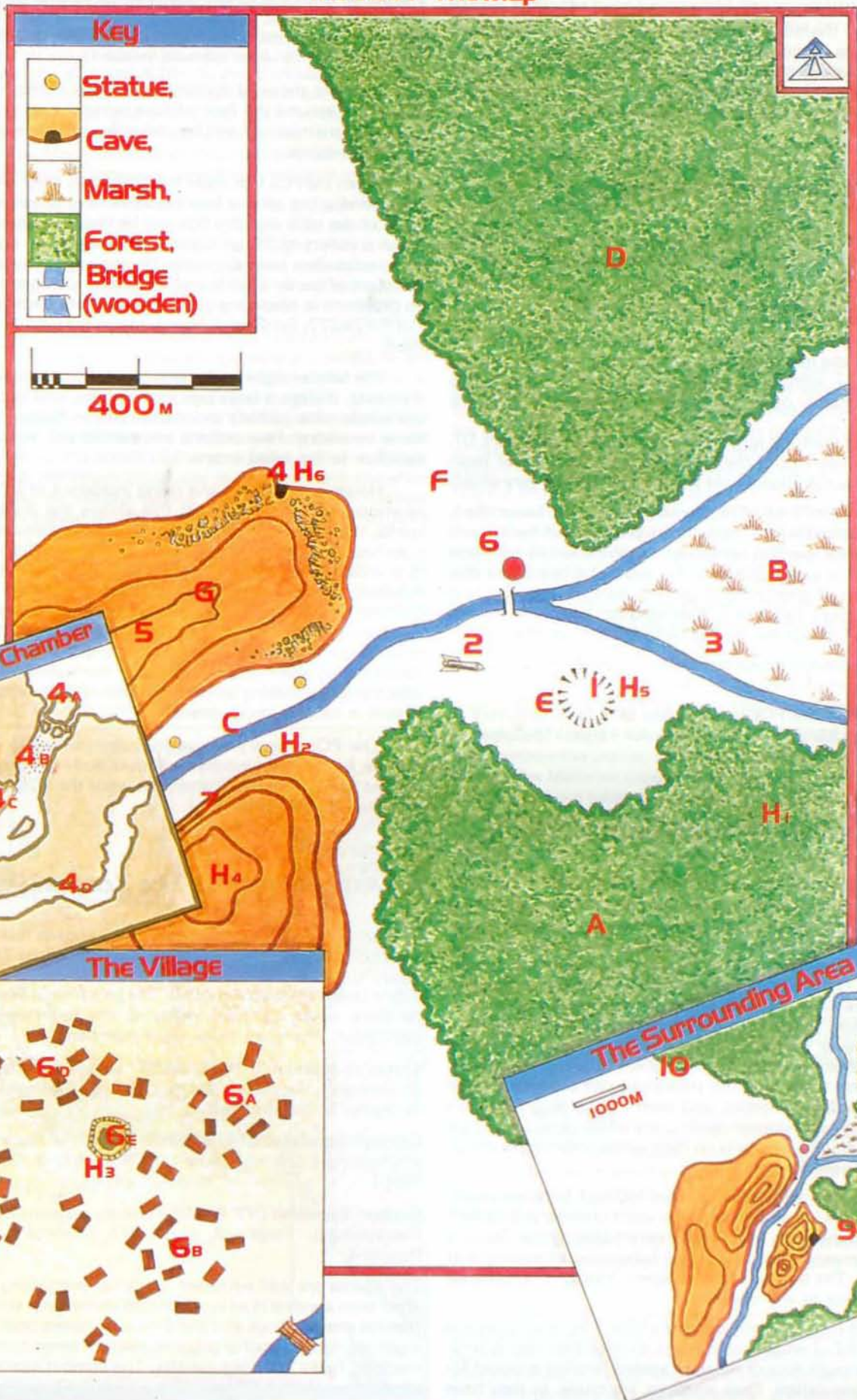
**1. Crater** - Formed by the crash of the the *Storm Runner*, over the years the edges of this crater have crumbled until it is now no more than a circular dip in the ground. The crater will be obvious when the river floods as it will become a perfectly circular lake. It is regarded as a holy site by the Marishet tribe, and they will be reluctant to let the PCs go near it. See **Adventure Data 9: The Marishet Tribe** for more details of the tribesmen.

**2. The Missile** - By a miracle a single missile was thrown clear of the crash site and buried in subsequent floods to a depth of 10 feet. It will show up on any metal detector survey. Digging anywhere within a 2 metre radius of it may (8+) cause it to explode (2D damage to all within 10 metres). It can be defused on a 9+ (DMs: +1 per level of *Gunnery*, *Electronics* or *Jack-o-T* skill).

**3. Corpse!** - This body (the name tag reads 'Paul Andersen') is all that remains of one of the Institute's survey team. He has been dead for some two weeks, and the cause of death was two bullet wounds, clearly visible through the tattered remains of his coverall. An autopsy will reveal the two ACR bullets, fired by the Zhodani team members, still lodged in the chest cavity. The rest of the survey party are buried a short distance away.

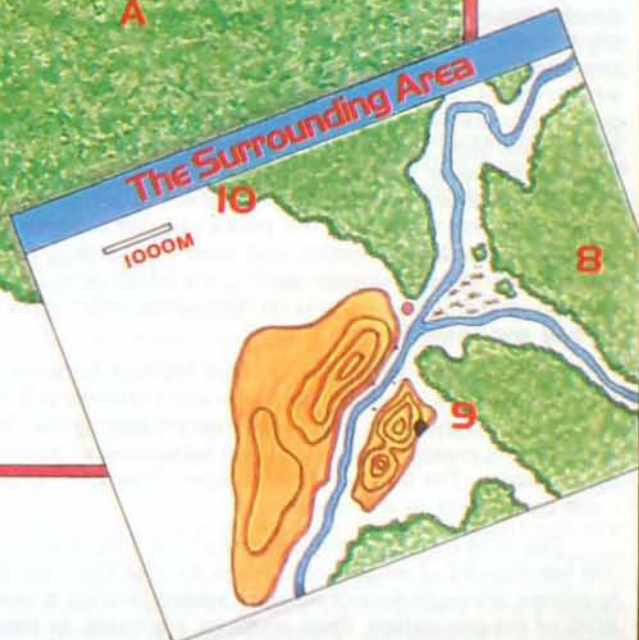
**4. The Burial Chamber** - These short tunnels are reserved for Marishet chiefs and their worldly possessions. Any interference with the burial area is a crime to the tribesmen, punishable by death - which the tribesmen believe will come from the 'curse' of the dead chieftains. The air in the tunnel is heavily tainted with poisonous spores that will infect any unprotected PC. These will be fatal within 1 week unless the PC recovers (11+, DMs +3 if *Medical* skill used, +1 in *Endur* 9+, +1 if exposed for less than 5 minutes).





**Key**

	Statue.
	Cave.
	Marsh.
	Forest.
	Bridge (wooden)





## MISSION

are now addicts. 1 kilo of fungus could be sold for about Cr500, and there is enough fungus to harvest 60 kilos around the hill.

**H. Religious Areas** - These are areas and object of special significance for the tribe, and they will be extremely displeased if the tribe if the PCs desecrate them: **H1** the tallest tree in the area; **H2** the statues along the river bank; **H3** the ship's power plant; **H4** a strangely shaped boulder on top of the hill; **H5** the crash crater; and **H6** the tribal burial chambers.

## Adventure Data 8: Encounters

Roll 1D every day, on a 1 or 2 one of the encounters given below (your choice) occurs. You should use encounters 3 - 6 only once.

- 1 The PCs meet a hunting party of 2D tribesmen.
- 2 The PCs see flickering lights in the marsh at night. Anyone who enters the marsh at night will become lost and trapped on a roll of 3+ without adequate lighting. The flickering lights will be constantly out of reach, and will disappear after 1-6 hours.
- 3 The PCs encounter a lone native who is suffering from DT. He is an outcast from the tribe, although he has not been discovered by the Zhodani. He will be cautious, but very afraid.
- 4 Jenna Stannis (UPP 86A578, Hunting-2, Air raft-1, Laser rifle-1, Survival-1; armed with a laser rifle), a professional hunter, will land at the PCs' camp in her air raft, accompanied by two local guides. She is based 90km to the east, and has come this far in search of good herd of grazing animals. Her visit is a simple courtesy call, but it may develop into more as the Marishet will attack her guides (who are from another tribe).
- 5 A plastic container blows into the PC's camp (as above, area 10).
- 6 One or two of the PCs are attacked by a local carnivore (1 killer 200kg 22/11 none 17 as pike A4 F5 S1). The creature also suffers from DT.

## Adventure Data 9: The Marishet Tribe

The Marishet tribe have lived in this area on Syleria for nearly 500 years as hunter-gatherers and primitive farmers. They are deeply religious and have a tight social system, a religious oligarchy based around the chief and his immediate family. This has kept the tribe stable over the years, but has stopped any other advancement - religious tradition crushes new ideas as they appear. Crops are sown by hand, and simply harvested when they appear ripe. Most food comes from the herds of grazing animals. They are, however, brilliant craftsmen, as their statues and other carved objects show. They are also adept at using the natural material around them, and the tribesmen can produce a large number of poisons, narcotics, and even a *slow* drug. They are also masters of assassination techniques when using poisonous animals - and any PC who gets on their wrong side should check his bed and boots for scorpions!

Recently the tribe has become divided between traditionalists and the lesser families who want change to a council system. The arguments have been exacerbated by the Zhodani who, by one means or another, have sabotaged all attempts at reconciliation. The tension in the villagers - though not its cause - will be obvious to any observer.

The tribe has 114 male members (89 of fighting age) and 119 females (92 of whom could fight), divided into twelve family groups, although four of these extended families account for 80% of the population. Their weapons are crude, as they have

no metals other than gold available to them, often no more than flint tipped spears and arrows. Those tribesmen of high social standing have sharpened teeth and tooth-edged swords as well. Other weapons include clubs, slings, or even preserved animal feet on sticks. The tribesmen have little use for armour, and only the chief and his immediate family wear leathers (mesh-1).

In battle those of fighting age attack without fear, while others run around the field administering the coup de grace to wounded enemies. All will be under the influence of their *slow* drug-like fungus.

When the PCs first meet the tribesmen, they will be curious and friendly, but after a few days the novelty will wear off for most of the tribe and the PCs will be largely ignored. The tribe speak a variety of 'Pidgin Galanglic', thanks to an Imperial sponsored education program some 15 years ago. The villagers use a system of barter (goods and services), so the team will have no problems in obtaining guides and porters (typical tribesmen - UPP 878577, Survival-3, Bow-1, Melee weapon-1) if they want them.

The tribe's religion is the worship of nature spirits and natural elements. It plays a large part in their lives, and every few days the whole tribe gathers around the *Storm Runner* power plant for a ceremony. Few actions are carried out without a small sacrifice to the tribal totem.

However, thanks to the rising incidence of DT among the newborn, and the belief that this shows the disfavour of the spirits, the normal practise of casting anyone diseased out of the tribe has been altered: how does a two month old baby survive in a wilderness, and would not the spirits be even angrier if newborn children were made to suffer more than necessary? Children with DT are normally kept until they are eight years old and then banished - if they are not already dead. The rising incidence of diseased children has simply made them more superstitious and made them turn to the totem for protection, which in turn is leaking curium peractate 205 all over them, which in turn is causing more disease...

The PCs may try to use their technology to impress the natives, but acts of kindness are more likely to succeed in gaining and holding the tribes attention while the PCs try to find the cause of the DT outbreak.

## Adventure Data 10: The Zondani Group

The Zhodani group on Syleria have chosen this area almost by accident for their work. They are agents of the Zhodani Consular Office of Reconnaissance and Exploration (CORE - see *White Dwarf 59* for full details). The group have been on Syleria for three weeks and have plenty of time to influence the local population. There are three team members:

**Scientist/psionic** UPP 879A68 Liason-1, Interrogation-1, Streetwise-1, Air raft-1, Tactics-1, Rifle-2, Electronics-1; PSR 8, Telepathy 5, Telekinesis 9.

**Combat Specialist** UPP 9AB467 Air raft-1, Recon-1, Combat engineering-1, Sword-1, Bow-1, ACR-2, Vacc-2, Demolitions-2, Pilot-1.

**Support Specialist** UPP 8659A7 Communication-1, Computer-1, Electronics-2, Forgery-2, G-carrier-1, Medical-1, Autorifle-2, Dagger-1.

The agents are well equipped. Each has everything required for short term survival in all types of climate (rations, survival knives, thermal sleeping bags etc) and they each have a body pistol, ACR, a garrote, light intensifier goggles, medium range communicators, medkits, flares and disguise kits. The combat special has 2Kgs of plastic explosive, 10 grenades, a sword, a bow and 20 arrows.



# MISSION

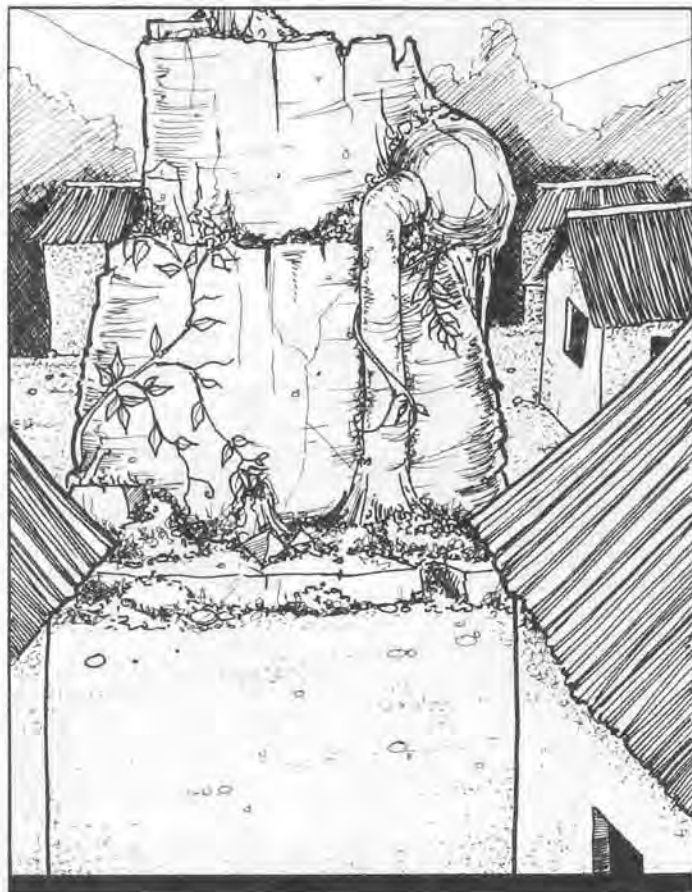
A large boulder (4a) blocks the tunnel entrance. A combined brute strength of 60 or more is needed to move this, although this can be reduced to 20 by use of levers and pulleys.

The muddy entrance passage (4b) floor is trapped with sharp flints that are coated with a contact poison and hidden below the surface of the mud (6+ to avoid treading on a flint). The poison will incapacitate any PC who fails to roll less than *Endur*. After *Endur* days (and one roll per day), the character will die. Medical attention allows 1 extra die roll for recovery every three days. The Marishet have an automatically successful antidote, but they will be extremely unwilling to supply it to the PCs.

The entrance to the burial chamber (4e) is hidden behind a crudely disguised slab (4c - needs strength 25+ to move it), which will be immediately obvious in good light. (4d) is a narrow, twisting passage which leads to a dead end. At the very end is a gut trip loop which releases a huge pile of rubble at X. This will block the passage, but it can be cleared in 5 man-hours.

The burial chamber (4e) proper is dominated by 6 stone coffins, four of which are covered by thick sheets of aluminium, the other two by stone slabs. Piled around are various tribal artefacts, made of wood covered in hand-hammered gold leaf. If sold off-planet they would be worth 2D x Cr10,000 to a collector or private museum. The PCs may be able to estimate the date (some 200 years ago) of the arrival of the aluminium (which is hardly a material that primitives could use or produce) and therefore the crash date by carbon dating the bodies in the coffins. Aluminium lids appear on coffins with bodies less than 200 years old.

**5. Watchtower** - Used by the natives to watch the herds of grazers, the tower is a crude platform structure. A large tree nearby is used as a calendar, with scratched marks to represent days and small animal drawings to represent the arrival of the herds. Several day marks (such as the longest day) have large stars carved above them, although one of these is much newer than the rest: the day when a bright light came from the sky - the landing of the Zhodani.



**6. The Village** - This is a collection of mud and wooden huts laid out on whatever (slightly) higher ground exists. Each hut houses one family, while the huts are grouped into larger family groups (6a-d), with the head of each family living at the centre of the group.

The *Storm Runner's* power plant (6e) stands on a small mound. It is totally unrecognisable as it stands, having been decorated and embellished over the years. This is *the* sacred object of the tribe, so they are unlikely to let the PCs near it.

**7. The Gold Vein** - The mountain side has slipped at this point, revealing a rich gold seam. (7+ to spot, +1 if geology speciality). This is the source of the natives' gold, and the immediate reason for the Zhodani presence.

**8. Zhodani Base** - The Zhodani are hidden deep in the forest, and their base camp is extremely well camouflaged and every approach is covered by cameras and listening devices ((14+ to spot, +1 for *Recon* skill, +2 for IR sensors). About 100m to the east is a hidden air raft. For more information see **Adventure Data 10: The Zhodani Group**.

**9. The Caverns** - Housed in this cave are 25 outcasts from the Marishet tribe - sufferers from DT and secondary infections. Over the past few weeks the Zhodani have herded them together for an attack on the village, using their natural hatred for the rest of the tribe to the full. The cave entrance is not immediately obvious (7+ to spot, DMs as above) and two of the outcasts are usually on lookout duty. A Zhodani is often (7+) with the group, and the outcasts will treat any PC resembling a Zhodani with respect and a degree of friendship. If the PCs discover this location, the Zhodani will speed up their plans or move the outcasts further into the forest.

**10. Old Camp** - It was here that the Institute's team set up their camp. The Zhodani have taken great care in eradicating evidence of its presence, and all that is left is a scorched earth. However, the Zhodani missed a plastic rations container which is caught in the undergrowth. This seems trivial, but what is a plastic container doing on a low-tech world like Syleria?

**A & D. Forest** - The forest is a very dense mixture of trees and bamboo-like plants, with a large range of colourful flora and fauna. The Marishet tribes regard the forest as the home of the spirits, and have taken precautions (such as planting skull-topped stakes at various points) to keep them in. Any PC checking the forest will find that the oldest trees (200 years plus) are fire damaged, thanks to the crash of the *Storm Runner*. Area D is similar in most respects, except that there are no burnt trees.

**B. Marsh** - This area is a treacherous marsh, and also a home to the spirits. The natives know their way around the marsh, but any PC without a guide may (7+) become trapped. At night, marsh gas causes will-o-wisps, which could be mistaken as lanterns or torches.

**C. River Valley** - Thanks to the gold-bearing vein in the cliff (7), panning for gold in the river will give Cr1Dx100 per day. The richly-carved statues are the tribes' way of thanking the nature spirits for the gold.

**E. Crash Area** - Although plants have regrown since the crash, the land around the crater is poor, due to the presence metallic and plastic toxins from the burning wreckage. Soil analysis will reveal small particles of metal and plastic, and any biologist will be able to tell that the plant life in the area is unhealthy.

**F. Fertile Plain** - The land here is divided into family plots for farming, and the area is also on the migration routes for herds of grazing animals.

**G. Hill** - This area of exposed rock is the site of a yellowy-green fungus, unique to this area. When heated gently, it releases spores which have similar effects to a very weak *slow* drug. The tribesmen use it during religious ceremonies and before battles but, unfortunately, it is very addictive - and most of the villagers



# MERCY MISSION

The support specialist has mechanical and electronic tool kits, and various bugging devices, which will be positioned close to the PCs' camp as soon as the Zhodani are aware of their presence. These - and the psionic's telepathic ability - will be used to monitor the PCs.

The Zhodani want the villagers out of the area so that they can begin their mining operations. They are willing to achieve this by sponsoring a (very) minor civil war within the tribe, or by using the outcasts with DT (whom they have rounded up) to attack the village. If all else fails, the Zhodani will have little difficulty in using the telekinetic ability of the psionic to convince the tribesmen that they are gods. They will then lead the tribe on a religious exodus (incidentally spreading DT to the surrounding tribes). By using such indirect methods, they hope that their presence on the world - and the subsequent mining operations - will go undetected. The Zhodani are aware of the disease among the tribesmen, but not that it is serious or that, by disrupting the tribe, they may well spread it across the rest of the planet. If they do discover this - and the PCs have not been outwardly aggressive it may be possible for the PCs and the Zhodani to arrive at some sort of agreement. You should play the Zhodani as pragmatists: dedicated to achieving their aims of moving the villagers so that mining can begin in secret, but willing to ally with anyone to do it.

If the PCs come to be regarded as a nuisance, the Zhodani will do what they can to make life as difficult as possible. They will sabotage experiments and turn the tribe against the PCs. If this fails they will resort to more drastic actions, assassinating the PCs (using native intermediaries), blowing up equipment, (especially the air raft - even the most technologically backward tribesman will be able to put a 'little box' underneath it), using bribery (gold taken from the river) on one vulnerable PC, kidnapping or whatever else you decide is appropriate.

If all goes to plan for the Zhodani, they will mount a night attack on the village with the outcasts two weeks after the PCs arrive. The outcasts (now 34 in number) will be armed in typical native style, although one or two will be carrying Zhodani-made daggers. If the PCs do not interfere there will be much damage to the village (fires and the like will have been set during the attack), but few casualties. The outcasts will return to their cave once the village is ablaze. The tribal elders (influenced by the Zhodani telepathist) will decide that the attack was a sign from the spirits that they should abandon the village and move elsewhere. Again, DT will be spread to the rest of the planet.

## Adventure Data II: The Solution

The PCs first actions should be to carry out a complete scientific survey of the tribesmen and their environment. This will involve soil analyses, metal and radition monitoring, local flora and fauna classifications, medical checks on the tribesmen and the like. These tests may reveal that the land to the south of the river is poor and slightly toxic; that animals are affected by the disease as well as the tribesmen, but nowhere near the same degree; that older (200 years) trees in the region are fire-scarred; that small metallic particles are present in the soil; that a large metallic object (the missile) is buried some distance beneath the ground; that there is a large impact crater; and that, most importantly of all, there is a high level of radiation within 5 metres of the tribal totem.

The solution to the DT problem revolves around recognising its source, and persuading the tribe of the danger, while remaining isolated from the rest of the planetary population. The evidence of what happened 200 years ago - the crash of the *Storm Runner* - is in the environment all around the village, although tracing the actual source of infection to the power plant/totem may not be so easy. The second key to success is in (hopefully indirectly) manipulating the villagers into remain-

ing as one group and in not moving into another tribe's area. This is directly contrary to what the Zhodani have been trying to achieve, but the PCs and the Zhodani could work out some form of agreement that satisfied everybody.

The power plant must also be removed or made safe in some way, as it is continuing to leak curium into the environment.

The Zhodani will help in moving the tribe to a reservation where they can be treated, but they will expect the PCs to renounce all Imperial claims to the planet (a meaningless gesture, but very useful for propaganda purposes). If the tribe can be moved there will be no further problems with quarantine, as the Marishet are complete xenophobes where other tribes are concerned. However, there is a minor problem thanks to the tribal addiction to the *slow* fungus...

The power plant will have to permanently sealed, or taken offworld and destroyed, possibly with the *Tycho Brahe's* weaponry. Simply burying it is only postponing the problem.

How difficult you make it for the PCs to convince the tribesmen that they must move or allow the PCs to remove the power plant and all the surrounding soil etc is for you to decide. Gung-ho play should not be allowed to succeed in this adventure, where a scientific and, above all, sympathetic, approach to the NPCs is the best method. If the PCs treat the Marishet with honour and kindness, try to explain what is going on and do not run rough-shod over their beliefs, allow them to succeed. Ultimately, the only way that gun-happy adventurers will stop the spread of DT is to commit mass-murder and then dispose of the power plant. While this does solve the problem of the disease, Director Morello of the Makin Institute will be horrified, and will make sure that the PCs face loss of all payments (ouch, for most *Traveller* characters), immediate and very public trial, and long terms of imprisonment or worse.

If the PCs have agreed to renounce Imperial claims to Syleria - and this is subsequently used for propaganda purposes - there may also be some very awkward questions to be answered. ■



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# Rants, Rogues & Rules



*Traveller Articles*  
*by Andy Slack*



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# Rants, Rogues & Rules

*Traveller Articles*

*by Andy Slack*

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## Star Patrol

*Scout Service in Traveller by Andy Slack*

*Originally published in White Dwarf 20 - © Games Workshop Limited 1980*

*"How do you tell a youngster raised on the 3V serials that you're still alive only because you ran away with less provocation than the other five guys - and you're rich because you've got their shares as well?"*  
- *Shel Meldol, ITSS (Retd.)*

### BACKGROUND

The Scout Service of the Imperium has many tasks; probably the most widely known is its survey function. *Traveller Book 1* provides a character generation system for general adventurer characters; this article presents an expanded procedure for more experienced scouts of the Survey Arm.

The Scout Service Survey Arm performs astronomical and planetological surveys of unexplored subsectors. If Lost Colonies or alien life-forms are discovered in the course of these surveys, the Service makes recommendations as to the advisability of contact, exploitation and trade. Suitable planets are recommended for colonisation, in which case the Service provides liaison personnel to advise and protect new colonists. Due to their intimate knowledge of certain systems and superior sensor equipment, Scout personnel are often seconded to the Navy as pathfinders, guides or interpreters; particularly if aliens or ecology-disrupting modes of assault are to be involved.

Retired Scouts are much in demand by the smaller governments and larger corporations of the Galaxy for their own exploration/exploitation projects. Such projects tend to be less fastidious than the Imperium about possible effects on local ecologies and populations.

### NOTE ON SKILLS

To conserve space, definitions of skills acquired have not been included; therefore, persons using this article will need:

- *Traveller, Book 1*
- *Mercenary, Traveller Book 4*
- *High Guard, Traveller Book 5*
- *Citizens of the Imperium, Supplement 4*

If *Mercenary* and *High Guard* are not used in your campaign, this article will probably give Scout characters too great an advantage over other classes.

### Weapon Combat

This skill may be taken as *Blade Combat*, *Gun Combat* or *Brawling* at the player's discretion.

### ENLISTMENT

A throw of 7+ on 2D6 is required to enlist in the Scout Service. A DM of +1 is allowed for Intelligence 6+, and a DM of +2 is allowed for Strength 8+. These DMs are cumulative.

### ACQUIRING SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Upon enlistment, a character embarks on a term of service lasting four years. This is divided into four one-year assignments. Characters determine their assignment each year,

then resolve all actions pertaining to it. Upon completing the fourth assignment, the character has concluded one four year term, and may attempt to re-enlist (a throw of 3+ on 2D6 is required) or elect to muster out.

### Specialities

When first enlisting, a character determines in what capacity he will serve the Scouts by rolling 1D6 and consulting the *Speciality Selection* table below. DMs: +2 if Intelligence 10+, -2 if Intelligence 5-. A further DM of +2 is allowed at the character's option if his Education is 11+.

The six Specialities of the Survey Arm are *Security*, *Support*, *Flight*, *Geology*, *Ecology* and *Contact*.

### SPECIALITY SELECTION

0. Security
1. Security
2. Support
3. Support
4. Flight
5. Geology
6. Ecology
7. Contact

*Security Specialists* are charged with protecting the personnel of the other five groups from hostile life-forms and other hazards; *Support Specialists* ensure the continued functioning of the many and varied items of high-technology equipment used by the Service; *Flight Specialists* have the responsibility of delivering the other groups to their destination intact. The first three groups are therefore concerned with enabling the personnel of *Geology*, *Ecology* and *Contact* to perform their tasks free from distraction; these tasks are respectively mineral resources surveys, surveys of current and potential flora and fauna, and liaison with local cultures.

*Flight Specialists* are also concerned with Remote Sensing of systems and the construction of astrogation charts.

Once a Speciality has been selected, a character may only change it by cross-training in the Speciality he wishes to transfer to, then re-enlisting in that Speciality at the beginning of a new four-year term.

### Basic and Advanced Training

This occupies the first assignment of the first term. The character rolls for two skills on his Speciality Skills Table.

### ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment is resolved separately. This is a three-stage process: first, the character determines if he has been placed in command of a Scout team. Roll 2D6; if the result is less than or equal to the character's current Grade, he has been placed in a command position. Second, the character rolls 2D6 on the *Specific Assignments* table to determine his assignment for that year; and lastly, the assignment is resolved. Four rolls (each on 2D6) on the appropriate *Assignment Resolution* table are required:



1. *Survival*: To survive an assignment, the character must roll the indicated number or higher on 2D6. Since duty in the Scouts is particularly hazardous, if exactly the number stated is thrown, the character has received some crippling injury in the line of duty. One of his physical characteristics is reduced by one point (roll 1D6: 1, 2 = Strength, 3, 4 = Dexterity, 5,6 = Endurance) and his next assignment is automatically to a base hospital where he spends the year recovering. However, since the Service does not believe in wasting manpower, roll 4+ on 1D6 to receive a level of expertise in each of the following skills: *Admin, Computer, Instruction*.

Optionally, characters failing to make their survival roll are allowed a saving throw against death. If a character rolls his Endurance or less on 2D6, he is considered not to have been killed, but instead to be so severely maimed that he is granted an honourable discharge on medical grounds. He musters out immediately, without completing any remaining assignments of that term; he does not dice for Bonuses, Promotion or Skills for that assignment, and Strength, Dexterity, Endurance and Intelligence are reduced by one point each.

2. *Bonuses*: Characters may receive Bonuses for ingenuity. If the indicated number or higher is rolled, a *Science Bonus* is awarded. The character is allowed a DM of +1 on the next roll for promotion. If the number rolled is at least three higher than the indicated number, a *Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Science* is received. This allows a DM of +2 on the next promotion roll. If the number rolled is at least six higher than the number stated, a *First Contact Bonus* is received. The winner of a *First Contact Bonus* immediately receives +1 Social Standing, is allowed a DM of +3 on the next promotion roll, and many choose his next assignment.

A character who has consistently been awarded at least one Bonus per term of Service receives a DM of +1 when rolling for benefits upon mustering out.

3. *Promotion*: There are no actual ranks in the Scout Service; a fluid structure assigns individuals on a basis of ability. However, an individual's Pay Grade increases with experience and responsibility. The Pay Grades used in this article are exactly parallel to the Enlisted ranks in *Mercenary* and *High Guard*; they range from G1 to G9. Promotion may be gained as often as once per assignment; and by long-standing tradition, any Scout (except *Security Specialists*) returning from a *Survey* mission is automatically promoted one Grade.

A roll on 2D6 at least equal to the stated number indicates that the character has been promoted one Grade; on a roll of exactly 2 or 3, however, the insubordination for which Scouts are rightly famous has caused the character to be reduced one Grade as a disciplinary action. A Scout reduced in Grade to G0 musters out immediately, and loses one point of Social Standing.

4. *Skills*: A character may receive skills if he rolls the indicated number or higher. Which *Skill* table is to be consulted depends on the current assignment and the character's Speciality.

Any character may opt to roll on the *Scout Life* table or his *Speciality Skills* table regardless of the current assignment. If the character was placed in a command position, he may roll on the *Command Skills* table. If the assignment on which the skill was gained was *Battle, Pathfinder, or Colony Protection* the *Combat Skills* table may be used; if the assignment was *Covert Survey, Colony Assessment, Colony Protection or Training* the *Hole Life* table may be used; the *Ship Life* table, if the assignment was *Battle, Pathfinder, Recon or Survey*.

## DEFINITION OF ASSIGNMENT TYPES

### Battle

The character has become involved in a naval or ground battle as a "military advisor".

### Covert Survey

The character has infiltrated a society which is as yet uncontacted in order to assess its likely interaction with the Imperium. He may recommend interdiction.

### Pathfinder

The character, because of his intimate knowledge of local space, has been selected to spearhead a planetary assault, guiding in the first wave of troops dropped.

### Recon

The character has been ordered to make a deep penetration data-gathering sweep through hostile or potentially hostile space.

### Colony Assessment

Following reports by a Survey team, the character has been picked to assess the suitability of a potentially useful planet for colonisation or exploitation.

### Colony Protection

The character has been detailed to protect and instruct the personnel of a new colony.

### Training

The character has been recalled to Base for advanced training in his Speciality.

### Survey

The character has been assigned to a mission which will map a new subsector, and search it for useful planets.

### Special Duty

Roll 1D6 to determine the type of Special Duty:

1. *Recruiting*: The character has been assigned to Recruiting Duty, and receives one level of *Recruiting* expertise. In addition, on a roll of 4+ on 1D6, a level of *Admin* expertise is gained.
2. *Cross-Training*: The character rolls once on the *Skills* table of any Speciality except his own. He notes the fact of cross-training in that Speciality, and may opt to re-enlist in it at the beginning of his next four-year term.
3. *Covert Survey School*: Ostensibly a school training Scouts for *Covert Survey* assignments, it is rumoured that this school has other uses for its graduates; this is, however, officially denied. Up to eight skills may be received; roll 5+ on 1D6 for each of the following skills: *Forgery*, *Bribery*, *Interrogation*, *Streetwise*, *Admin*, *Weapon Cbt*, *Recon*, *Combat Engineering*. Note that a Scout learning *Weapon Cbt* in this school may elect to take one level of expertise in *Bow Cbt*. This is the only way in which a Scout may acquire *Bow Cbt*. (Defined in *Citizens of the Imperium*.)
4. *Colony School*: This school teaches skills useful on *Colony Protection* or *Colony Assessment* assignments. Roll 4+ on 1D6 for each of the following skills: *Survival*, *Instruction*, *Hunting*, *Prospecting*.
5. *Synergy School*: The character has been selected to receive instruction in a generalised, systems approach to heuristic problem-solving. One level of *Jack-of-Trades* expertise is received automatically.
6. *Contact School*: The character has been selected for training in the art of contacting other cultures. Roll 4+ on 1D6 for each of the following: *Liaison*, *Carousing*, *Streetwise*.



### Multiple School Assignments

If a character is assigned to a school and already has a skill level of 3+ in one of the skills offered there, the assignment is instead to the school as an instructor; instead of dicing for the stated skills, the character receives one level of *Instruction* expertise automatically. Characters may be assigned to a school any number of times.

### RE-ENLISTMENT AND MUSTERING OUT

After completing four one-year assignments, a character has concluded a four-year term, and may elect to muster out or attempt to re-enlist. Re-enlistment is allowed on a throw of 3+ on 2D6. If the dice roll is a natural 12, the character must re-enlist.

Mustering out, aging and retirement are conducted in accordance with *Traveller, Book 1*. A character choosing this generation system is not eligible for term skills as detailed in *Traveller, Book 1*.

### SERVICE ADVENTURES

An alternative to the standard *Traveller* adventure format is to start a character from scratch, and “live out” his terms of Service as adventures; in this case, just dice up an assignment each game year and play through the important parts.

### TABLES

#### SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

Die Roll	Assignment	Die Roll	Assignment
2	Battle	8	Training
3	Covert Survey	9	Survey
4	Pathfinder	10	Survey
5	Recon	11	Survey
6	Colony Assessment	12	Special Duty
7	Colony Protection		

#### Assignment Resolution

##### Security

	Battle	Covert Survey	Pathfinder	Recon	Col Ass	Col Prot	Training	Survey
Survival	7+	5+	8+	5+	5+	6+	3+	3+
Bonus	12+	10+	11+	11+	10+	11+	None	9+
Promotion	6+	8+	5+	8+	8+	7+	8+	9+
Skill	6+	7+	5+	7+	7+	7+	6+	9+

DMs: Survival - +1 if Endurance 9+; +1 if any weapon skill level 2+.

### Support, Flight

	Battle	Covert Survey	Path-finder	Recon	Col Ass	Col Prot	Training	Survey
Survival	6+	4+	7+	4+	4+	5+	3+	3+
Bonus	12+	12+	11+	11+	9+	11+	12+	8+
Promotion	6+	8+	5+	8+	8+	7+	8+	Auto
Skill	6+	7+	5+	7+	7+	7+	5+	7+

DMs: Survival - +1 if Endurance 9+; +1 if any Specialist skill level 2+.

### Geo, Eco, Contact

	Battle	Covert Survey	Path-finder	Recon	Col Ass	Col Prot	Training	Survey
Survival	5+	3+	6+	3+	4+	4+	Auto	3+
Bonus	12+	9+	12+	12+	10+	10+	12+	8+
Promotion	10+	9+	10+	9+	9+	9+	9+	Auto
Skill	9+	6+	9+	9+	6+	6+	5+	6+

DMs: Survival - +1 if Endurance 9+; +1 if Survival-2 or better. Bonus - +1 if Intelligence 10+; +1 if Education 12+.

### Speciality Skills

	Security	Support	Flight	Geology	Ecology	Contact
1	Weapon Cbt	Admin	Vacc	Prosp	Hunting	Admin
2	Weapon Cbt	Admin	Vacc	Prosp	Hunting	Admin
3	Zero-G	Mech	Admin	Veh	Survival	Street
4	Survival	Elec	Commo	Engnrg	Veh	Veh
5	Hvy Wpn	Comp	Sh Bt	Prosp	Comp	Comp
6	Veh	Grav	Engnrg	Mech	Medic	Liaison
7	B. Dress	Medic	Nav	Elec	Hunting	Liaison
8	Tactics	J-O-T	Pilot	Comp	J-O-T	J-O-T

DMs: +1 if Intelligence 9+; +2 if Grade G4+.



## Other Skills

	Scout Life	Ship Life	Hole Life	Combat Skills	Command Skills
1	Wpn Cbt	Vacc	Wpn Cbt	Fwd Obsv	Veh
2	+1 Str	Gambling	Wpn Cbt	Wpn Cbt	+1 End
3	Carousing	Mech	Wpn Cbt	Demo	Wpn Cbt
4	Gambling	Sh Bt	Survival	Recon	Survival
5	Survival	Elec	Veh	Cmb Eng	Admin
6	+1 Dex	Zero-G	Hunting	Medic	Liaison
7	+1 End	Commo	Prosp	Veh	Carousing
8	+1 Intel	Engnrng	Gambling	Wpn Cbt	Ship Tactics
9	+1 Educ	Nav	Carousing	Pilot	Fleet Tactics
10	J-O-T	Pilot	Leader	J-O-T	Leader

DMs: +4 if Grade G6+.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*This was the first article I wrote for White Dwarf as a Games Workshop staffer. Scouts had always been my favourite career for characters, but in the groups I gamed with they were falling out of favour because players preferred the richer character generation sequences in Mercenary and High Guard. So, using High Guard as a model, I developed a similar sequence for Scouts.*

*The official Traveller canon rendered this article obsolete when Scouts were detailed in Book 6. I carried on using it myself for years, as it better fits the Scout Service in my Traveller universe; but I abandoned it in the late 1980s when I switched to the 2300 AD and GURPS rules, which have a different approach to prior service.*

## Backdrop of Stars

*Setting Up Traveller Campaigns by Andy Slack  
Originally published in White Dwarf 24 - © Games Workshop Limited 1981*

One major problem in *Traveller* campaigns is the question of 'background' - or rather the lack of it. This article proposes some ideas on how the problem can be solved.

First 'background' must be defined. As used here, 'background' is a solid, believable and consistent campaign world; if a campaign has this background, then characters become 'real' people rather than statistics. When background is present, there are times when the players literally see through their characters' eyes, and identify with them to a degree impossible in lesser games.

It is this which distinguishes a good referee from a bad one. A good games master will create a good background, and as a result games in that campaign will be good regardless of which rules and scenarios he is using.

A campaign without a background causes problems: The games master who can't think of a scenario, the player with a new character saying "What shall I do with him? What's the point of the game?"

Let's look at some other games and see why *Traveller* is particularly prone to these problems.

Like myself, most *Traveller* players started off in *D&D*. This game has few problems of background. The DM has no trouble setting up a Mediaeval backdrop for his campaign, because thanks to hundreds of fairy tales, films, comics and books absorbed almost from birth, you needn't spend hours describing a village in detail, or how a crossbow works, or what a horse looks like; you simply say 'You enter a village,' 'They have crossbows,' or 'You see a horse in front of you.' And everyone present knows what you mean, instantly.

There is likewise no trouble in developing a personality for a character, complete with objectives. Looking at die rolls for characteristics, you can see at once what the character will be best as. Once a character class is chosen, a rough sketch of the character is already present; a paladin will be generous and kind to small children and animals, a monk may imitate Grasshopper or Shang Chi, and so on.

Most fantasy role-playing games are similar: *D&D*, *C&S*, *T&T*, *TFT* and so on and infinitum draw on a background of wizards and warriors ingrained below the conscious level in most of us. There are a few of another kind: These games do not draw on an immediately familiar background, but instead describe a novel one. *RuneQuest* is the prime example of this; after reading the description of Glorantha, looking over the map, and learning our cult's aims in life, we quickly feel at home. Yet these games are 'cheating'; Glorantha may be strange, but a crossbow is still a crossbow, a horse is still a horse, and trolls still behave like the trolls of fairytale despite different statistics.

A *Traveller* referee cannot draw on historical prototypes for his milieu. Thus statistics rarely become clothed in flesh; referees give up because the game lacks something, players discuss *D&D* trips in little huddles while he dices up encounters, and everyone goes back to the dungeon.

GDW produce an excellent background in *The Spinward Marches*, *the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* and other sources. However, this article is for those referees who don't want to buy these supplemental materials. Here then, for what they're worth, are some tricks that can be used to get around this problem of background. Nor are they limited to *Traveller*; some of these ideas will be useful in other games and have probably been thought of before by a lot of other DMs...

### **Rolling Your Own**

Don't be afraid to plagiarise. If you see a good idea anywhere, grab it and weld it on. After a while your campaign doesn't look much like anyone else's, but that's part of the fun of role-playing games. By adding and deleting rules, scenarios and so on, you eventually wind up with a game that has been tailored to your own group's preferences. A lot of people refuse to use anything that isn't 'official'; don't be one of them.

Don't try to roll up a million planets right away; this makes it difficult to generate any detail. Even if the players have a starship to begin with, start with a couple of planets and work them out in depth. If the players want to move on, and you want them to stay, either admit that you haven't worked out anywhere else - most players will understand - or invent some reason why their characters can't leave. ('I'm sorry, guys, but the nearest stockist for that spare you need is fifty parsecs away. You'll have to wait for the mail.')

Start with the statistics, and ask yourself: Why did these come to be? With a little practice, and some dice rolls to inject variety, you'll be generating immensely devious and interesting backgrounds in no time at all. Don't reroll 'nonsensical' results until you're sure you can't explain them.



Have an overall struggle into which the players can fit. This gives them some kind of overall goal which will carry them through several early adventures, until they find purposes for their characters. (It's rare for someone to play more than a few sessions without coming up with some long-term aim for himself - this can be anything up to and including ruling the galaxy. Often this will mean they abandon your carefully-plotted goals; let them.)

If a struggle is present, the players can side with one party or the other, or play both ends against the middle. Where possible, work out several layers of plot, then interesting rumours and encounters can surface.

Some useful struggles that could be set up are:

### **1: Mission: Impossible**

This is typified by the Sable Rose Affair in White Dwarf 17. Here we have a group of players who have been recruited by a highly secret organisation to perform tasks which cannot be openly countenanced; of course, while all possible aid will be given, the players must work out their own methods; and should they be caught or killed, the Imperial Senate will disavow all knowledge...

Tasks here are numerous and will keep most characters usefully employed. Possible operations set up by the referee, acting as the group's Case Officer, include surveillance, kidnapping, blackmail, arson, murder, paramilitary commando raids, piracy... the list could go on for pages. Bear in mind, too, that there will usually be several government agencies of this kind on both sides of the border, which will be competing for appropriations and thus unfriendly towards each other. (My own Covert Survey Bureau spends more time trying to discredit Naval Counter-Intelligence than it does breaking up Zhodani spy rings...)

### **2: Punishment Battalion**

This plot requires a war, and is suited to militaristic or 'hack and slay' players. Players represent the vilest psychopaths their stellar empire has produced, who have been banded together for convenience and sent off on those suicidal missions which are so prevalent in futuristic warfare. This leads to fairly straightforward bloodbaths and some enjoyable table-topping.

### **3: Where No Man Has Gone Before**

Here the group has been given the task of exploring a new subsector - this one is obviously good for solitaire play. In a suitable exploration ship, the crew proceed from world to world, mapping the subsector as they go. Depending on whether they are sponsored by a government or a merchant company, their opponents may be hostile aliens, native life-forms or explorers from other organisations. Their objectives may be to negotiate trading deals, diplomatic treaties, or simply to establish a naval or scout base.

### **4: Shogun**

This does not take place on the frontier of your empire, but near the capital worlds. It is postulated that the emperor is involved in some kind of power struggle, where the nobles and other powerful beings of the empire have split into factions, each vying for control of the throne. This scenario lends itself readily to assassinations and underhand skulduggery, not so well to straightforward slaughter. The players will be hired by one faction or another, and thereafter events will proceed much as in case 1: Mission: Impossible, with the difference that the enemies are internal rather than outside the empire.

## 5: Star Wars

In which the heroic (or villainous) players strive to overthrow (or preserve) the corrupt and tyrannical empire. Or the hideous barbarians attempt to sack the ancient galactic civilisation. It's up to you.

Other set-ups will suggest themselves; this list is by no means exhaustive. It is perfectly feasible for a campaign to have several of these plots running at once; once a campaign has been going for a while, such crutches will no longer be needed as players develop their own goals, but will still be useful background material, providing opportunities to the group.

### Methods

There are several methods of generating background besides working it all out from scratch. These vary in usefulness, and are presented here without comment.

The referee can generate a character for himself and run solo trips for this character, noting down all encounters for use in later games. By means of asking the dice questions and noting the answers, a background quickly appears.

Let some of the non-players encountered by the group be 'personality' non-players; that is, NPCs who have been worked out in considerable detail, like a 'real' player character. These people will have their own goals and plots which may (or may not) involve the players. How to do this will be covered later in the description of patrons.

Write up the trips and adventures of your band as stories and circulate them. This forces you to concentrate on describing a character's surroundings and equipment; and once these descriptions have been circulated, people all 'know' what a phase-interlocked grunge rifle (or whatever) looks like. This is important for the 'feel' of the game. If someone in the group has artistic talent, drawings are even better.

Let the players work out some of the background for you. They, too, can design a planet, an alien, a ship; sometimes this develops into whole subsectors run by another gamer in which you can adventure.

You will find that after a brief period - usually a few months - the campaign becomes 'self-sustaining'; the characters already present, and the world descriptions, begin to generate scenarios and background information by themselves. Often thereafter, you will find that you are observing your universe as it unfolds rather than consciously creating it.

### Player's Complaints

The first one to arise will be: 'What character class shall I be?' In other words, which career/service should the character enter? The best method for a new player is to ask him which fictional hero he'd like to imitate and insert him into an appropriate service. Alternatively, pre-dice a character for him; Traveller characters, particularly in the expanded generation mode, take a long time to dice up, during which some players may wander off and join another game. At the other extreme, there are those who don't actually play, but enjoy dicing up characters. Encourage these people to leave you the results, and you have a ready-made supply of NPCs... (something I've not actually tried yet is making new players start as Barbarians (from *Supplement 4*), so that being bewildered at the background is in character).

The next problem will be choosing a long-term goal for the character once he's been diced up. Many players will expect the life's purpose of their character to be spoon-fed to them. This is where your carefully prepared background and struggle will come in. Until he knows what kind of universe he's in, how can a player plan anything? Don't expect much for the first few sessions, because everyone involved has to learn their way around your universe. For really bad cases of confusion, use the method suggested for patron generation below.



Soon (particularly if hard-core *D&D* players) your group will ask the embarrassing question: How do I improve my skills? (Translation: Where are the experience points?) This occurs less frequently with experienced players, who tend to go in more for developing a character and global domination than accumulating experience points and going up levels. In all such awkward moments, never tell a player it is impossible to do something. Just make it very, very difficult. For example, most people in my group (including myself, to be fair) wanted experience points. So a system was devised, which ended complaints despite the fact that since its form stabilised only two people have gone up a level in any skill by experience. It's far faster to use a friendly instructor - and since Book 4's Instruction skill, the experience problem has died down.

Next we come to the hack-and-slayers. *Traveller* is not really for them. The first decent hit anyone scores on you in *Traveller* will render you unconscious at the very least. So even with restrained players, it's advisable for them to run a couple of characters each (two seems to be optimum - people can't usually develop more than two characters at once). In *Traveller*, fighting is something to be avoided if at all possible, as in real life. This seems to sit better with older or more experienced players.

Another complaint comes from people who have set their hearts on some particular item, usually powered armour or a phaser. Don't be afraid to put your foot down and say they can't have it, if it will upset your campaign. It is better, however, to let them have a reasonable facsimile - with a reasonable drawback. For example, see Joe Haldeman's *Forever War* for all the things that can go wrong with powered armour.

### **Referee's Problems**

The main and recurring problem for referees is setting up commissions. When all else fails, let the dice decide!

First, you must generate a patron. (This technique is also useful for working out personality NPCs, and the characters of inexperienced players.)

Dice up a suitable character. Examine his UPP, skills and record. How does he look? His terms of service will give you his age. Does he look muscular (high Strength)? Tough (high Endurance)? Graceful (high Dexterity)? Is he a good conversationalist (high Intelligence and Education)? What social class does he come from? Do his skills (Leader, Carousing, Streetwise) make him especially easy to get on with? And so on. UPP, skills, service. These tell you more about a character than you'd think. When a difficult choice appears, consult the dice for an answer.

Similarly, what kind of person is he? Is he smart (Intelligence and Education again)? Can you trust him? (Probably not, if he's got Forgery-3.)

The merchant in Book 1, provided as an example of character generation, is the sort of thing you will get here. Service history is a valuable aid in working out a character. Has he got wounds of some kind, for instance - yes, if he barely made his survival roll a time or two.

You now know what kind of person the patron is; what would a man like that do with his life? What is his long-term goal, and how close is he to achieving it? Once you know these things, since you know what the players' characters are like, you will know why he wants to hire them instead of anyone else. Usually there are few commissions which a specific, detailed patron actually would hire a given band for. They're fairly apparent.

If not, seek further information. Ask the dice: Is this commission concerned with some kind of person? (If so, dice up a random person or patron; generate a character to fit; flesh him out in the same way as the patron, and ask yourself: How would these two relate to each other, and why are the players involved?) Or, is the job concerned with some kind of cargo? (Dice a random cargo on the trade and speculation table, and try to figure out why the patron is interested.)

This becomes easier as the campaign goes on, and the background which you've generated is invaluable. Eventually some characters will become powerful enough to hire other bands to do their dirty work for them - by which time they should have been retired from play, but will occasionally participate as military commanders, trading magnates, etc. In this case, they will already have a clear aim which the band can further, or they wouldn't have made it that far.

Another kind of 'commission' is the rumour; rumours can be simply rumours of a patron generated as above, or snippets of your background surfacing for the first time. If a scenario is already in progress, it will be fairly easy to think of a rumour which can help/thwart/confuse the party (delete where inapplicable). If the rumour is the starting point, then a piece of your local Library Data might be enough to spur the band into action. For example, on page 28 of the Spinward Marches, we note the planet Zila as a renowned wine producer, while its neighbour Pysadi is ruled by a religious dictatorship which prohibits alcohol. Someone with a Jump-2 drive and few scruples could surely make quite a killing there smuggling booze.

(A similar method to the patron/rumour generation process can be used to develop your background. You might dice up several nobles from Supplement 4, and declare them to be the last few emperors. Compare their service records. One might have died in service - did his successor assassinate him? Or, if he retired, was he forced to abdicate? If so, how?)

The most intriguing method of generating rumours can be used with great effect when you are refereeing several independent groups in the same campaign universe. One group can then uncover rumours of the other's activities. They may be recruited by the Imperium to stop those activities if the other group has been obnoxious enough. If the first group is rich enough, the second group may decide to rob them. There are endless possibilities. This does give some problems when the groups meet; either you can call them together and watch them battling with a ferocity never achieved against NPCs, or you can 'split' your time-lines; you then have two parallel universes, in which each group in turn is used as a non-player gang while the other is run by the players concerned. In this case, with a little extra record-keeping, after the fallout has settled each side can blissfully go on believing it has won - after all, if the groups met each other regularly the whole set-up would have been impossible.

There is a third, bastard kind of commission: The linked list of patrons. Here there is some vast treasure/intriguing rumour/ancient lost city, or some similar interesting thing which has been well-documented in your background as a legend, for example. The group runs into a patron who is tracking down the source of the legend. He hasn't much to go on, but he himself has a rumour which states that such-and-such person knows some important key fact about the whole affair. When this person is unearthed at last, he too has a rumour, leading to a third patron - and so on for as long as your ingenuity holds out. Several of GDW's adventures run this way, with the group fulfilling minor commissions along the way, all the time gathering more evidence to lead them to the Big One.

Of course, there are times when all these fail, or you haven't had time to work out a scenario. In this case, there are a few standard fall-back options.

**Trading:** Someone will have a starship in most groups; if they have, they probably need money. Most groups in this position will cheerfully wander around trading and beating off the odd pirate. Frequently a commission will appear as if from nowhere, for example if they found the Zila/Pysadi setup described above. This requires at least one subsector mapped out, though not in great detail; just the stats will do. Things like animal encounters can be diced up as they happen.

**The shadows of the past:** When a group has been going for some time, at least one of them will have made a powerful enemy. He could decide it was worth tracking the group down to settle accounts.



**The arena:** If a group is really hard-up, there is always the arena in which Dumarest frequently finds himself. Here, with varying degrees of legality, travellers down on their luck fight each other with assorted weapons to first blood or to the death. There is an arena at most starports of A, B or C class where the jaded appetites of the nobility are slaked with the blood of others; the winner gets a percentage of the bets made, and can expect to realise enough money for a High Passage after a few weeks or months - if he survives.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*This and the Introduction to Traveller series are my personal favourites of the articles I wrote for White Dwarf.*

## Blowout!

*Vacc Suits in Traveller by Andy Slack  
Originally published in White Dwarf 25 - © Games Workshop Limited 1981*

While it is possible to adventure in any environment using *Traveller* rules, my preference has always been space actions. Thus, it was not long before the rules on vacc suits were expanded. The three types of vacc suit and the associated rules given below are the result.

### CIV STD

Civilian Standard vacc suits are typified by 20th century Terran models such as the Apollo EVA suit. TL: 7; Cr 10,000.

They carry the following: Medium range communicator, electric torch, emergency repair kit, anti-glare visor, numerous belt loops and pockets for tools and samples, wristwatch, provision for safety lines, distress flare and homing beacon, sensors to determine external atmosphere type if any, and magnetic compass.

By Imperial law, a spacecraft must carry vacc suits to outfit all crew and high or middle passengers. These may be in the ship's locker, or where they are frequently needed.

A Merchant, Pirate or Belter character may elect to forego one of his rolls for mustering out benefits, receiving instead a CIV STD vacc suit.

### MIL STD

Military standard vacc suits resemble a skintight leotard made of elastic, porous material. Thus clad, a person's own skin acts as his pressure suit, his sweat glands as the temperature control system. TL: 9; Cr 20,000.

Equipment is as for the CIV STD, with the following exceptions: No emergency repair kit carried; magnetic compass replaced by inertial locator; and the following additional items are fitted: Telephone jack and cord for communication in radio silence, facilities for plugging into shipboard air/power supplies to conserve those in the backpack, systems capable of monitoring the wearer's vital signs from a backpack readout or over a radio/computer link, heavy-duty overshoes, geiger counter, and hand calculator.

A Navy, Marine or Scout character may elect to forego one roll for mustering out benefits, and receive in lieu a MIL STD vacc suit.

### Emergency Vacc Suits

These are little more than a man-shaped plastic bag. TL: 8+; Cr 1,000.

Emergency vacc suits carry no equipment other than that required to keep the wearer alive for a short period. They are scattered throughout all kinds of starship in strategic

locations, where they may be grabbed in an emergency by persons with no time for stronger measures.

### **General**

Both CIV STD and MIL STD vacc suits have backpacks and helmets, which are interchangeable in emergencies. These contain facilities for the supply of air, heating/cooling as necessary, and limited amounts of water and emergency rations. Emergency vacc suits have only an air supply. CIV STD or MIL STD vacc suits can support their occupants for 16 hours 40 minutes, and for up to one week provided replacement air tanks are available. Emergency vacc suits can support their occupants for 2 hours and replacement air tanks are not feasible.

Standard EVA kits are available for CIV STD and MIL STD suits, consisting of a rocket pack capable of up to 3" of acceleration, and re-entry shield enabling a safe re-entry at speeds up to 2". Such kits are available at TL 8+, costing Cr 5,000. Ships come equipped with three such kits per thousand tons of displacement; minimum three kits on a starship and one on a non-starship.

### **Fitting and Donning**

CIV STD suits may be purchased off-the-peg at any class A or B starport. Their size is determined by a 2D6 throw, and is prominently stencilled on them. A character may wear such a suit if any one of his physical characteristics (strength, dexterity or endurance) is the same as the suit's size.

MIL STD suits must be tailor-made for the wearer, a process requiring 6-8 weeks at a class A starport, during which the character must be available for weekly fittings. A character must have the same physical characteristics and gender as the wearer to don such a suit.

Emergency vacc suits can be worn by anyone. Characters may only wear vacc suits designed for their species.

To don a vacc suit requires two minutes for a CIV STD; ten minutes for a MIL STD; 15 seconds for an emergency suit. Once donned, a MIL STD suit can be worn minus the helmet and backpack for several days without penalty, during which time the helmet and backpack can be donned in 30 seconds. If caught by surprise by explosive decompression, a character must make a roll of 9+ to don a suit before he falls unconscious. DMs are: -5 if no vacc suit skill; + vacc suit skill; + dexterity. An unconscious character may be stuffed into an emergency suit by a comrade, using the same throw.

### **Use**

CIV STD vacc suits are bulky and have clumsy gauntlets. If Azhanti High Lightning or Snapshot are used, they suffer the movement penalties laid down for vacc suits. Further, no dexterity bonuses may be claimed by a character in suit a suit, and all skills requiring fine manipulation suffer a DM of -2 on success rolls. Emergency vacc suits impose a DM of -5 on such skills, and likewise negate dexterity bonuses, but do not suffer movement penalties. MIL STD suits impose a skill DM of -1, but no movement penalties or negation of dexterity bonuses.

Use the Book 1 procedure for avoiding mishaps when in a vacc suit. Punctures in CIV STD or emergency suits cause loss of pressure; CIV STD suits may be temporarily repaired using the emergency repair kit by the victim or a comrade, throw as for donning a suit when surprised as above. A character exposed to vacuum loses consciousness after about two minutes, and cannot be saved from death after about five minutes. (The referee may care to make these times equal to endurance in combat rounds, and thrice endurance in combat rounds respectively, where a combat round is 15 seconds.) The wearer of a MIL STD vacc suit takes 1D6 damage if it is punctured (DM: - vacc suit skill). On a roll of 11+ on 2D6, the puncture is a faceplate shatter, leading to death in any kind of suit



unless the victim can be pressurised within five minutes inside an ATV, ship, building etc. Punctured vacc suits must be replaced.

Extended wear of vacc suits causes extreme discomfort and fatigue. For each complete 12 hour period that a suit has been worn, impose a -1 DM on the use of all skills by the wearer.

### Combat

In general, the notes from the Use section apply, but combat presents certain special problems.

CIV STD suits give armour protection equivalent to cloth; emergency and MIL STD suits give no armour protection, but modified versions of most armour can be fitted over MIL STD suits (CES and Battle Dress are not allowed). Such modified armour is available at TL 10+ and costs are the same as for normal armour.

An individual hit while in vacuum takes double damage; in the Azhanti High Lightning system, wounds are increased by one level. Thereafter, the puncture rules above apply. Also, roll 2D6: 11+ indicates a faceplate shatter, followed by a head hit and instant death.

### Skills

Any character from the Navy, Marines, Scouts, Merchants, Pirates, Belters, Nobles or Scientists is considered to have a minimum skill of Vacc Suit-0 for game purposes due to his training. Vacc Suit-0 may be taught in the same way as general weapon familiarisation in Mercenary, if the instructor has at least Vacc Suit-1 himself. Vacc Suit-0 is sufficient for most everyday activities, but not strenuous ones or combat.

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

*This article appeared almost by chance. The copy deadline for White Dwarf 25 was fast approaching, and we had one page left to fill. I looked through my campaign notes for something with the right word count, and voila!*

## Droids

*by Andy Slack  
Originally published in White Dwarf 34 - © Games Workshop Limited 1982*

*"We don't serve his kind." – Anonymous bartender, Star Wars*

This article presents a few standard models of robots, which have been designed more or less according to the referee's notes appearing in the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. The descriptions of individual robots can be shown to the players, or perhaps photocopied and used as a manufacturer's brochure (the company is of course Rossum's Universal Robots, LIC); the section headed Referee Only makes some comments on characterising robots that it would be better for the players to find out by experience.

### Dedicated Vehicle Droid

Also known as the crewbot, this is properly a family of units built at a variety of Tech Levels for a variety of purposes. However, all units have the following properties in common: The unit weighs 50 kg, and is armoured to battle dress standards to resist impromptu reprogramming by boarders. It has 25 hit points. The unit is directly interfaced to the relevant controls in the ship or vehicle it is to serve, generally displacing one crew couch or seat, but occasionally occupying cargo space. It has sensors as per the Mechanical Droid. A single-frequency radio allows longer distance communication without reducing the capacity of the ship's or vehicle's comms circuits, and the droid may examine the external environment through telescopic visual sensors, with enhanced night

vision provisions, active infrared detectors and a small infrared searchlight, or any sensors fitted to the vehicle or ship to which it is attached. A remote master unit allows the direction of medical rescue servos for reconnaissance or rescue purposes. The price and skill of a unit depend on its task and tech level:

TL 12 Cr	Expertise	TL 14 Cr	Expertise	TL 15 Cr	Expertise
105,940	Pilot-1	506,140	Pilot-3	1,006,640	Pilot-8
105,940	Navigation-1	506,140	Navigation-3	1,006,640	Navigation-8
106,040	Air/Raft-3	506,340	Air/Raft-6	1,006,840	Air/Raft-11
106,040	Ship's Boat-3	506,340	Ship's Boat-6	1,006,840	Ship's Boat-11
106,040	ATV-4	506,240	ATV-6	1,006,740	ATV-11
106,140	Gunnery-4	506,440	Gunnery-7	1,006,940	Gunnery-14

### Mechanical Droid

Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr 117,000. Weight: 200 kg. Speed: 75 km/h on road; 30-40 km/h on other terrain. Propelled by tracks, it has two light and one medium work arms. Sensors are equivalent to human senses in capability, and a voder/vocoder enables the droid to converse with its masters. It carries a set of mechanical tools and has a parts bin capable of holding up to 35 kg of spares. Its skill level is Mechanical-6. It is treated as cloth armour for combat purposes, and has 65 hit points.

An identical droid is produced for cargo handling, but instead of Mechanical-6, this variety is programmed to load and unload cargo into and off ships or vehicles, and report unusual circumstances such as unexpected visitors, fires, etc. This variant costs Cr 116,500.

### Heavy Mechanical Droid

Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr 122,520. Weight: One ton. Speed: Up to 40 km/h on good roads, 5-20 km/h cross-country. In all other respects it is the same as the Mechanical Droid except that it can carry spares and parts weighing up to 425 kg, and has 135 hit points.

### Medical Rescue Servo

This robot is designed to operate in conjunction with a Robodoc (see below). Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr 109,300. Weight: 100 kg. One light and one medium work arm allow it to carry unconscious humans or similar objects, administer first aid, etc. Sensors are as per Mechanical Droid, and a remote slave unit allows it to be radio-controlled by a robodoc and feed data about the patients' condition to the robodoc. A padded storage tray can carry up to 3 kg of drugs and medicines, while a comprehensive set of basic medical instruments is also carried. While its main purpose is to function as a mobile remote drone for a robodoc, the droid has a certain amount of 'initiative', so that it is able to fight fires and rescue injured persons from dangerous situations without supervision.

In combat, the droid is considered to be wearing cloth armour, and has 50 hit points.

### Electrical Droid

This droid is for the repair and manufacture of electrical or electronic devices. Tech Level: 12. Cost: Cr 117,050. Weight: 100 kg. Speed: Up to 200 km/h on integral antigravity units. Has two light work arms, similar to human arms and hands. Sensors are as per Mechanical Droid. It has internal compartments containing electronic tools and up to 10 kg of spares or parts, and an expertise level of Electronic-6. In combat it is treated as wearing cloth armour, and has 50 hit points.



## Robodoc

This is a large unit, normally fitted in ships or vehicles, and less frequently in buildings. Six light work arms with multi-purpose manipulators make use of three sets of medical instruments to allow for treatment of up to three injured beings simultaneously. Human equivalent sensors are supplemented by microscopic visual pickups, low-level audio pickups, a single-frequency radio for communication with other robots or persons, a voder/vocoder for verbal communication, and a remote-control master unit which may control up to six medical rescue servos. An ultraviolet steriliser is fitted to deal with bacterial contamination. The robodoc may be interfaced directly to the ship's internal scanners and life-support monitors, so that it can observe crew members and despatch servos to bring them in for treatment as necessary. It may also interface into the ship's commo units so that similar coverage is extended to crew members outside, if they carry communicators to act as homing beacons. Integral storage trays carry up to 175 kg of medicines, prosthetics etc as required. The robodoc has its own internal power source and is not dependent on ship or vehicle power supplies except to power the three integral couches in their low berth mode; for while the robodoc can deal with most circumstances, it occasionally finds damage or disease beyond its ability, in which case the injured individual is put into suspended animation until better facilities can be reached. The robodoc's price and expertise depend on its Tech Level:

Tech Level	Credits	Expertise	Weight	Speed
12	266,340	Medical-1	Two tons	Immobile
14	666,530	Medical-3	Two tons	Immobile
15	1,166,940	Medical-7	Two tons	Immobile

Should it be attacked, the robodoc counts as wearing cloth armour, and has 80 hits.

The robodoc can treat persons if one or two of their physical characteristics (strength, dexterity, or endurance) have been reduced to zero. If the character has sustained enough damage to reduce strength, dexterity and endurance to zero, and no more additional damage points than the sum of his endurance and the robodoc's Medical expertise, he may be resuscitated as long as he is placed in the robodoc within a number of combat rounds equal to his endurance. His endurance is raised to one, and the robodoc will place him in suspended animation pending full medical treatment at a comprehensively-equipped hospital of Tech Level 8 or higher. If the character has suffered more damage than this, he is dead.

*Example:* Shel Meldol has a UPP of 797AC8 and has thoughtfully fitted a Tech 15 robodoc in the hold of his scoutship (reducing cargo capacity by two tons), with a couple of medical rescue servos. While adventuring, he is grievously injured, taking 32 points of damage. The robodoc promptly dispatches a medical rescue servo to pick up the smoking boot which is yelling "Medic!"; it has 7 rounds to get the dying adventurer into its low berths. It succeeds; we now examine the overkill. Shel's strength, dexterity and endurance sum up to 23 points; his endurance and the robodoc's Medical skill sum to 14 (7 + 7), so if he has taken less than (14 + 23) 37 damage points in total, he can be revived. Fortunately, he has taken only 9 more hit points than he actually has; examining the storage trays, the robodoc decides he can be saved. It raises his UPP to 001AC8 and places him in suspended animation to await treatment at a fully-equipped base hospital. Meanwhile, the Vogons approach the defenceless starship, blasters ready... The referee may opt to allow human medics a similar revival ability.

## Engineering Droid

This droid is for the repair and maintenance of starship drives and similar heavy machinery. A medium work arm enables it to carry heavy objects up to 100 kg in weight; two light work arms are fitted for manipulation of tools and equipment. It carries sets of

electrical, mechanical and metalwork tools to aid it. Sensors as per Mechanical Droid. Specifications depend on Tech Level of manufacturer:

Tech Level	Credits	Expertise	Weight	Speed
12	117,040	Engineering-1	400 kg	50 km/h on roads, 10-30 km/h on other terrain
14	517,240	Engineering-3	400 kg	50 km/h on roads, 10-30 km/h on other terrain
15	1,017,940	Engineering-8	400 kg	50 km/h on roads, 10-30 km/h on other terrain

In combat, treat as wearing cloth armour, with 80 hit points.

### Valet Droid

The valet droid is constructed at Tech Level 12. Weight: 75 kg. Cost: Cr 111,540. Speed: Up to 200 km/h on integral antigrav units. Sensors as per Mechanical Droid. It has two light work arms. It may function as a Steward-1, and in addition may serve as a personal valet, cleaning and caring for clothes, doing housework, making minor repairs and so on. It is treated in combat as if wearing cloth armour, and may carry refreshments etc weighing up to 4 kg in an integral tray. It has 45 hits.

### Valet Android

Not actually an android, this robot is similar to the valet droid, but is much more anthropomorphic and in poor light can be mistaken for a human being. It has two legs and two light work arms, and in general is capable of movement and manipulation to much the same degree as humans. Sensors are as per the Mechanical Droid. Extensive social programming enables the robot to make appropriate comments on the weather, politics etc, unlike the other droids who are entirely concerned with their normal duties and unable to 'think' along other lines. The valet android is treated as if wearing cloth armour, and has 50 hit points. All such droids are programmed for valet duties - housework and the care of clothes, etc - and in addition, as Stewards. Skill and price depend on Tech Level:

Tech Level	Credits	Expertise
12	208,600	Steward-1
14	1,009,100	Steward-6
15	2,010,100	Steward-16

### Warbot

Tech Level: 14-15. Weight: One ton. Cost: Cr 2,000,000. Speed: 200 km/h. It is, in fact, too large to be used in urban or shipboard operations; its normal use is to man bases on isolated worlds. For most purposes, human beings are cheaper to set up and maintain, and less easily damaged; they are also quicker and easier to replace, given a large population.

The warbot is armoured to battle dress standards with 260 hit points. Its size and power output render it quite vulnerable to tac missiles, however. Sensors far exceed the capability of human senses; vision is telescopic in all but the lowest levels of lighting, and infrared detectors allow the unit to 'see' heat emissions. Low level audio is fitted, which can pick up heartbeats at several tens of metres in standard atmospheres (greater range in denser atmospheres, less range in thin atmospheres). The droid communicates by a voder/vocoder or a multi-frequency radio with integral anti-jamming circuits, and has a TV camera for transmitting pictures of battlefield conditions back to base. It may carry



objects up to 78 kg in weight, without loss of performance, or one unencumbered person. Four light and two medium work arms are fitted; two have handlike attachments for field repairs, changing magazines, and so on, while the remainder carry an FGMP-15, while two of the light arms carry an autorifle and an auto grenade launcher respectively.

The droid may be ordered to stand watch, in which case it will patrol an area at random intervals and report any intruders or disturbances. It may handle any standard infantry weapon with the two general-purpose arms, and may perform all tasks expected of a modern infantryman, even in zero gravity.

### **Guardbot**

The guardbot, security droid, or 'biffo' weighs 75 kg and is capable of moving at up to 200 km/h on its built-in antigrav units. Armoured to cloth standards and having 45 hit points, the biffo has one light work arm which may carry any standard human weapon of up to 8 kg in weight (including ammunition); sensors surpass human senses, being able to see in very low levels of light perfectly, and into the near infrared to detect body heat. Its audio pickups are quite capable of tracking persons by their heartbeats up to medium range. Voder/vocoders and a single-frequency radio allow it to communicate with other robots, a central command post, or humans.

The price and abilities of the biffo vary with tech level; at TL 12 for Cr 105,890, it will patrol a specific area at random intervals and report any unauthorised personnel or accidents such as fires, then await further orders while observing the disturbance.

At TL 14, for Cr 505,990, the biffo will make random patrols and report and report any intruders or accidents; unless ordered otherwise, it will then attempt to detain any intruders using the minimum necessary force.

At TL 15, for Cr 1,006,190, the droid will make random patrols and report and report intruders or accidents; unless ordered otherwise, it will then attack the intruders (if any) with a view to causing death, or at least grievous bodily harm. It may also fight without penalty in zero-G combat.

Naturally, the ownership of guardbots is strictly controlled, and the least violent possible is always used. Guardbots are capable of handling any normal weapons like a human character, but gain no pluses for dexterity, strength or skill; likewise, they suffer no penalties.

### **Referee Only**

#### **General**

Robots normally function under Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics, which they must obey. Despite their common usage, I shall restate them:

1. No robot shall knowingly harm a human or other intelligent being, or through inaction allow such a being to come to harm.
2. A robot shall obey orders literally and exactly which are given to it by a human or other intelligent being, provided such orders would not cause the robot to disobey the first law.
3. A robot shall protect its own existence unless this would cause it to disobey either of the first two laws.

Alert readers will note that these are not the usual forms in which the laws are quoted; but for game purposes, they are more accurate. Robots believe whatever they are told, and obey orders precisely. In this respect the referee's handling of them should resemble handling *D&D* wishes; if he can legally misinterpret a player's orders to a robot he should do so. This partially compensates for the robots' high skill levels. Robots have no initiative or common sense whatsoever in most circumstances. However, for their own

protection, if presented with a logical paradox they will clear their input circuits and behave as if they had not heard it, or alternatively ask for it to be explained to them, depending on circumstances. If given imprecise, impossible, or contradictory orders they will point out the situation politely and ask for the orders to be restated until they can be carried out.

Robots never lie, but nor will they volunteer information which is not specifically requested of them. Security droids or warbots are often not programmed with the first law so that they can carry out their duties; these will not answer questions which they have been instructed are secret unless given correct passwords and identification, nor will they obey orders from unauthorised personnel. Other robots will obey orders from anyone and answer any question as truthfully as possible.

In combat, any natural roll of 12 to hit will hit the robot's brain and disable it completely, provided that the modified roll would have hit and penetrated armour anyway. A robot so disabled is junk. Damage reduces the machine's ability to function; exactly how is up to the referee if he hasn't got the relevant article from the *Journal*.

Robots not specified as capable of functioning in zero gravity cannot be used in the icy vacuum of space, where lubrication is a problem and some of their metallic components may become brittle. Robots are affected by explosive decompression as are human beings; those armoured to battle dress standards can be exposed to space without ill effect.

As a final note, so far as robots are concerned (except biffos or warbots) all intelligent beings have an equal right to go anywhere or do anything they please, so long as violence is eschewed.

### Medical Rescue Servo

This unit is perhaps too conscientious, for example, it has a penchant for seizing people who are, say, fighting fires and dragging them off so that they will be safe, leaving the fire raging unchecked. The servo is generally not moved by pleas to release its charges until they are safely out of danger, and may decide even then that they don't know what's good for them or have been deranged by shock. Servos also indulge in such habits as stealing cigarettes because they're bad for you, reminding you to dress warmly every time you venture outside, and so on; one particularly annoying habit they have is to follow people around since they never know when they might be needed, often getting in the way at critical moments.

### Robodoc

The robodoc shares some of the medical rescue servo's faults, though it is more intelligent and less mobile and therefore more bearable. It thus tends to restrict itself to pompous lectures about the necessity of a balanced diet and regular exercise, and upon occasion will ask a character if he would like his appearance improved by plastic surgery while under the anaesthetic. If connected to medical rescue servos, it will also try to help wounded in battles impartially, and may ignore a player for an enemy who is more drastically wounded. In times when its facilities are overloaded, the robodoc will divide injured into three categories; those who will live regardless of treatment, those who will die regardless of treatment, and those who will only survive if treated. It then treats only those in the third category.

### Dedicated Vehicle Droids

At higher Tech Levels, these become increasingly contemptuous of human crew members who do not match up to their own high standards. The gunnery versions are not prone to this, but are very enthusiastic and will continuously interrupt with pleas to be allowed to shoot something, estimates of the ship or vehicle's chance of destroying anything in site, and so on.



## Valet Droids/Androids

The main problem with these droids is their humility and attempts to ingratiate themselves, especially at higher Tech Levels. The Tech 15 android in particular is always finding a way to fetch a tempting sweetmeat (which naturally brings it into conflict with robodocs), polish boots (often at the most inconvenient moment), embroider floral patterns on combat fatigues, and generally be so helpful that it is acutely annoying. On the plus side, it will leap into the path of an incoming missile even faster than the other droids - but will then make lengthy dying speeches about how grateful it is that the termination of its own worthless existence has saved the life of a Master.

## Guardbot

Note that only the Tech 15 biff is capable of actually injuring someone in the course of duty; the others will threaten occasionally, but if it comes to the crunch they will shy away from actually harming anyone. Since the types are externally similar, it is difficult to tell which sort you are facing, and they will take advantage of this. If faced with a more squeamish biff, it could be diverted by for example threatening to shoot yourself unless it went away.

The second fault is not apparent until captured by a biff; it will then spout unending saccharine morality, platitudes about the immoral nature of a life of crime, and the inevitable bad end awaiting all who stray from the straight and narrow.

I would like to thank Graham Liddiard and John Dongray for their help and ideas concerning robots of all kinds.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*These days I'm not sure I would allow such skilled robots in my campaign. A statistical analysis I did of Traveller skill levels shows that skill levels 2-3 are very common among PCs, so they could easily match and hope to better most TL 12-14 robots, which is as it should be for game balance; but the skill levels of 7 and up which TL 15 robots have are beyond typical PC levels. Mind you, skill levels over 6 are less and less useful; the minimum roll on 2D6 is 2, and skill 6 gives you a modified 8+, which is usually successful.*

*Note the relative cost of robots as opposed to NPC hirelings: A TL 12 Pilot-1 DVD costs Cr 105,940; at Cr 6,000 per month, you could hire an NPC pilot of equivalent skill for 18 months. At TL 14, the costs for Pilot-3 are Cr 506,140 and Cr 7,200 per month respectively; an NPC can be hired for nearly six years before it is cheaper to buy the robot. At TL 15, the costs are Cr 1,006,640 and Cr 10,200 respectively for Pilot-8; a robot is equivalent to over 8 years' NPC salary. Of course, it takes years to train a pilot that good, while the robot can be ordered off the shelf; but how often do you need more than, say, Pilot-3?*

*It's even worse for the lower-salaried skills; take Gunnery, for instance. At TL 12, Cr 106,140 buys a Gunnery-4 robot; you can hire an equivalent human gunner for Cr 1,300 per month, so the robot represents about seven years' wages. At TL 14, the numbers are Cr 506,440 for Gunnery-7; if you can find a Gunnery-7 human, he'd cost you Cr 1,600 per month, so you could hire him for 27 years before the robot is cheaper. At TL 15, a Gunnery-14 robot costs Cr 1,006,690; the one and only Gunnery-14 person in the Imperium (a Book 1 Admiral in his 40s who never learned any other skill) would cost you Cr 2,300 per month, so you could have him working for you for over 36 years before the robot was cheaper.*

*Finally, note that by spending about a million Credits at TL 12 and up, you can have an entirely robotic starship crew for a small ship - less than half a percent of the ship's cost. Think carefully about what that would do to your game before you open the factory doors. Is it possible in your Traveller universe? Is it legal?*

## Vehicle Combat

by Andy Slack

Originally published in *White Dwarf 43* - © Games Workshop Limited 1983

Most referees use Mercenary as well as the basic set, and many also have *Striker!* But there are many groups and scenarios where the emphasis is away from open military action, and many referees have neither the time nor the inclination to design *Striker!* vehicles for these. The following system is a fast and easy method of representing ground vehicles in combat where the scenario is run using Books 1-4.

### Specifications

Wheeled, tracked or grav vehicles will have performances equal to those of the ATV or Air/Raft as appropriate, unless otherwise indicated by *Mercenary*. In combat, those vehicles not trying to flee will move cautiously - rarely more than 5 range bands (125 m) in a combat round.

There are three classes of vehicle armour; softskins are all civilian vehicles and military vehicles such as supply trucks, staff cars and so on; light armour covers quasi-military vehicles such as the Book 3 AFV and ATV, and also military ones such as Armoured Personnel Carriers and Self-Propelled Artillery; heavy armour is mainly used on Main Battle Tanks.

The cost and mass of vehicles is determined by comparing them to items in Book 3 and 4; as an added guide, a military vehicle must cost and mass at least ten times as much as its major weapon system.

### Vehicles in Combat

Vehicles attacking personnel will use the normal rules; they will normally fire HE rounds from the main weapon, using the Mercenary section for Field Artillery as a guide, or attack with support weapons such as machineguns in coaxial or pintle mounts.

Personnel attacking vehicles also use the standard rules, at least to determine a hit. Softskins count as Mesh armour; light armour counts as Combat Armour with an additional DM of -1 per tech level over 5; heavy armour counts as Combat Armour with an additional DM of -3 per tech level over 5.

Artillery, ship's weapons, tac missiles, tank main guns and so on attacking vehicles must roll 8+ to hit regardless of range; the firer's expertise in the weapon is a positive DM; if the target's driver is evading, his skill level is a negative DM; and in addition, the difference between the tech levels of the firer and the target is used as a DM in favour of the higher tech level unit.

Any successful hit, regardless of the weapon used, allows the firer to roll 2D6. DM +2 if the target is lightly armoured, DM +4 if the target is a softskin; again the difference in the tech levels is applied as a DM in favour of the more sophisticated unit. If the modified roll is 8+, the target is disabled; if the roll is 11+, the target is destroyed.

Disabled vehicles may be repaired. Roll 18+, with DMs for appropriate skills, when the damage is first inspected; success indicates that the damage can be repaired in 1-6 hours, failure that the damage will require a workshop and 1-6 days to repair. The mechanic will know roughly how long repairs will take before he starts work.

Destroyed vehicles may not be repaired. Occupants take 1-6 D6 damage and escape the wreck with their armour, life support gear if any, and one weapon or personal item of their choice.



## Special Rules and Notes

Military vehicles will normally be guided, even in combat, by the vehicle commander exposing his head and upper body out of a hatch. He may be attacked using the normal rules for shooting characters, but counts as evading. If he is hit, or fails a morale roll, he will 'close up' the vehicle; it must then roll its tech level or less to spot any character near it on foot.

Personnel in vehicles may be attacked directly; if so, they may count either their personal armour or the vehicle's armour at their discretion against the attack. Further, unless surprised they count as evading.

Vehicle platoons normally contain 3-5 vehicles. If expecting trouble, they will advance by turns, covering each other as they move and with infantry in support. The vehicles assigned to cover their fellows will watch for attackers, and if any are seen will pour fire onto their location while the target dodges for cover.

Referees must be prepared to improvise impromptu DMs and rulings as always.

## Example

Scout Arrek Salvor (589929, Gunnery-1) is sitting in the turret of a Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicle of tech 7. This vehicle has a crew of 2, we shall say, and carries a 9-man infantry squad. It is tracked and its turret carries a 73mm light field gun, a tech 7 tac missile, and two light machineguns - one mounted coaxially with the 73mm and one on a pintle mount for anti-aircraft fire. The vehicle's main weapon is obviously a light field gun; assuming it is for infantry support it is probably a howitzer which we find masses 1.0 ton and costs Cr 5,000. Using the ten-times rules, therefore, the MICV will mass 10 tons and cost Cr 50,000. This looks reasonable compared to an ATV, so the referee lets it stand, having decided that the MICV is basically an armed and armoured ATV and thus should mass and cost at least as much as its civilian counterpart. Its performance will equal that of an ATV, and its armour will count as Combat -2 vs infantry weapons.

Facing Arrek's MICV is a tech 7 Main Battle Tank, fully tracked with a crew of four. The MBT will be armed with a field gun (twice the mass and cost of a howitzer because of its higher muzzle velocity - see Mercenary p 48) which masses 3.6 tons and costs Cr 20,000. So the tank will mass 36 tons and cost Cr 200,000 - this is actually a bit low in both cases, but close enough to be playable as the mass will only be used for freighting the thing around in starships and the cost only when players buy one or two - which won't happen often, or if it does you are probably already using *Striker!*

The MBT's performance will again approximate that of an ATV. Its heavy armour counts as Combat -6 against infantry weapons. The tank will also probably have at least two machineguns.

Shouting to the driver to evade, Arrek fires the 73mm at the oncoming tank. He has a +1 DM for skill; the target is not evading (why worry about a little thing like that?) so there is no DM for evasion, and the vehicles are of equal tech level, so no DM for that. The referee decides that since the normal anti-tank gun of this tech level is probably a 105mm or 120mm, the MICV should suffer a further -1 to hit - he justifies this by pointing out that weapons of this size were in service as tank guns at the previous tech level, and so should count as tech 6. Total DM: +0. Arrek rolls a 9 - a hit; he then rolls an 8 for damage, and the referee decides to subtract one pip as he has already decided the 73mm is a tech 6 weapon. Result thus becomes 7 - no effect. Deciding that this is getting too close for comfort, the tank fires back, also achieving a hit. The MBT rolls 9 for damage; Arrek's player claims that although his gun may be tech 6, the MICV armour is tech 7, and the referee allows this. Thus only the +2 DM for being lightly armoured is added, for a total of 11 - a kill. The MICV is destroyed; Arrek takes 2D6 damage and bails out with his cloth armour and rifle, having rolled a 2 to see how much this hurt him personally.

The rifle would suffer a total DM of -4 (armour) -6 (tech level) -1 (long range) +1 (dexterity) = -10 if Arrek fired at the tank itself, so he aims at the commander who is

conning his tank from the turret hatch. DM +3 (no armour - after all, he's usually in a tank!) -1 (long range) -4 (evading) +1 (dexterity) = -1, a much better bet. Arrek rolls a 10, -1 = 9, a hit. He then rolls 11 for damage on 3D6 (rifle vs character) which will knock out the commander. The rest of the crew pull him inside and close the hatch; the tank must now roll 7 or less on 2D6 to spot Arrek as it trundles past shooting up the MICV infantry. It rolls an 8 and Arrek lives to fight another day.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*Book 4, Mercenary, got an enthusiastic reaction from my gaming group and quickly became a part of our campaigns. Striker! didn't - designing the vehicles was too much like hard work, so I did a little reading (the single most useful work was J F Dunnigan's How to Make War) and talked to a few tankers (I was working with some at the time) and designed these rules. I still think they work pretty well for Classic Traveller.*

## A Fleeting Encounter

*Book 2 Fleets by Andy Slack  
Originally published in White Dwarf 49 - © Games Workshop Limited 1984*

*High Guard* vessels and fleets are fine for mass military actions and tournament play, but I have found that in normal *Traveller* adventures the amount of time spent designing them is wasted. Smaller units like the famous *Gazelle* class or my own *Explorer* class (WD40) have their uses, but in general can be replaced by ordinary Book 2 designs without any loss of flavour. Huge craft like the *Azhanti High Lightning* are negligibly large - their firepower and marine contingents are such that if they appear in a game at all individual characters in a small ship stand no chance whatsoever, unless the opposing captain is an idiot. The average game or commission is instantly unbalanced unless the heavy cruisers are kept off-stage - so what's the point of spending days designing them?

A fleet of Book 2 ships is much more deployable and far easier to design. It is also easier to run; because of the lack of screens and the way the weapons behave, tactics are roughly similar to modern naval warfare. Even with computer programmes such as those available to the vast Model/7 machines, lasers and missiles are roughly equivalent in effect whoever launches them or fires them. Further, because ships are not very resistant to damage, and because ton for ton a group of ship's boats have more weapons than a starship or non-starship, there is a strong incentive to having many small units, rather than a few big ones. From a game balance point of view, this means that instead of being pursued by a 20,000 ton craft with a meson gun the players' free trader is set upon by a squadron of fighters or ship's boats. They stand slightly more chance, but the referee has had virtually no design work to do and can concentrate on the scenario not the rules or hardware.

## Fleet Composition

1 Carrier - a large vessel carrying fighters or ship's boats modified as fighters. 2-12 Escorts - type C or type T cruisers would be perfect. 1-6 Auxiliaries - supply ships, hospital ships and so on. Type R or M subsidised merchants called up for war service, probably. 3-18 Scouts - the familiar type S. 1-6 Couriers - fast, long-range vessels for carrying reports and orders on strategy, future fleet positions, etc. 1-6 Tankers - large vessels with vast amounts of spare fuel to transfer to other ships. 1-6 Assault Carriers - large vessels carrying marines and their equipment, possibly in low berths.

## Deployment and Tactics

The running costs of warships will be much higher if they are moving around than if they sit still, so to save money any government in peacetime will keep the fleet in port as much as possible. In peacetime, the scout ships will roam around space looking for trouble which requires a fleet's presence, and if they find it they will report back straight away.



The escorts will also patrol randomly in the hope of nipping such trouble in the bud, blasting pirates, and so on. The rest of the fleet will spend most of its time at a naval base, strategically placed for quick response to likely trouble areas. Still, sometimes it will go on exercises to fine-tune crews and equipment; so assume a naval base has a fleet present 5/6 of the time, and if a 6 is rolled the fleet is on exercise. Naval bases will always retain some fighters to protect them, some scouts for reconnaissance, and some couriers to report or yell for help with.

When in war or exercise the fleet moves as a whole, the units have the following tasks:

**Carrier:** The flagship, also responsible for transporting up to a hundred or so fighters/combat ship's boats between star systems. It is lightly armed as a last line of defence.

**Fighters:** They do most of the real work. They attack enemy ships, usually with missile fire; support ground troops, serving as 'flying tanks' as well as maintaining air superiority; and attempt to prevent enemy fighters from doing the same things back.

**Escorts:** Their primary function is protecting the carrier from enemy fighters. If friendly fighters do not break up an attack, the escorts must do so as the carrier is not itself efficient in combat.

**Auxiliaries and Tankers:** Supply the fleet with fuel and other goods. They normally huddle around the carrier for protection.

**Scouts:** Primarily responsible for reconnaissance. They will jump into nearby systems in search of opposing forces and report back if possible. The fleet normally plans its movements some weeks in advance; this means that the scouts can leave the fleet in system A, search systems B and C, rejoin the fleet in system D, rather than the whole fleet sitting idle until a report is brought back. This also makes the scouts prime targets for capture by enemy intelligence, and since plans must often be changed, scouts are often lost from the fleet by appearing at the scheduled system to find the fleet absent. Contingency plans are laid against this, e.g. alternate routes and instructions to 'go to such and such world and wait for further orders', but even so there are a lot of lost scouts roaming around in a war. (Good scenario there, perhaps.)

**Couriers:** Required to carry messages back and forth between fleets and bases. A quite respectable 400 ton courier capable of jump-5 can be designed at tech level 11 for around MCr 250, which should be sufficient for most needs. The same comments about fleet schedules and routes apply here as were made for the scouts above.

Finally, each fleet must have its own marine force with it in case it needs ground troops, because it will rarely be able to wait weeks or months for troops to arrive. These too huddle near the carrier.

As can be seen the fleet has quite a realistic feel, and requires only a few hours work designing the couriers, carriers, tankers and assault carriers. In fact, most of this work can be skipped since only the courier is likely to appear in a scenario - a band might well be hired to hijack it to find the composition and route of its parent fleet.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*In 1984 my twin daughters were born, and suddenly the time I had used to design ships (amongst other things) went away for ever. This started me down a path of ruthless simplification in all my gaming, of which this was the first result. I came to the conclusion that designing new starships, while fun, essentially contributed nothing to the game - that the standard designs provide everything you need to run a role-playing campaign, and that the details of any ship much over a thousand tons just don't matter. Your Mileage May Vary...*

## To Live Forever

*Immortality in Traveller by Andy Slack*

*Originally published in White Dwarf 52 - © Games Workshop Limited 1984*

*"What do you mean you discovered Skirrow's World. That was over 200 years ago!"  
Mr Skirrow looked knowingly at Jamison, a wry smile on his face. "That's right," he said.*

Players using other systems should find conversion easy enough. Prices, tech levels and effects given are rough guides; referees should feel free to modify anything they disagree with.

### Methods

#### Drugs

TL 15; Cr 200,000 per month. A regular course of drugs voids aging throws.

#### Rejuvenation

The drug may be rejuvenating or simply life-prolonging. Rejuvenating drugs actually reverse aging and the character gradually returns to his physical peak as the doses take effect; in most campaigns this does not happen, and would require someone to keep records of a character's history. Life-prolonging drugs may either keep the user perpetually at the age when treatment commenced with regard to appearance as well as characteristics, or the user may grow old in appearance but remain healthy.

#### Signs of Use

If it is rejuvenating, scars may disappear. If appearance is not conserved, the user will appear a hale and hearty 285. In any case, skin or eye colour might be affected, or some other sign might be visible. Similarly, the drug or process might make the user sterile - permanently, or while treatment continues.

#### Addiction

Most characters on anagathics will behave as if addicted, but withdrawal symptoms must be specified. Most likely the character will simply carry on aging from where he left off until treatment resumes. The character may be physically dependent on the drug, however, and may die, lose psionic powers or become ill if he stops. Most spectacular and unlikely is that all the 'cheated' aging rolls must be made at once, and the character ages the time his youth was maintained in mere minutes.

#### Age Limits

The drug may not work if the user is too old - or too young - when treatment commences. It is unlikely that anyone will want to start the drug before 30 in Traveller terms since there is no aging before then. If the drug arrests normal body development, the very young might not be allowed to start treatment.

#### Disease

As a side-effect, the drug may make a user more resistant to disease, or vice versa.

#### Source

The animal, plant or mineral the drug is manufactured from and where it is found must be specified. The process must be complex and expensive to preserve game balance; otherwise everyone will use the drugs and some player will start manufacturing them.



## Medicine

In WD40, Sean Masterson suggested that for each Tech Level above 8, the aging rolls were delayed one term; this suggestion is a good way to handle the procedure.

## Surgery

### Organ Transplants

TL 8; Cr tens to hundreds of thousands per operation. This is already done with kidneys and hearts; in the future, once the rejection syndrome has been overcome, it will be possible to replace lungs, eyes, livers etc. A trained surgeon, assistants and a fully-equipped hospital are necessary; the recipient will be incapacitated for several months. In game terms, the recipient may gain DMs on his next aging rolls for Strength or Endurance; since central nervous tissue is unaffected, there is no effect on Dexterity or Intelligence rolls. The DM size should depend on operation costs. Operations should be repeated regularly, say every few years at first, getting more frequent and expensive as the character gets older.

A real problem would be getting hold of the parts. High law level worlds may retain the death penalty, condemned criminals being broken up for spare parts. Since everyone needs the parts, the death penalty is voted in for increasingly minor crimes. Organleggers may exist; criminals who kill people to sell their organs illegally to transplant surgeons. If the law level is low, desperate individuals (perhaps the travellers) may sell parts of their bodies or put them up as security on a loan.

At TL 9 or so, regeneration therapy allows characters to regenerate lost limbs; soon after, growing synthetic organs (a kind of primitive cloning) is possible and the problem of obtaining spares lessens.

### Bionics

TL 8; Cr hundreds of thousands to millions.

Bionics are not the path to superhuman characteristics; they are still attached to a body which is at least partly flesh and blood. Again, Dexterity and Intelligence are not affected; however, bionic limbs might be used to enhance a character's Strength and Endurance to former levels, or possibly a little beyond. Strength is the easiest to raise since Endurance largely depends on the heart and lungs, but other bionic organs are possible at higher tech levels. The maximum benefit from a lengthy series of bionic operations should be +1 or +2 to a character's original (i.e. as first diced) Strength and/or Endurance. A hospital is needed for the operations.

Bionics are mainly prosthetic, and are likely to become redundant when tissue regeneration and cultured synthetic transplants are available. A bionic individual will be dependent on batteries, with a possible loss of Dexterity due to the operation.

### Coring

TL 11; Cr millions to tens of millions. Normally illegal.

This involves killing someone in (hopefully) perfect health. Perhaps the bodies of condemned criminals would be used. A superb surgeon and an excellent hospital are required. The character's brain and large parts of his nervous system are surgically removed, and implanted in a new body. The donor's brain may be destroyed or placed in a robot vehicle (see below). The transplanted character retains his own Intelligence, Education and skills; he gains the donor's former Strength, Endurance and appearance. Dexterity is reduced to the lower of the two values. Social Standing may be that of the donor or the transplantee, depending on how secret the process was. Aging then proceeds normally, in the new body.

### Robot Bodies

TL 12; Cr millions to tens of millions.

At TL 12 it is possible to keep a person's brain alive without a body. The brain is kept in a tank of nutrient fluid, surrounded by life support equipment, normally wired up to numerous sensors so that it does not go insane. The equipment is fairly bulky, massing several tons; the robot 'body' is likely to be a large vehicle, perhaps a starship, directly controlled by the disembodied brain. Such a brain retains its Intelligence, Education and skills; other abilities depend on the 'body'. At higher tech levels, the life support equipment becomes smaller and more mobile, until at TL 15 a true robot body is possible. The characteristics of this depend on what system the referee uses for robots. Normally, robot bodies are used either for criminals (who must serve out their sentence as useful construction or earth-moving equipment before getting their bodies back) or those born hopelessly crippled, who then repay the cost of the operations by working for the government as courier ships, transport etc.

At TL 17, an electronic recording of a character's personality and brain pattern can be taken and replayed into a true robot body with no biological parts.

### **Robot Antibodies**

TL 17; Cr millions.

These virus-sized 'robots' are programmed to destroy harmful germs, viruses and other nasties such as cholesterol blocking the arteries, and cancer cells. Injected into the bloodstream, they keep the user healthy from the inside. In game terms, they make the user immune to disease and most poisons, and allow a sizeable DM (+3 to +5 according to price) on all subsequent aging throws.

### **Clones**

TL 13; Cr millions to tens of millions.

A character gives a sample of his flesh (often only a couple of cells) to the cloning complex, comprising a large hospital and computer facility, where it is grown into a duplicate body. The clone's age is accelerated to 18 in a few months, at which point it has no skills and zero Education and Social Standing; the rest of its UPP is the same as the character's was when he was first diced up, before enlisting. This, as it stands, is not much use to the would-be immortal. However, at TL 14 it becomes possible to grind up a character's brain and extract the memory RNA in which his memories and personality are contained; this is then introduced into the clone body, so that the character has its own skills and experience, but in an 18-year old body. At TL 16, an electronic recording of the character's personality and brain pattern is taken and replayed into the clone body, with the same effect. In either case, the character's Strength, Dexterity, Endurance and appearance are effectively restored to their values at age 18.

### **Matter Transporters**

TL 16; Cr millions to tens of millions.

Depending on the way in which the Matter Transporter (MT) is ruled to work, it may be possible to produce copies of an individual without destroying the original - similar in effect to cloning. Normally, however, these will be exactly the same as the original, so nothing would be gained. At TL 18, the information being beamed from transmitter to receiver is edited, producing a younger, healthier version of the original. Typically, the character will be beamed to the receiver minus all the accumulated aging toxins in his system, allowing a +4 DM on his next set of aging rolls.

### **Unusual Techniques**

#### **Low Berths**

TL 8, Cr 50,000.



Not an attractive method for the adventurer, since there is no point in living forever if you are in a drugged and frozen sleep at the time. However, rulers might store gifted experts in this way against possible future needs.

### **Psionic Powers**

TL 0, Cr 0.

A recurrent theme in science fiction is the individual who lives forever for no apparent reason, because of a happy accident of genetic makeup or supernatural help. The easiest way to represent this is as an extremely rare psionic power; perhaps with a prerequisite of maximum possible scores in psionic strength and a couple of other characteristics. After training, ability would rise one level if the monthly advancement roll was a natural 12. The character can use the square root of his ability level (rounded down) as a DM on all future aging rolls.

### **Subjects**

Problems of immortality in SF are not so much technical as social and psychological. Who gets it? Usually it is assumed the method is very rare and expensive - not for the masses, but only for the few.

### **Rulers**

The obvious group to get the treatment are the people in power. The rulers probably paid for the research, and if it is only available for a few, will make sure they get it first. If there is any left over, close relatives and friends will get some, as will trusted and skilled associates. The reason for this is partly sentimental, and partly to ensure loyalty (by threatening to withdraw the technique) and avoid being assassinated in jealousy.

### **Skilled Technicians**

It is unlikely to be cheaper to keep a minion on anagathics than to train a new one every 30 years, but if a ruler does so, such a minion will be loyal (or at least terrified of losing favour), and will be vastly more useful because of his vast experience.

### **Long Term Personnel**

If a project requires continual supervision and is likely to last centuries, the personnel concerned might be put on anagathics. This applies especially to slower-than-light starship crews, or even faster-than-light crews if the game universe is vast enough compared to the drive speed. This is the lowest-priority group, since one can always get by with machines or avoid such projects.

### **Psychological Effects**

Just watch your friends playing their 'unkillable' high-level characters, and you will see the sort of behaviour that is likely in an immortal character.

### **Risk-Taking**

There are two likely attitudes towards taking risks for an immortal; either his extended life becomes so precious that he will do nothing to risk it or his immortality drug/machine. Such characters will not adventure at all if they can avoid it, and when they do it is with massive bodies of loyal guards against weak and surprised opposition. He becomes a master of the pre-emptive strike and the inescapable trap. Eventually he is assassinated. Or the immortal is likely to grow careless of danger and will tackle anything, sure that he will (somehow) survive. He may even start taking crazy risks just for kicks; sooner or later he takes one risk too many and dies.

## **Boredom**

After a character has lived two or three hundred years, and seen it all, a feeling of boredom sets in. First, he may react against the boredom by doing weirder and weirder things. Often he feels long life is only appreciated when there is a risk or losing it, and so takes progressively worse chances until one finally kills him.

Second, he may become a jack-of-all-trades; a career, a marriage, a hobby last 20-50 years, then he gives them up and starts afresh with a new set. This is common where the immortality method is secret and known only to a few; the immortal then needs to change his identity every few decades and move to a new planet, or Awkward Questions are asked.

Third, the immortal can dedicate himself to some very long-term purpose or project, often a scientific or social project which will need lifetimes of work.

## **Problem Solving**

As the character gets older he will see solutions to problems more and more quickly, because he will have seen similar problems many times before. Often he will grasp the answer before the question is fully stated, and so tend to jump to conclusions; but these conclusions will usually be right. However, the immortal grows less and less likely to explain his orders, more and more contemptuous of those less experienced than himself. Frequently, the immortal is very predictable in his actions despite his search for novelty.

## **Lack of Memory Space**

There could be a limit to the amount of information the human brain can store. If some form of personality recording and transfer exists, the immortal will edit his memory every few centuries to remove unpleasant or irrelevant memories. If the immortal cannot edit his memory, he will be very careful about what he learns. For instance, he will not learn to drive - he can always hire a chauffeur, and cars are likely to be obsolete within a few centuries anyway.

## **Identity Crisis**

This is the most serious problem, and arises if personality recording and transfer is used. If the transfer destroys the original personality rather than copying it, you are not immortal - just dead. There is now an artificial personality which has your memories, right up to the moment of recording (or perhaps matter transmission), but it is NOT you. Some people will be able to accept this, or will be unable to see what difference it makes, but others will get very depressed once they realise it. If the referee believes his personality recordings contain the characters' souls (if they have souls!) he may allow the character to use this method of immortality, but should persuasively put the opposite case to players to worry them; if not, any character trying to use these methods simply dies.

If the personality transfer copies the original personality - which one is really you? One of the two identical personalities is older, of course, but that one is no worse off than before and may well envy the younger version. Although both start with the same memories, from the instant they recover, both are separate people leading separate lives. Lawyers will probably rule that the new version of the personality has no wealth or property unless these are freely given to it by the old one, perhaps in a will.

## **Effects on Society**

### **Oligarchy**

As the immortal rulers get older, society is likely to become more centralised, more authoritarian, and more conservative. What's more, the government gets better and better at keeping it that way. Even with the best of intentions, the rulers will lose touch with the masses. Still, they will become harder to overthrow. The only real hope is that one of the rulers will wipe out the others, because one ruler alone must die eventually by accident or assassination. The next generation of rulers will probably not want to wait for their elders



to die, and may well try to kill them. In a continuously-expanding empire, young nobles might be given a ship and some troops and told to go and carve out their own fief; this is only possible near the edge of human space, because near the middle of a race's sphere of influence it is easier to grab a neighbouring state or assassinate pater. The young noble might be fobbed off with a provincial governorship.

### **Resentment**

If immortality is only available for a few, the masses will resent paying for it. They will probably decide that if they can't have it, nobody's having it. In addition, there will be a few philosophers who feel the whole thing is not healthy for mankind. The mob will try to destroy the process and kill the users, which will drive the users underground unless they have an iron grip on society. The rulers in turn will bribe anyone competent enough to be dangerous with offers of anagathics provided they join the current clique.

### **Currency**

Anagathic drugs might be the standard to which the Imperial currency is tied. Drugs are easy to assay, easy to dilute, small, easily carried and scarce. This would mean characters would be faced with a dilemma; whether to spend their drugs or take them. Of course, paper currency (or whatever) would continue to exist. Drugs would only be used for settling accounts between planets.

### **Sexism**

People who live forever are less likely to seek immortality by proxy through children, so perhaps the birth rate would fall. Certainly if the process only works on one sex, that one would dominate society. Possibly without the need to raise children, or if the drugs arrested aging before puberty, the sexes would go their separate ways.

### **The Xerox Problem**

If you can copy the personality once, why not do it twice? Fifty times? A thousand times? If a criminal is executed, the search must go on in case there is a copy of him somewhere, or in case the original is still alive and you only executed a copy. Is a duplicate of a criminal guilty of the crimes the original committed? Legally, each copy must be treated as a separate entity with regard to possession and inheritance. This assumes some method of identifying which copy is which - possibly a radioactive tracer or tattoo.

Unemployment will rise still further - only the very best are good enough to be copied, and only a copy of the very best will be good enough for a big employer. Human life will become fairly cheap. If your top surgeon gets killed, you can always make another. If your ace pilot is sent on a suicide mission, you haven't killed him - you still have the original safe at home.

### **Scenario**

Patron: Noble.

Required skills: Combat.

Type of immortality: Cloning with personality transfer, TL 16.

### **Player's Information**

The band are approached by an obviously rich and nervous person who has heard of their reputation and knows they are offworlders. She is an immortal, she confesses, and in need of protection. Each time her new body wakes up, a recording is taken of her personality so that she has one available which is up to date. Normally she updates this recording at yearly intervals. Thus, she should remember waking up, living for a while then making a new recording, and so on. Instead, she remembers waking up four times in a row; her guards and technicians assure her that she was assassinated each time before updating her recording. She no longer trusts her bodyguard, and reasons that the local police have

already failed at least three times, so she will offer the players Cr 1,000 per month each to be her new bodyguard until the mystery is solved. They will be expected to track down the assassin as well.

### Referee's Information

Of course, the patron does something very like this every time she wakes up, and the killer knows the pattern by now. The band are thus under scrutiny at all times by the assassin.

1. The killer is one of the previous four versions of the patron (the first) who committed a vile crime and intends to assassinate the patron in some deserted spot so she can replace the current version, which as far as the police are concerned is innocent of the crime. Naturally she will be able to impersonate the patron perfectly.
2. As 1, but the killer has already substituted herself for the newly awakened clone. She should make some slips so that the players have a chance to uncover the plot, for example remembering an item of news she should not have seen, or having been seen in public while supposedly dead.
3. As 1, but the police are aware of what is going on and are hoping to catch the killer and bring her to justice. If the current clone is assassinated they will not care, since another one will be grown in a few months once it is clear the patron is dead.
4. As 3, but after a successful assassination the police intend to kill whichever clone survives - just to be on the safe side.
5. As 3, but the players will foil the assassination attempt and kill the assassin in the process. Their patron will then be wrongfully arrested, and they will be charged with killing the innocent version of the patron.
6. The mystery is due to a fault in the cloning complex computer which accidentally killed the last four clones before the fault was completely repaired. The only way to test the machines was to try a new clone. The technicians are worried that the patron will fire them if she finds out.

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#### Drugs

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#### Medicine

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#### Surgery

*The Long ARM of Gil Hamilton*, *A Gift from Earth*, Larry Niven; *The Ship Who Sang*, Anne McCaffrey.

#### Clones

*The Ophiuchi Hotline*, John Varley; *Pursuit of the Screamer*, Anson Dibbell; *To Live Forever*, Jack Vance; *Time Enough for Love*, Robert A Heinlein.

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

This was the first of a projected series of articles, each of which would cover a major science-fiction theme or cliché in depth. The birth of my twin daughters and a change in direction for *White Dwarf* (towards *Warhammer*) coincided, and the series was cancelled.



*I'm pleased with this piece, and I think it has stood the test of time well.  
There are so many scenarios that can be run around immortals that I'm  
occasionally tempted to start a campaign just to run them.*

## The Staurni

*An alien race for Traveller by Andy Slack  
Originally published in White Dwarf 57 - © Games Workshop Limited 1984*

### Home World

The Staurni homeworld is Staurn, and they are rarely encountered away from it.

Staurn's UPP is AFB7870-C. It is a sub-Jovian world orbiting an F5 world quite closely, with two moons. Surface gravity is just under 2.0 G, and the world rotates in about 18 standard hours. From space, the blue-grey atmosphere with its blue-tinted clouds partially conceals a world with royal blue seas and ochre and cinnabar continents, with many volcanoes and areas of hot springs. Vegetation is predominantly reddish-yellow.

The planet's atmosphere is a mixture of hydrogen, helium, nitrogen, ammonia and methane at a pressure of three standard atmospheres. (NB: Oxygen burns and explodes readily in this atmosphere!) Because of the high energy input from the primary, winds and storms are especially fierce - no-one ventures out in a Staurnian storm. Surface water is heavily contaminated with ammonia. Animal life is common, and of standard types. The world can be placed in any system as a secondary world, in place of one of the nearer gas giants; the system should be politically independent.

### Appearance and Attitudes

The Staurni are approximately 3 metres long, half of this is a rudder-tipped tail. They have two arms with taloned hands, but no legs; they rest sitting on their coiled tails. A prominent keelbone and batlike wings with a 7 metre span allow the Staurni to fly. The head has a narrow skull with a protruding fanged muzzle and small rounded ears at the sides. The nostrils are hidden under the chin. The whole body is covered in a greyish growth that is similar to a cross between fur and feathers; a darker band of this surrounds the eyes. Clothing is limited to pouched bandoliers.

The Staurni are carnivores. They demand respect and must be addressed in an elaborate and polite manner in their own language. They will respect a character who meets them on their own ground, in the high pressure and gravity, rather than talking over a communicator. They are aggressive and warlike in behaviour. They are not gregarious and prefer to hunt for food. On reaching middle age, a Staurni loses both sex drive and aggression, and becomes content to stay at home. The elders are respected for their experience and wisdom.

### Evolution

The Staurni evolved from 200 kg flying carnivore/chasers. Intelligence was developed to fight off a larger but related species which invaded their hunting grounds eons ago.

### History

Technology was slow in coming to the Staurni - before they discovered atomic energy, the only way to smelt metal was in one of the numerous volcanic vents. Eventually, a planet-wide industrial society was formed, composed of confederations of clans expanding by conquest and slavery. A nuclear war followed, lasting quite some time; afterwards Staurni society attained its present form, over a century ago.

## **The Society**

The Staurni social structure is based on a patriarchal male and his extended family, including his wives, cubs and relatives as well as retainers and their immediate relations. Staurni marriage is exceedingly complex both ritually and structurally. Each clan is heavily armed, usually with atomic weapons; its home will be a complex of underground, nuclear-proof bunkers and fused stone towers in a mountainous region. These are called Aeries, perches, nests or some such term, and are identified by the name of their patriarch.

A quasi-religious organisation called the Lodge exists to settle disputes between clans and deal with off-worlders. Its leaders are old males, and most work is done by acolytes - usually younger sons of patriarchs, with little hope of inheritance, who join the organisation for the adventure, the concubines, and the chance of promotion and power.

## **Technology**

The Staurni know of jump drive, but do not use it. Their only spacecraft are system defence vessels. They make truly excellent weapons, often deliberately for trade with off-worlders. They are a common source of advanced naval and personal weaponry, especially kinds which are illegal in most other systems. Their transport technology is very limited, since they can fly themselves.

## **In Play**

It is not recommended that Staurni be used as player characters because they loathe to leave Staurn, and in any case their life-support requirements are most abnormal. For non-players, the referee should give Staurni a DM of +3 when dicing for Strength and Endurance. Aging is at normal rates. Staurni may not fly except in the proper atmosphere - it must have the right composition and pressure. Staurni may acquire any skill or benefit, but their Strength and Endurance may not exceed 15 at any time. An unarmed Staurni (a rare thing) is considered equipped with claws and teeth, and may use either (but not both) in any combat round.

The planet Staurn is useful as a source of non-standard weapons, especially for starships. A referee might invent his own weapons for the Staurni to sell, or might rule that Book 4 and 5 weapons are illegal and can only be obtained from Staurn, and so on. In any case, players are likely to go there to tool up. Characters who have certain skills will know the following.

Those with Medical skill will know that a human being will require one dose of Medical drug per day while on Staurn to counteract the effects of the high gravity. If this is not available, after two or three days a character will be too ill and exhausted to move or perform any actions. A character who is not using the proper drugs who is exposed to Staurn's gravity will take 2D6 wounds per day. In addition, a medic and those with Hunting skill will know that the water, air and animal life on Staurn are all poisonous.

Those with Survival skill (or Scout prior service if Book 4 is not in use) will know that while the water on Staurn is polluted with ammonia, it is possible to obtain drinkable water by firing a low-intensity, wide-beam laser pulse from a hand weapon (using one charge) at a metal canteen of local water; the ammonia is then boiled out over a period of minutes.

If the band travel on the surface of Staurn, there are two kinds of special events which may be encountered.

## **Walking Forests**

A large copse of trees, each 4 metres high, is encountered near dawn. As the sun heats them, the trees begin to 'walk' inexorably across the band's path. The trees move in this fashion in search of new soil, since they quickly exhaust the nutrients where they stand. When the sun goes down again, they will stop moving. A character caught in such a forest while it is on the move must make a Strength saving throw or be trampled underfoot,



taking 2D6 wounds per combat round and almost certainly having his suit torn. One attempt to escape per round is allowed.

### Slaughter Machines

In their nuclear war, the Staurni protected industrial centres with robot tanks, programmed to patrol an area and kill anything that moves in it. After the war, some clans left the surviving robots in place as a free defence of their nests. Heavy weapons will be useless due to age; the robot tank encountered by the party will attack with weapons equivalent to auto-rifles and laser rifles, several of each. The auto-rifles are harmless since the explosives in their bullets have decayed; but the lasers are still operational.

Staurn and the Staurni are taken from *The Star Fox* by Poul Anderson.

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

*Poul Anderson had more influence on my Classic Traveller campaigns than any other writer, especially the Polesotechnic League and Flandry stories.*

*The Staurni appeared in my Spinward Marches campaign as inhabitants of a subjovian world in District 268.*

## The Motivated Traveller

*Character traits for Traveller by Andy Slack*

*Originally published in White Dwarf 61 - © Games Workshop Limited 1985*

A recent *WD* article described the idea of choosing objectives for *D&D* characters and awarding experience points for actions consistent with those objectives. Here is a similar system intended for use with SF RPGs, notably *Traveller*, *Space Opera* and *Universe*. *Star Frontiers*, having character advancement based on experience points, would be better served by the original system.

The advantages of using the system are threefold: First, it provides a quick, simple guide to the character's actions and personality; this is most valuable when dealing with NPCs and for beginning players. Second, it provides clearly defined goals for the character, often a problem for players, especially those new to the system concerned. Third, it provides a way to remove large sums of money from the game painlessly.

### Objectives

On joining the game, characters must each specify 3 objectives. (Choosing 3 makes for some interesting 'crises of conscience' as the demands of various objectives conflict.)

Possible objectives are: Adept, Altruist, Hedonist, Killer, Miser, Rover, Socialite, Warrior. The character's goal is to amass Victory Points (VP) and so increase his Victory Level (VL), which represents his reputation and self-esteem. VP are totalled monthly; in any game month in which a character fails to amass at least as many VP as his VL, his VL is decreased by one; in any game month in which he amasses 3 times as many VP as the next VL, the character's VL is increased by one. The GM should award VP as he sees fit, but the following are guidelines. Note that a character may gain VP twice for an action if he has two objectives which would each gain him VP for it.

Adepts are characters devoting themselves to the pursuit of excellence in one particular skill.

An Adept must specify one skill as his speciality. His VL may never be less than twice his expertise level (in *Traveller*) or less than his skill level (in *Space Opera* or *Universe*) in this skill, and he gains a favourable modifier when studying it; a +1 DM in *Traveller* and a 5% chance of success in other systems. The Adept's minimum VL as defined by his expertise is not affected by VP gains or losses.

Altruists are those who strive to help others and do good deeds - a rare type of character indeed without some incentive such as this system. Generally they avoid combat where possible, not from cowardice but for moral reasons.

An Altruist gains VP as follows: 1 VP per student per week if he is acting as an instructor, 1 VP per Cr 500 x his VL which he donates to a worthy cause (GM's discretion is required in determining what constitutes a worthy cause), 1 VP for healing a character of a minor wound or disease and +2 VP for healing a character of a major wound or disease.

Hedonists enjoy the good things in life - good food, good living and other pleasures. Much of their income is spent on these things.

A Hedonist gains VP from Gambling and Carousing (see below). He also gains VP as follows: For 'High Living', +2 per month. For travelling High Passage, +2 per trip. Per Cr 500 x his VL spent on otherwise useless luxuries, +1 VP.

Killers are generally nasty characters who enjoy causing pain and suffering, and are ruthless in the pursuit of their goals.

A Killer gains VP as follows: +1 VP per minor wound inflicted on a character; +2 VP per major wound inflicted on a character. Note: These awards are doubled if the Killer wounds another player character. The purpose of this is to ensure that those travelling with a psychopath are always a little uneasy about it. A Killer also gains +1 VP each time he hits an opposing ship in space combat.

Misers are those who desire money for its own sake; they tend to be wary of any expenditure, however necessary, and will do almost anything to make money.

A Miser's VL may never be less than the logarithm (base 10) of his cash balance in Credits, regardless of VP gains or losses. Thus a Miser with Cr 10,000 must have at least VL 4; one with Cr 1,000,000 has a minimum VL of 6.

Rovers travel for the sheer joy of travelling, and are born tourists. They are usually intrigued by natural wonders and exotic sights and customs.

A Rover's VL increases by one each time he lands on a world he has never visited before, regardless of VP gained or lost that month.

Socialites are characters who make a career out of social climbing; their overall aim is to be rich, famous and powerful, preferably noble with it.

A socialite gains VP from Carousing and Gambling. He also gains VP as follows: For High Living, +2 per month. Being a member of the Travellers' Aid Society, +2 per month. Each time a Socialite's VL increases (or decreases) by one, so does his Social Standing. However, a character may not become noble in this way unless the Emperor grants him a title, which he will do on a roll of 12+ on 2D6. Whether and how this roll can be influenced are up to the GM, but the wishes of other nobles will have great effect. Note that systems without a set of social ranks must have them defined before the Socialite objective has its full use; VL could possibly be used as a measure of social class.

Warriors are those who love fighting, but fight not to kill or maim as does the Killer, but for purposes they consider just and honourable, and are normally generous and merciful to those they defeat.

Warriors gain VP as follows: For being on the winning side in combat, +2; for commanding a winning side outnumber n:1 in combat, +(n x n); for each hit personally scored in space combat, +1.



## **Carousing and Gambling**

Carousing is an activity lasting one week and costing Cr 50 x character's VL. It gains a Hedonist or Socialite +1 VP. If two or more Socialites carouse together by mutual and prearranged consent, this is called toadying; the Socialite with the highest VL present gains +1 VP per other Socialite present, and the other Socialites gain VP equal to 1/2 the difference between their VL and the highest VL present.

Gambling uses the normal rules for the system in use. A character may make up to 6 bets per week of gambling, each of Cr 50 to Cr 5,000. Hedonists and Socialites gain +1 VP per Cr 500 x VL bet; Socialites gain +1 VP per bet won, and lose 1 VP per bet lost.

## **Alien Beings and their Objectives**

Aliens seem best handled by restrictions on what objectives they may choose.

Every SF game or writer has a race of feline creatures with the codes of the Samurai: Niven's Kzinti, Traveller's Aslan, Space Opera's Avatars, Cherryh's Mri; the list is endless. Such creatures must choose either Killer or Warrior as an objective; they may still choose whatever they like for their other two objectives. In the same way, other races would be characterised by one objective which they must (or may not) choose; Niven's Puppeteers or Star Frontiers' Vrusk would be forced to select Miser as an objective; Traveller Zhodani would automatically choose Socialite (as all aspire to become enfranchised nobility); and so on. Traveller Vargr are perhaps an exception, and should be allowed (unlike other characters) to change their objectives annually, reflecting their changeable attitudes to life.

## **Non-Players**

Objectives are easily selected for NPCs to flesh them out in the same way. It is easy to allocate them by die roll, but take into account that character's skills, characteristics and race. An extremely rich character, especially if a merchant and most especially if he has a ship, is very likely to be a Miser. A tough character with many weapons skills is likely to be either a Warrior or a Killer, and is probably not an Altruist. An ex-Scout, again especially if he has a ship, is more likely than most to be a Rover. In short, pick objectives for NPCs sensibly; choose something for them which would start them with a high VL, and allow them to improve that VL easily.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

*This was an early attempt to formalise the character and motivations of player characters; in 1986 I began to use the GURPS system of advantages and disadvantages as a concise way of describing characters' motivations and personalities, even in other games. This was the first step on the slippery slope to converting all my campaigns to GURPS.*

## GUSHEMEGE CSB ACTIVITIES

by Andy Slack

HIWG Doc. No. SW04

### ABSTRACT

An overview of the activities of Strephon's Agency in the fields of disinformation, memetic engineering, terrorism, and commando operations.

### OVERVIEW

The Covert Survey Bureau (CSB) is the logical choice for Strephon's secret agency. There are also a number of interesting anomalies in Gushemege sector. This document discusses what the Gushemege CSB is up to, under these main headings: Disinformation, Memetics, Terrorism, and Commando Operations.

### STRATEGIC GOALS

Strephon's Worlds are outnumbered absolutely in terms of the fighting ships and men available to the other factions. In any given battle, however, what matters is not how troops the enemy has, but how many he can bring to bear. The CSB aims to reduce the odds against Strephon's forces in three main ways:

- By tying down as many opposing troops and ships as possible, rendering them unavailable for combat.
- By rallying the undecided populations behind Strephon, thus increasing his forces.
- By attacking the enemy's command structure and communications routes so that he cannot direct his forces to the right place at the right time.

The CSB's top administrators are wise enough to realize that this strategy only delays the inevitable fall of Strephon's Worlds. The rebellion is bound to settle down to a war of attrition, and in that kind of conflict the faction with the most troops will eventually win. Strephon and the CSB hope that the major factions will cripple each other before the attritional phase sets in, or that they can rally enough high-population worlds to become the largest faction.

In the meantime, an interesting scenario might be made out of a senior CSB agent employing the PCs to carry out missions for him - not for Strephon's cause, but to build up a nest egg he can retire on when Strephon's Worlds collapse.

### DISINFORMATION

Or, the time-honored art of telling lies about your opponents. Because of the slow speed at which news travels and the general chaos of the Rebellion, it is difficult for most people to find out what is really going on. They will therefore tend to believe nothing at all or whoever shouts the loudest.

Affeldt suggested lowering enemy morale by tampering with the troops' mail. Strephon's agency takes this a step further by tampering with the faction's mail - introducing false information into their rival's xboat networks. This is done in a variety of ways:

First, by introducing Gushemege xboats into the networks of rival factions, carrying fake news. For example, reporting a battle or a planet lost when it was won, or faked footage of the rival faction's leader being assassinated. This is a dangerous mission for the pilot, but allows maximum consistency between the messages aboard, making the news more credible.



Second, agents in rival faction's territory invent false messages and introduce them into the local xboat network. This can mislead the readers. More importantly, it lowers the credibility of the other messages delivered. If one report says the battle was won and another says it was lost, which do you believe? This slows the enemy's response to information as he must verify its truthfulness before acting, possibly by sending another ship to check what really happened.

Third, destroying data banks, xboats, and couriers wherever possible. This slows the enemy response, because he doesn't know what is going on. He must either send more ships to find out, or have fighting ships escort couriers. (The latter will slow down couriers, because warships generally have lower jump numbers.)

In all cases, due to the excellent quality of Gushemege simulations, based on Lancian technology, the false data introduced by the CSB are not obvious forgeries.

In a more adventurous vein, carefully doctored news might persuade a low-technology, high-population world that it was cut-off, surrounded, abandoned, and soon to be smashed by Strephon's fleets. Silver balloons masquerading as orbiting battleships would help. A forceful landing by a gunboat or two carrying a CSB agent dressed as a Colonel or Fleet Admiral with a request that the world surrender could gain the world's surrender, if the agents were good enough actors.

## **MEMETICS**

Pre-jump-drive experiments on Terra showed that certain ideas are infectious, spreading among persons like viruses and taking over victims' belief systems. These ideas are known as memes, and the techniques of studying and creating them are collectively called memetics. Where the vectors (transmission agent) for a physical disease include vermin, insects, and carriers of the disease, the vectors for a meme include media broadcasts and whispered conversations.

In memetic theory, social movements are side effects of the spread of specific memes. It follows that a group capable of creating and spreading a suitable meme can produce social movements to order.

Much CSB research has been targeted on projects to create new religions, philosophies, and codes of behavior which will dispose those accepting the artificial ideals to support the CSB's aim. These projects usually conduct their experiments on interdicted worlds with low tech levels, to minimize the disturbing affects of outside interference. The group of four type-X starports close together in subsector L house the major projects, close together for ease of comparison.

Creating a suitable meme requires, first, that CSB agents thoroughly study which memes are already active in the target culture. The successful pseudo-religion will make extensive use of existing memes to help it take root in the target population.

Second, the meme must be codified in a written (or other recorded) form. As self-replicating information patterns, memes are subject to mutation and evolution like physical genes, and standardizing the meme helps to limit mutation as the number of people infected grows. The CSB agent in place normally prepares and distributes the standard "Bible" for the new meme.

Third, the CSB encourages those infected with the meme to isolate themselves from the rest of the population, to minimize contamination from competing memes, and to protect the believers. The local government and/or religion will undoubtedly attempt suppression.

The most successful memes - from the CSB's standpoint - are those overriding a sophont's natural desire for genetic and personal survival. This sort of meme can induce untrained civilians to drive grav sleds full of explosives into Lucan's or Dulinor's local headquarters, or attack troops in battledress with sticks and stones. The sort of fanaticism needed can

only be generated by pseudo-religious memes, hence the CSB's interest in creating artificial religions, and even then must be continually fanned by agents onworld.

A possible scenario is that the PCs are forced to deal with a local religious cult inflamed to acts of terrorism by a CSB agent. Perhaps one of the party's favorite NPCs is kidnapped and brainwashed by the cult.

## **TERRORISM**

Even in the former heartland of the Imperium there are dissidents - corsairs, terrorists, criminal elements, and so on - who would take up arms against the government. The CSB's policy is to contact those groups in their rivals' territories, and give them arms, money, and specialist advice. The CSB is not concerned with what these groups stand for; all that matters is that they oppose their government and are prepared to take action. Of course, should such action be against the CSB's interests, their supplies of guns and cash dry up.

This policy would give Strephon major problems if he won, because he will then have well-equipped, trained terrorist groups entrenched in his territory. Desperate and vastly outnumbered, however, he is prepared to take that risk and hope the CSB will have an answer for that problem when it arises. Strephon's main concern so far has been for the innocent victims of terrorism. The CSB argues that innocent victims are essential, as killing the spouses and children of rival factions' troops is not only easier than killing the troops, it has a greater effect on their morale.

The CSB recognizes that it would weaken Strephon's bid for the throne to be associated with this activity. They are careful to lay blame either on the terrorists themselves or on another faction. Atrocities committed in Lucan's domain will be blamed on Dulinor, and vice versa.

**False Flag Recruiting:** The CSB studies intended recipient organizations, and then poses as members of that faction. The Solomani Party is the main recipient of CSB support within the volume of space controlled by the Ziru Sirka. Like most other recipients, it is ignorant of the true source of funding. It might reject the money and advice if it knew where they came from.

Within Lucan's Imperium, the Scarlet Claw Society is a group of Aslan terrorists which the CSB funds. The agents pose as members of Dulinor's agency, and so the terrorists believe themselves to be fighting for Dulinor instead of helping Strephon.

Affeldt suggested arming PCs and turning them loose to create mayhem in rivals' territory. This is as good a campaign setup as any sponsored by CSB.

**Disease:** Another common ploy is for CSB agents posing as customs inspectors to board independent merchantmen just before they leave Strephon's Worlds for enemy territory. While aboard they surreptitiously infect the ship with contagious disease germs. The intent is to spread the disease into starports within a rival faction's turf.

The plagues used will be crippling, but not actually lethal. A dead enemy who only needs to be buried has less effect on opponents' morale and resources than a horribly diseased one who must be cared for constantly.

A possible scenario is to infect the PC's ship with a virulent plague in this way, perhaps while dropping off a passenger who is really a CSB agent. The PCs will become ill while being hunted as saboteurs or plague carriers.

## **COMMANDO OPERATIONS**

The CSB maintains a number of highly-respected commando teams, which are trained and equipped at a level rivalling the special forces units of the other major services. Like



the rest of the CSB's operatives, these have a reputation for the bizarre, earned mainly from their use of trained animals, gadgetry, and deception.

Trained pouncers have been fitted with time-fused explosive packs and encouraged to build nests inside enemy starships. This has had mixed success, with some targets destroyed and other attempts destroying neutral or merchant tonnage instead. The CSB argues that even failures help their cause, as they lower enemy morale, discourage neutral merchants from visiting enemy ports, and tie down forces on security duties.

Small flying animals that nest in the eaves of buildings have been captured and fitted with incendiary devices in attempts to burn down enemy cities. These missions have uniformly failed so far, but all add to the fears and worries of those opposing Strephon.

During the early days of the Rebellion, attempts were made to peddle drugs to troops fighting for other factions. These were discontinued when Strephon's troops proved equally vulnerable - in many cases they received the drugs intended for Lucan's forces.

CSB commando units often travel incognito aboard free traders owned and operated by the CSB. A possible scenario is for the CSB to hold the lien on the PC's ship through a number of dummy companies. A CSB commando team in disguise charters the ship, and the PCs are blamed for the atrocities they commit at one port of call.

Once on-planet, CSB teams are supported by sleeper agents scattered throughout the sector years ago to support anti-terrorist and anti-piracy operations. The typical sleeper believes he works for someone else (whoever his recruiter thought he was likely to work for), and is exempt from draft by virtue of ill health, age, or professional status.

The sleeper's task is to provide a safe house where the team can rest, avoid searches, and prepare for missions. Stocks of food and medicine, and perhaps a vehicle, are also needed. These hideouts take many forms - a starport restaurant franchise, a cargo container ostensibly storing furniture for someone off-planet on business (and stacked amid many genuine ones), an unproductive mine on a nearly-abandoned asteroid, a lighthouse or emergency shelter, and so on.

The missions undertaken by a commando unit are often blamed on terrorists, and are broadly similar to terrorist operations. What distinguishes them is their precise timing and targeting, as opposed to the apparently random and pointless violence of the terrorist. These units are specially tasked with eliminating key opponents by killing, kidnapping, or discrediting them. To gain the proper perspective for how the gadget-oriented CSB tackles this sort of task, watch reruns of the *Mission: Impossible* show.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

*This was my first and only piece for the History of the Imperium Working Group, a group of fans who supported and helped develop the MegaTraveller line. It is also available in the free download of Jim Vassilakos' Galactic mapping software, which is the de facto standard for Traveller starmaps produced by fans.*

## Quick Start

*Fast PC Generation for the New Era by Andy Slack*  
© Andy Slack 1994, 1998. All rights reserved. Originally published in *Challenge 75*.

*Traveller: The New Era* features detailed player characters, with a well-fleshed out history behind them. Such PCs can take a long time to generate, perhaps hours, and the players need either a good knowledge of the rules or much attention from a patient referee.

Sometimes, though, you'll need to create a group of characters quickly - perhaps for a game at a convention, or for players who want to start playing right away. You can create detailed PCs beforehand, if you know you're going to be running a game; or you can give each player a stock NPC for the first session and let them create a full persona later on.

However, there are players who want to generate their own characters, without spending a lot of time doing it; I don't like to lose these people from the session or turn them off *Traveller*, so I've developed the method below as a middle ground between full character creation and pregenerated PCs. It's based on the observation that PCs, like NPC Star Vikings, fall into three main types: Ground specialists (marines, mercenaries etc - the party's warriors), space specialists (scouts, merchants, other ship crews) and covert specialists (spies, rogues, private eyes - the party's streetwise infiltration team).

### Character Attributes

Roll 2D6-1 for each of the following attributes: STR (strength), AGL (agility), CON (constitution), INT (intelligence), EDU (education), CHR (charisma). If the total of these is less than 36, add points to taste to bring it up to 36. Roll 2D6-1 for SOC (social standing). The decide whether to be a space, ground or covert specialist; this determines your starting skills package, listed below. Skills listed with a number show the skill level you get; of the ones listed without a number, space or ground specialists may choose three at skill level 6 and three at skill level 3, and covert specialists may choose two at level 5. Note that it is not effective to pick both slug weapon skills or both energy weapon skills; note also that PCs may base energy weapon skills on AGL rather than STR if they prefer.

Regardless of which character type you chose, you now get three skill levels to allocate as desired to any skills you like.

The PC's hit points by body part are:

*Head:* 2 x CON

*Chest:* 3 x (STR + CON)

*Each Arm, Each Leg, and Abdomen:* 2 x (STR + CON)

The unarmed combat damage is (STR x Unarmed Martial Arts skill) / 10; Throw Range is 4 x STR; male PCs weigh 80 + 4 x (STR - AGL) kg, with female PCs being 15 kg lighter. Roll 1D6 for Initiative Level.

The PC now enters play at age 29. He or she has Cr 1500 x SOC to buy equipment with. It is possible to flesh out such PCs into fully generated ones later if so desired, in the same way as stock NPCs who become recurring contacts.

### Space Specialists

**STR-Based Skills:** Either Slug Pistol-5 or Energy Pistol-5; Mechanic.

**AGL-Based Skills:** Pilot (Interface/Grav), Machinist.



**CON-Based Skills:** Environment Suit-2, Zero-G Environment-2.

**INT-Based Skills:** Willpower-0, Astrogation, Sensors, Survey.

**EDU-Based Skills:** Communications, Computer, Electronics, Gravitics, Gunnery, RCV Operation, Screens, Ship's Engineering.

**CHR-Based Skills:** None.

### **Ground Specialists**

**STR-Based Skills:** Any three of Slug Rifle-5, Energy Rifle-5, Autogun-5, Grenade Launcher-5, Tac Missile-5 or Unarmed Martial Arts-5; Mechanic.

**AGL-Based Skills:** Grav Belt, Machinist.

**CON-Based Skills:** Climbing, Combat Engineer, Swimming, High-G Environment.

**INT-Based Skills:** Willpower-0, Farming, Navigation, Survival.

**EDU-Based Skills:** Biology, Chemistry, Communications, Computer, Construction, Electronics, Excavation, Genetics, Geology, Map, Medical, Meteorology, Physics, Robotics, Starship Architecture, Xenobiology.

**CHR-Based Skills:** Liaison.

### **Covert Specialists**

**STR-Based Skills:** Any two of Slug Rifle-5, Slug Pistol-5, Energy Rifle-5, Energy Pistol-5, Archery-5 or Early Firearms-5; Mechanic.

**AGL-Based Skills:** Intrusion-3, Stealth-3, Machinist.

**CON-Based Skills:** None.

**INT-Based Skills:** Navigation-3, Observation-5, Survival-1, Willpower-0, Farming, Interview, Psychology, Research.

**EDU-Based Skills:** Biology, Chemistry, Communications, Computer, Electronics, History, Genetics, Geology, Meteorology, Physics, Robotics, Xenobiology.

**CHR-Based Skills:** Act/Bluff-3, Disguise-1, Language-9 (specify which language), Instruction, Persuasion.

As a final note on languages, I normally allow new players to note generic languages in the same way that they note generic contacts, so that they can pick their languages when they have a good enough idea of the local region of space to make an informed choice.

### **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

*By the early 1990s I'd come to the conclusion that just as fantasy characters fell into a few basic stereotypes with occasional exceptions - fighters, magi and thieves - so did science fiction characters, and that the basic stereotypes for SF were soldiers, spacers and spies. Maybe doctors or psions should be added to that list, but they are usually subclasses of the first three.*

*Traveller: The New Era was a game I wanted to explore, but wasn't sure about; and the PC generation sequences were longer and more complex than any previous incarnation of Traveller, so this was developed as a short cut to support that exploration.*

## Core Subsector

*The Core Systems of 2300 AD rated for the New Era by Andy Slack*  
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*Challenge 75.*

The game *2300 AD* offers an exciting alternative universe for *Traveller: The New Era*.

This universe offers adventures against a background of Earth and its colonies 300 years after World War III, the Twilight War. Humanity is dominated by the Third French Empire, which maintains a shaky peace among its jealous rivals - Britain, Germany, Manchuria and America.

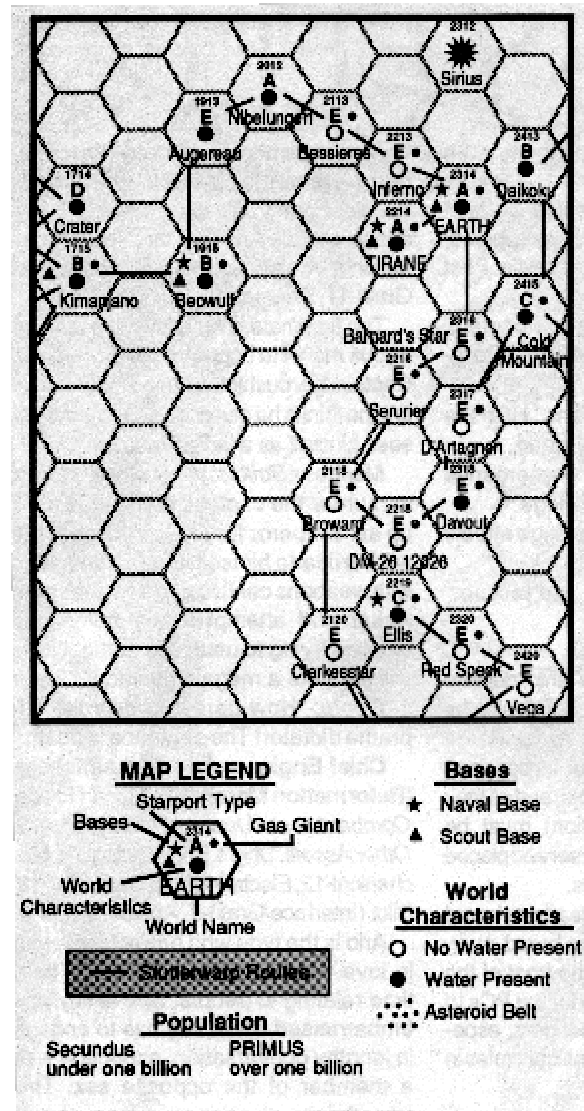
Human technology in the core worlds has reached tech level 12, with two main differences from the Imperium campaign. First, contra-gravity technology has not been discovered. Second, star travel is by stutterwarp rather than jump drives. The heavy black lines connecting worlds are the only routes which starships can travel along. Unless you are using *Fire, Fusion & Steel*, assume that only jump-2 equivalent drives are available, and these can only travel along the marked routes.

Using *TNE* conventions, the sector becomes the Sirius Sector after the brightest star within its boundaries, the spectral type A0 star Sirius.

Following is data for Core subsector, only one of the many subsectors available.

### Core Subsector (Subsector G of Sirius Sector)

Core subsector is the centre of human population and economic activity in the 24th century. It contains the Core proper (Earth and Tirane) and a number of colonies.



Crater is rated as an Amber travel zone because of unrest amongst the miners and ranchers, plus consequent close government regulation of many activities.

Kimanjano's oceans are a pre-biotic soup of polycarbons valuable to the chemical industry. There is no true life present, although some borderline cases have been observed.

Ellis' primary export is food, grown in large hydroponic facilities. Ellis is unique among colony worlds in being a full-fledged state of America.



Daikoku appears to have been colonised by intelligent nonhumans 4000 years ago, probably the Ebers. The colony died out long before humanity arrived.

Cold Mountain's Amber rating is due to the fire risk from its oxygen-rich air (so strong as to constitute a taint except in mountainous regions), acidic water, and savage wild-life.

Name	Hex	UWP	Base	Trade	TPPG	AI	Stellar
Crater	1714	D751666-6		Po	A210	Br	G8VI, M0V
Kimanjano	1715	B869677-B	S	Ag Ri	706	Fr, Az	K4V
Augereau	1913	E6B0377-7		Lo	200	Fr, Ge	M2V, M8V
Beowulf	1915	B968777-A	M, S	Ag Ri	412	Br, Fr	K4V
Nibelungen	2012	A553766-B		Po	900	Ge	K7V
Bessieres	2113	E6B0366-7		De Lo	103	Fr	M2V, UC
Broward	2118	E730366-8		De Lo Po	104	Am	M5V, SB
Clarksstar	2120	E000366-A		As Lo	100	Br	M4V
Inferno	2213	E7B0377-7		De Lo	201	Fr, Az	M8V
Tirane	2214	A867977-C	M, S	Hi	101	Special	G2V, K0V
Serurier	2216	E000377-A		As Lo	204	Fr, Ma	M4V
DM-26 12026	2218	E8B0377-7		Lo	325	Fr, Ma, Ar	K1V, K1V, K5V
Ellis	2219	C861666-8	M	Ri	402	Am	M3VI
Earth	2314	A867977-C	M, S	Hi	914	Special	G2V
Barnard's Star	2316	E7B0377-7		De Lo	221	Am, Ma	M5V
D'Artagnon	2317	E8B0366-7		De Lo	104	Fr	M0V
Davout	2318	E734377-8		Lo	204	Fr, Ja	M5V
Red Speck	2320	E000366-A		As Lo	124	Am	M3V, M3V
Daikoku	2413	BA54777-B		Ag	100	Ja, Ab	G1IV
Cold Mountain	2415	C676766-8		Ag Ri	A221	Ma	G8V
Vega	2420	E000366-A		As Lo	100	Am	A0V

## Notes

**Bases Column:** M indicates a Military base, S a Scientific base.

**TPPG:** Indicates Travel Zone, Population Multiplier, Planetoid Belts and Gas Giants. If the Travel Zone digit is empty, it is a Green Zone; A and R indicate Amber and Red Zones, respectively. As the subsector has no equivalent of the Travellers' Aid Society, classifications are a general consensus of public opinion.

**AI (Allegiance Column):** Ab = Arabia, Am = America, Ar = Argentina, Au = Australia, Az = Azania, Br = Britain, Fr = France, Ge = Germany, Ja = Japan, Ma = Manchuria. Note that most worlds have colonies from several nations; the allegiance codes are listed in descending order of colony population. Earth is home to the various nations which own colonies, and many more. Tirane has colonies owned by Argentina, Azania, Brazil, France, and Japan, with independent former colonies of Britain and Germany.

**Stutterwarp Routes:** The heavy black lines connecting worlds are the only routes which starships can travel along.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTES**

*At the time this was written, GDW had recently published Traveller: The New Era, and were contemplating rewriting the 2300 AD line using that game system; I intended to pitch to GDW to be one of the writers on that project. I had been using Traveller style jump drive in my 2300 AD game, and had started mapping local space as a series of subsectors, so submitted this as an article to gauge interest. The project never developed, and the other subsectors I had worked out disappeared mysteriously during some building work on our house.*