



FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource

Featured Article:
The Petrified Forest

by Joe Webb



A Note About Production

Freelance Traveller is prepared using Microsoft Office Publisher 2010 running on a Windows 7 Ultimate x64 system. The program is reasonably easy to use, and produces good results with moderate effort; it also supports advanced typographic features such as typographic quotes and apostrophes, small caps, ligatures, swashes, and stylistic alternatives (if the advanced features are implemented in the font). Generation of the PDF files is built in to this version of Microsoft Office; no additional products are needed.

The title and heading typeface is ZapfHumanist BT, a Bitstream adaptation of Hermann Zapf's digital redesign of his 'hot lead' typeface Optima, chosen as a 'tie-back' to the title typeface of the original edition of *Traveller*. The black-and-orange of the section headings is also a tie-back to *Traveller's* origins, though we felt that the 'correct' red was too dark. The heading sizes vary from 12 to 16 points. Body text is set in Palatino Linotype, also designed by Hermann Zapf, and is set at 11 points for most body text, giving approximately the same text spacing as Times New Roman at 12 point (which was the original *Freelance Traveller* body text), but a lighter 'color'. Palatino Linotype also 'balances' better as a body text typeface to Optima as a titling typeface.

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Contributors: Jeff Zeitlin, Megan Robertson, Ken Pick, Michael Brown, Andrea Vallance, Timothy Collinson, Rob Garitta, “kafka”, John Clifford, Joe Webb, Jeffrey Schwartz, Ken Murphy, Les DeGross, William Wilson, Sam Swindell.

Artwork

Cover: *Mark Lucas.*

From the Editor: *Jeff Zeitlin*

Critics’ Corner: *13 Mann Verlag, from the product; Mongoose Publishing, from DriveThruRPG’s website; Gypsy Knights Games, from their website; Digital Arc Systems, from the product, screenshots by Jeff Zeitlin.*

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Freelance Traveller is published bimonthly in PDF form by the editor. The current issue is available from *Freelance Traveller’s* website, <http://www.freelancetraveller.com>.

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From the Editor



Life gets in the way, d****! Not a lot, this time, but enough to delay the release of this issue by a week. Admittedly, part of it was trying to find the best articles for reprint; sad to say, I’m not getting the level of submissions I did when *Freelance Traveller* was monthly, and I’m very definitely scraping the bottom of the backlog barrel. I have to admit some fault in this; I haven’t pushed as hard as in the past—and I also haven’t gotten my *tuchus* in gear and properly acknowledged receiving what people

do send me. I’ll try to do better—but I’ll also tell you, right now, up front: if you haven’t heard from me within a week of sending to me, nag me from the same address—and to my freetrav@gmail.com address, not just to editor@freelancetraveller.com. That’s not for just going forward, it’s for anything not yet published that you’ve sent in the past. I really do care about this, and want to be a good neighbor on this, but I’m afraid I need help. And submissions to acknowledge. My thanks, in advance, to you all. ☼

Three Blind Mice

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Three Blind Mice. Timothy Collinson.

13Mann Verlag <http://www.13mann.com>

21pp., PDF

Free (via DTRPG or 13Mann)

This adventure was originally run, with great success, at a UK TravellerCon. The author was encouraged to release it publicly, and has, through German publisher 13Mann Verlag. Surprisingly, it's free (not even PWYW), but I'd certainly agree that (given a convenient opportunity) throwing the author a few bucks, quid, or Euro in appreciation wouldn't be out of line.

The design of the adventure is interesting, in that it can be played by a group of three PCs in either of two ways, or both aspects can be covered with a group of six – but in the latter case, the author recommends running it as two separate groups of three until they meet near the end of the first segment of the adventure.

Mr Collinson has clearly done his homework for this adventure; while only the *Mongoose Traveller Core Rulebook* is required, he lists several other publications that would be useful, mostly for skill definitions and related tasks, and several others that he used for background information in composing the adventure, including two previous *Freelance Traveller* articles.

I'm not going to discuss the plot or give details of the storyline here; all I'll say is that it's a well-written one that deserves to have the players come at it cold. I will say that it's not fundamentally a combat adventure, and neither referees nor players should come in expecting firefights.

The adventure's organization is in "Acts" and "Scenes"; each Act represents a major thematic shift, usually accompanied by a major setting shift; each Scene develops the dramatic line of the Act. Development is essentially linear, with the exception of Act I, which has two developmental lines running in parallel and merging at the end of the Act. There is



TRAVELLER

Three Blind Mice
by Timothy Collinson

Participant of 13Mann's 'Adventure for a book' campaign

the potential for this to be "railroad-y", as not following the plan can in several places abruptly end the adventure, but if well-run, the players are not likely to notice this, and will see the adventure through to completion.

The six player-characters are well-defined, with capsule backgrounds and personal characteristics that allow for each to be seen as – and played as – a distinct personality, rather than a generic character-in-such-and-such-role.

Each scene is also well-defined in terms of what's expected to happen, where, and with what actions on the part of the various dramatis personae. Locations are described in a way that allow the players to get a "feel" for what the location is like, and what sort of reactions to various types of actions can be expected. This extends to animals that appear in the adventure; while some of them could be replaced with generic pulp "space-cows" or "space-

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Critics' Corner

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sheep", others are truly alien, and point up that no, you're really not in Kansas anymore.

As noted at the beginning of this review, the adventure was originally written for and run at TravelerCON in the UK, and so can clearly be played fully in a single four-to-five-hour session. On the other hand, if for whatever reason you don't have a single block of time of sufficient length, the breaks at change-of-Act are also good points to break, stretch, and say "continued next time". There's also room for

making this a side adventure in a longer campaign, or making this the central adventure in a longer campaign, with side adventures of its own.

I would say that this adventure is easily the equal of any adventure folio for *Traveller* that I've seen, and I could wish that the 13Mann "Adventure for a Book" campaign had worked out, with other adventures of quality to match this – a linked set of four to six adventures of this quality would absolutely have been worth the US\$20-30 that a print edition would have commanded. Go forth and download; it's only 1.5MB of your time/bandwidth. 🌟

Active Measures

Jabru

by Jeff Zeitlin, Bruce Johnson, and Louis Wester

Your Humble Editor posted a solicitation/challenge to a community forum, promising that the response he liked best would be printed in *Freelance Traveller*. The two responses here were, in the editor's opinion, the best of those submitted.

The Scenario

created by Jeff Zeitlin

The manager, such as he is, of the local starport (nominally class C, but more like a class D in reality) calls you, the captain of a free trader landed here, to what passes as his office, near the entrance to the extrality zone. When you get there, he gestures at a person sitting bound in a chair, somewhat the worse for wear, with an odd-looking hat-and-mask covering his head and face, and explains...

"I found him like this at the gate, with just a note in a local dialect that I can barely puzzle out if I'm lucky. The note seems to say that he can't stay on the planet any more—but he's clearly a native, so I may have misunderstood something. The note refers to him as "Jabru", but it's not clear whether that's his name, or some sort of descriptor. When I called the mayor of the nearest town to see if he could tell me anything more, he took one look at my 'guest' and literally spat the word "Jabru", said if he were seen

anywhere off the port, he'd be killed, and walked away. He won't take my calls now; his assistant says he won't talk to me until "Jabru"—or maybe "the Jabru"—is gone."

Purple Eyes

by Bruce Johnson

The PCs, out of compassion or hoped-for remuneration, take the poor soul aboard.

At the very least, the Captain reasons, he can earn his way with some labor-intensive, easily trained tasks. (the chief engineer has been complaining about flaky electronics connections, which means spending hours in dusty wiring boxes, and access panels checking and cleaning (and replacing) old, brittle Molex connections. Boring, but a trained monkey could do it, like washing dishes for your restaurant meal, if washing dishes led to bashing your knuckles on sharp box edges repeatedly.)

The first hitch happens almost immediately. When the "Jabru" is delivered to the ship, the steward starts to untie him.

Immediately the dock crew starts yelling and drops their tools, including the 10M containers they were loading. "No! No! JABRU!!!!" is about all the crew can make out in the panic.

Only a hasty application of a sizable bribe and a promise that the "Jabru" will remain visible, outside,

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next to the airlock, hooded and tied to the chair until the ship is sealed for takeoff, will the locals resume loading the ship.

The PCs will likely make a note to not ever come back to this backwards, superstitious port again.

"Not even the *expensive* beer was good!" says the gunner.

Upon departure, the poor "Jabru" is finally untied, revealing a slight young woman, dressed in rough, typically male local clothes (accounting for the port manager's confusion). She's been tied up for quite some time and is dehydrated, hungry and has numerous bruises, old and new, superficial cuts and burns, cracked ribs, etc. Not seriously injured, but pretty clearly tortured.

The very first problem the crew has is that she doesn't speak anything but a local dialect that is distantly related to common languages in the sector.

Any crew member with multiple language facility will be able to make themselves understood. Otherwise a fair amount of time will be spent establishing communications.

The second striking thing that the crew notices is that the 'white' of her eyes are deep purple. After a while (and suitable language rolls) she's able to explain that this is what is the 'Mark of the Jabru'. It is a demon/monster/boogeyman from her culture; and it most often manifests in young people 18-25 years old. They're considered dangerous and immediately killed or banished.

In the past they were killed in a ritual fashion, but some centuries ago, after first contact from the Imperium, offworld banishment became the norm, at least for those wealthy enough to afford it.

She turns out to be quite good at the tasks given to her, and rapidly grows to be a well-liked shipboard member.

It *might* occur to some PCs that they came to like her *awfully* quickly....

Possible Directions for This Scenario

1) "It's Only Business"

She was the co-heir to a sizable on-world business/criminal empire. Her brother wanted everything for himself, and contracted with an off-world cosmetic surgeon for a vial of eye dye, a temporary eye-coloring agent used in some cultures as cosmetic enhancement. Once her eyes turned purple, he was able to get her beaten and banished as 'Jabru' in order to claim the family business entirely as his own.

At the referee's discretion, she may have off-world contacts who will enable her to mount a mission of revenge...the PCs could profit handsomely if she's successful in what ends up as a gangland-style war that they participate in.

2) "Burn Her; She's a Witch!"

Her eye color is the result of a long-conserved mutation that made the possessor susceptible to infrequent fungal blooms in the local ecosystem. The bloom causes their eyes to become deep purple: in the past, "Jabru" or 'purple eyes' led to madness, usually violent. As a measure of communal protection, they started killing anyone subject to the mutation when it manifested. Although the gene that led to madness was long ago eliminated from the population, the related gene for 'purple eyes' was not.

The young woman is simply an unfortunate susceptible to the 'purple eyes' fungus; she's otherwise an intelligent, talented person who will make a fine engineer if given the appropriate training, and will gladly join the crew for just room and board if offered a chance, almost like a ship's mascot.

3) "The Incredible Hulk":

As above, but "Jabru" are still subject to fits of incoherent rage. She might seriously harm or even kill someone while in this rage state; she'll come out of it with no memory of what happened.

She seriously maimed her cousin in such an incident. As she was an heir to a sizeable fortune, her family was able to have her banished instead of exe-

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Active Measures

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cuted outright. With suitable treatment she may be able to suppress the madness; she needs to never become angry. Her family will pay the crew a sizable amount to get her off-world to a treatment facility.

About 4 days into Jump someone sets her off and she attacks maniacally with anything to hand.

4) "Possession"

"Jabru" are the result of parasitization of a rare invertebrate on her planet. Like other parasites¹, these parasites control their victim's central nervous systems. In this case, the parasite will cause the victim to be friendly, even (depending on the PG-to-X-ratedness of the game) wantonly sexual, in order to infect others with the parasite, which is accomplished by a long, thin, bony structure used to inject a fetal parasite into the victim.

The crew may notice the young woman's personality changing from the time they take her aboard, from a frightened young girl to a wanton seductress. As other crew are infected, the survivors will notice others with eyes that are turning purple; a sign of the impending maturity of the parasite.

5) "Skinwalker"

"Jabru" are a locally conserved genetic strain of psions (think a genetic trait linked to greater survival like sickle-cell anemia: people with only one allele are more resistant to anemia, poor kids who get both genes from their parents get the disease; in this case they are psionic, the purple eye color is just something that tagged along for the ride, genetically). They are empaths whose ability is to appear to a person as someone else they know, often an idealized or desired version of that person. If you have a crush on someone, a Jabru will appear as that version of the person, reciprocating your affection.

When you meet the real one, as they say, 'hijinx ensue'.

The referee can take this to light-hearted mistaken-identity comedy or take it as dark as *Solaris*²: "Your character meets your dead wife, real and in the flesh...she runs up and embraces you."

If the Jabru has control over this and malevolent purpose this can go more towards version 6 below....

6) "American Horror Story: Starship"

"Jabru" are highly capable sociopathic psions with a number of talents: they can make you think they're other people, they can 'hear' others thoughts and they have limited telekinetic powers; they can cause sensors to report the wrong conditions, thus suppress or create electronic warnings and make computer systems behave erratically. Keeping them hooded and tied up limits their power.

After freeing the Jabru, who appears to be the innocent young woman described above, the PCs start having odd ship failures during jump. When confronted, the Jabru can appear to be other PCs leading them to suspect each other in the failures.

The GM should reduce the ship to inconsistent emergency lights, flashing beacons, alert sirens, etc. Air systems fail (or appear to), producing copious clouds of water vapor; reactors report they're going critical, all sorts of phantom errors happen. You push the elevator button for engineering, you land on cargo deck 3. Etc.

This would play out better on a larger ship, perhaps the PCs are passengers or crew on a liner.

A good excuse to run a horror-style adventure.

Warrior Monks

By Louis Wester

Without some serious investigative digging the PCs will not know the world's history. They may have only rumors to guide them in this scenario. The word Jabru refers to any person deemed to be a witch or sorcerer. Long ago, a Zhodani heavy cruiser suffered a crippling mis-Jump and arrived in this backwater system. Due to catastrophic system losses

1) <http://io9.gizmodo.com/12-real-parasites-that-control-the-lives-of-their-hosts-461313366>

2) the definitive 1972 version, which remains, to me at least, one of the most haunting movies I've ever seen

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the remaining crew decided to scuttle the ship into the local star take their chances on the conveniently located habitable planet.

These survivors established an isolated community deep in the unsettled lands of this world. In time they spread from deserts to mountains to tundra; always away from local settlements but near enough to trade with a difficult journey in between. They fell back to the local tech. level (TL5 at the time) and established themselves as a monastic order who valued self-sufficiency and privacy. The locals were always suspicious of outsiders and of these 'monks' who always seemed to know a better way of making or doing things. Knowing that something *is* possible provides a big advantage when one is trying to figure out how to do it.

When the locals encroached upon the lands of the 'monks', the monks left everything behind and moved deeper into the wilderness. Eventually, there were no more open plains to cross. No more uninhabited forests or mountain valleys. The local civilization had grown and had now become accustomed to the 'monks' simply fleeing and leaving behind a ready-built community with aqueducts and bath houses and running water. When there were no more places to flee to the 'monks' defended themselves for the first time in recorded history. Things did not go well. The 'monks' had stealth and tactics on their side as well as the strength of conviction that comes from defending your homes against invasion. The 'monks' also had superior modern firearms and some modern unpowered armor. And a host of logistical items to allow them to stage a guerilla war for the next several generations. No engagement with Zho forces are complete without the elite psionics-using commandos. This really spurred the rumors of shadow-walking assassins getting past any sentry and into any fort.

But no matter how advanced the force the Zho survivors could field they were facing a war of attrition and knew their days were numbered. The

'monks' disbanded and fled as war refugees and blended in with the local population as best as they could. The locals still tell tales of the mysterious warrior-priests who could fight so well or could cure the grievous wounds for friends or foes alike. After contact with the Imperium, local historians began to see similarities in 4th Frontier war reports and their own historical accounts of the strange 'monks'. Armed with this theory, the military rulers started to conduct a 'witch-hunt' to root out every last 'stinking mind-raping Zho' on their planet.

Now strangers are given random DNA tests to ID potential Zho as well as the good old fashioned teeth counting method. When a Jabru (monk) was found, they were shipped offworld and forgotten.

Possible Directions For This Scenario

1. The Jabru is short, fair skinned, dirty, thirsty and exhausted. He will answer all questions but insist that he is no "Dirty Joe-Zho scum traitor. Nor does he have too many teeth to be base line Humaniti. His name is Jaceen Marduurn and he fell victim to this fear-mongering by a business rival who wished to see him stripped of his citizenship and deported so that he could take possession of his business and lands.
2. The Jabru is tall, thin, and dark skinned. If checked, he does have too many teeth. He acknowledges using 'Jaceen Marduurn', but is really named Chashian Mardrmiepr and he wishes to be repatriated to the Zhodani Consulate at the soonest opportunity. He is civil and diplomatic, if just a bit arrogant.
3. As #2 above, but Mardrmiepr will use his commando skills to commandeer the PCs' ship in Jump.
4. As #2 above, but Mardrmiepr wishes to stay on what he considers his Home World. A Home World with an independent government and established Zho colonies.
5. As #2 above, but Jaceen Marduurn is really his name, and he is not actually Zho. He is under the impression that Zho space is friendlier than Im-

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perial controlled space and is willing to do just about anything to get to Zho space.

6. As #1 above, but he is of mixed heritage and mildly psionic. The accidental manifestation of his powers led to a local panic; the Old Enemy

had re-surfaced and must be removed. Luckily the PCs were in port to take away this 'dangerous war criminal'. Marduurm never hurt anyone, nor does he harbor any ill-will towards his fellow citizens. He just wishes to return to the simple life of an algae farmer. 🌱

Raconteurs' Rest

A Problem Like Myra

by John Clifford

Part 2

5710 CE/1192 Imperial

Orbiting Rushu

(Spin. Mar. 0215 E766784-4 Ag Ni Ri Vw)

Oberleutnant (SubLieutenant) Dolf Feldmann looked around at his little command. Everything seemed in order. The cargo was properly secured. The two squads of marines looked menacing in their combat armor and weapons. The naval ratings looked competent and squared away. Even the smirking cadet seated next to him looked calm and ready for anything. He gave Myra a nod and she keyed her comm. "We're good to go; punch it, Verner!"

Dolf was used to her flippant ways and merely raised an eyebrow at her. Unable to shrug her shoulders, due to the safety harness she wore, the blond haired brown eyed 'young lady' gave him a head tilt in silent reply. Fortunately, her informality never seemed to rub off on the enlisted personnel. The warrant officer piloting the ship's boat replied. "Aye, aye, miss Brun. *Vakandi* three to flight, requesting release."

Dolf didn't pay much attention to the rest of the undocking procedure. His thoughts drifted off to the up coming mission. He had a lot to take care of. And he worried.

Myra watched as Feldmann's eyes got the glassy look that showed he was in deep thought. He was

probably worrying about the mission. He was a worrier, that was for sure. But this time he had good reason to worry. His mission had the potential to go sideways fast. On the surface it was simple enough. They were delivering a high priority, high value cargo to the planet Rushu. Sometimes, warships were used to deliver such cargos, in areas of space too dangerous for regular merchant ships. There were a fair number of pirates and corsairs operating in this region of space. But that wasn't the real reason. There were three things that made the planet Rushu special enough to warrant a frigate playing freighter. First, unlike the rest of the mostly-human-settled subsector, the planet Rushu's population was overwhelmingly made up of the species know as Vargr. They looked like, and in fact were, the genetically-engineered descendants of earth canines. Like their ancestors, they were pack animals. As a result, they were constantly fighting for dominance amongst themselves. This tended to make politics and commerce very 'energetic' among their kind. Which led to the second reason this mission was special. Rushu didn't have one government, it had almost a dozen. It was always possible that one of these governments would object to the *Vakandi* delivering its cargo to a rival. It was hoped a show of force would prevent that.

The third reason was a bit more complicated. Rushu was a client state of one of the regions major powers, the Zhodani consulate. The consulate had long been an ally of the Sword World Confederation, for centuries in fact. But they had turned their backs on the Sword Worlders several decades ago.

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Raconteurs' Rest

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They were too strong for the Sword Worlds to confront openly. So, a more subtle approach was in order. Now they were looking for opportunities to undermine the Zhodani's standing with these and other clients. This cargo was the first step. It contained one of the most effective and reliable means of transmitting data in known space. Books. The tech level of this world was fairly low. Radio was still considered high tech. Internal combustion engines were small, weak and unreliable. So it wasn't like they could deliver data chips. The goal with these books was to instantly upgrade the nation of Firtull's entire university system in one shot. The eventual goal was to raise their level of technology. Gradually, organically over a period of about ten years. Their neighbors would not want to be left behind and they too would look for outside help. Help the Sword Worlders would be more than happy to provide. While the Zhodani protected them from invasion, they never did anything to really improve things on Rushu. Hopefully, now they would look to the confederation for that.

The two officers were jolted from their respective reveries as the ship's boat hit some turbulence. They were just coming into the planet's upper atmosphere. Myra was glad she was seated by a window and looked outside. She could have used the heads up display in her space suit to get a visual through the boat's sensors. But there was something almost primal about watching the planet coming up on them through a window. She had always found atmospheric entries to be exciting. The only thing better than watching it through a window would have been being at the flight controls herself. She was hoping to go to flight school after she graduated from the academy. This was her idea of fun!

Dolf hated atmospheric entries. They always made him feel queasy. He did a quick check on the

boat's status, through his heads up display. They appeared to be right on course to the planet's starport, such as it was—little more than an open field and a shack, all surrounded by a chain link fence. The shack served as a combination control tower, passenger terminal and customs office. To say that the port's services were limited was a huge understatement. If he was lucky, he might be able to get a sandwich, maybe. The starport was located right between the two largest and most powerful nations on the planet. The border at this point was a large, deep river that flowed to the ocean. The port was located on the delta at the mouth of the river. The two neighboring nation, one of which was Firtull, only had to cross one of the two bridges connecting the delta to the mainland. For the other nations on the planet there was a dock for ocean-going ships, most of which still ran on steam engines. Just then the boat shuddered violently and a glow from super heated plasma appeared through the windows. Despite himself Dolf looked at the nearest window. He saw the wide grin on Myra's face as he did. It made her look like a child. She wasn't, of course, at twenty years old. But the look of unbridled joy on her face made her seem younger. He wondered for a moment if he had ever been that young. Of course he had been. But, at the ripe old age of twenty-seven, it just seemed so long ago now

Ahh, the simple pleasures in life! thought the cadet. Having grown up with three maniacs for brothers, Myra had learned early to enjoy a good adrenaline rush. She had been a tomboy and was every bit as wild as her brothers. Their parents had tried to get her to be a proper lady, enjoying the finer things in life and looking forward to marriage, motherhood, all the things a traditional Sword Worlder woman was supposed to aspire to. But Myra had too much fun being one of the boys. There was more to it than that, though. Although she reveled in her wild child image, at heart she was even more of a worrier than Feldmann. She just worried about less immediate

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Raconteurs' Rest

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things. When she hadn't been causing havoc with her brothers, she had actually been a very studious child. She had loved to read and learn. What she had learned about history, stellar politics and current affairs had terrified her. The Sword World Confederation was only a shadow of what it had once been. It was on the verge of being destroyed by the neighboring Imperial Regency. And if that happened, everything she knew and loved would fade to nothing more than a footnote in a history text. So, she had decided to do her part to preserve her people and choose to lead her life in the man's world. The fact that she enjoyed it more was just a bonus.

She would never admit it, but there was one thing she regretted about turning her back on the traditional woman's life. She loved to dance. She had always enjoyed ballroom dancing. It was the only time she liked wearing dresses. There was something about the way the fabric felt on her skin as she glided around a dance floor. Of course she had only confessed this to one person, her boyfriend Eric. She had made him promise, under pain of death, not to tell anyone. He had laughed and promised. He was the only person that really understood her, the only one that had ever really bothered to listen to her. As she thought of him she remembered the locket with the picture of him around her neck. Her one concession to her feminine side.

The small craft's ride settled down as it made it's way lower in the atmosphere. The boat's fins and wings gave it good handling characteristics, once the atmosphere was thick enough for them to have an effect. They could have just floated down on the boat's anti gravity, but that would have taken to long. Once they got low enough they circled the port and Myra switched to her HUD to get a more detailed view. The Delta was a good kilometer at it's base and roughly one and a half kilometers on each side. The starport was located right in the center of

the island. The bridges on either side both appeared to be about two hundred meters away. The ocean facing dock had three steam ships tied up. But there wasn't any activity there or at the few buildings next to the dock. At the starport however there was plenty going on.

On the eastern edge of the landing field there were nine primitive looking trucks and a smaller vehicle, staff car maybe? Lined up in front of the vehicles were about thirty or forty beings. It seemed they had a reception committee. After a smooth landing lieutenant Feldmann led the way out of the boat and into a scene from a comic opera. The Vargr official that met them was obviously happy to see them. The wagging tail was a dead giveaway. Just as obviously his outfit was designed to overawe and impress. Unfortunately, Vargr tend to have rather odd views on color. The green and orange uniform was glaring. The silver shoulder boards and braiding made a rather stunning...statement? Myra was very proud of herself, she didn't so much as crack a smile. She did almost lose it when she imagined her mother seeing his outfit , and passing out from sensory overload. She was also very proud of Feldmann; he greeted minister of trade Cohvegg without missing a beat. Even though he later told Myra the minister looked just like a pet Rottweiler he had as a child.

The Firtull army troops standing at attention behind the minister were, thankfully, less shocking to the eyes. But still, the orange and green uniforms took a bit of getting used to. The dark blue space suits and dull khaki combat armor of the Sword Worlders was quite the contrast. What followed was almost as amusing as the visual spectacle. Lieutenant Feldmann trying to speak the primary Vargr language of Gvegh and minister Cohvegg trying to speak the Sword Worlders' language of Sagamaal. To be fair, both languages are tongue twisters if you didn't grow up speaking them. After a few butchered sentences both agreed to speak the Imperial language of Anglic. Both beings could at least speak

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Raconteurs' Rest

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it at the same heavily accented, but understandable level. Once the language issue was dealt with, a few mercifully short prepared statements were made. Then orders were given. The crates of books were offloaded from the ship's boat, then loaded onto six of the trucks. The native troops climbed into two of the remaining trucks. The minister and lieutenant Feldmann went into the staff car and one squad of five marines went in the final vehicle. The convoy then headed to the eastern bridge and a nearby Firtull city. Myra was left in charge of the remaining squad of marines, her five spacers, the ship's boat and its two crewmen.

All they had to do now was wait and hope nothing went wrong. Which, of course, meant something was bound to go wrong. Being a strong believer in Murphy's law, Myra decided not to wait for the inevitable. She looked at the men around her first, noticing the smirks most of these had. To be honest, she was smirking too. It had been a funny scene after all. But after a few deep breaths to calm herself, Myra looked around again, this time examining the starport and its surroundings. Sure enough, something was wrong, out of place. But what? There was a guard at the door to the shack. And another at the gate. The road leading from the gate went down to a crossroad. Three roads split from there. One went south to the docks, another west and the last went east to Firtull. No one was on any of the roads at the moment. It was a quiet, pleasant, sunny day. And that was it, of course; it was too quiet. There was a small stand of woods to the west, a marsh to the north and rivers on both sides. But there was no noise. No insects, no birds, no animal noises at all. It was as if all the wildlife in the area was too afraid to make any sounds. Then there were the three steam ships at the dock. In the middle of the work day and not a soul was in sight on any of the ships, the docks, or the buildings by them. *Oh crap! We're going to be attacked*, she thought to herself.

The smirk fled from Myra's face and was replaced by a hard, dangerous look. Although she was unaware of it, at the same moment, her eyes started to shine. As the adrenaline started to flow through her blood, something awoke in the girl. Something ancient and terrible bared its teeth and snarled inside her.

She pressed a button on her comm and spoke in a firm calm voice. "All personnel, prepare for action. Sergeant Myerson, *bootsmann* Salidatter, on me."

As she switched to another channel on her comm the men around her started to move. They were well trained and the cadet sounded serious. The marines closed the visors on their armor and began checking their weapons. The naval ratings were not carrying their weapons; they were in the ship's boat's weapon rack. So they donned the helmets of their vac suits and started to board the boat.

"Postal two to postal one, come in postal one." Her call was met with silence as the two NCOs stood next to her. "Postal two to one. Come in postal one."

She waited for a moment, listening to the silence. Then looked up to the waiting men. "I'm being jammed. There isn't even static on the comm. And we haven't seen any startport personnel aside from the two guards the whole time we've been here."

There couldn't be many people working here. But someone should have at least stuck their head out of the shack with all the activity.

"Sergeant, if you were going to attack the port, how would you do it?" As Myra had spoken, any trace of levity had been replaced by the more usual, stoic expressions of the two NCOs.

The marine sergeant nodded his head almost imperceptibly, he paused for a second, then used his comm to display a local map. He pointed to things on the map as he spoke. "An attack would have to come from the south. The marshes north of us don't offer enough cover and the soft ground would slow an assault force. The woods to the west are too small to hide more than a squad or two. But, it would be a good place to put a heavy weapons team or some

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Raconteurs' Rest

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snipers. Coming from the bridges offers way too many problems. If I were doing this, I'd come in on one of the ships, then stage from some of those warehouses. Open up with fire from the woods and mortars, if I had them, then send my force in fast and hard. Try to overwhelm us."

It made sense, the terrain dictated the means of attack. She nodded her head and said "Any thoughts on defending this position?"

The marine shrugged his shoulders. "We don't have many options. If we can't just fly and pick up the *leutnant*? The best we can do is form a line and try and hold it. We don't even have entrenching tools."

The smirk returned to Myra's face. "Well, if it was easy, they wouldn't pay us our lordly salaries, sergeant. Besides, if they have jammers strong enough to block our comm they probably have anti air missiles. So flying might not be the best idea until we know for sure." She looked around again.

The other four marines were standing in a semi circle, facing outward. The naval crewmen were standing lined up by the door to the ship's boat. All the ratings were armed with what were euphemistically called 'Advanced combat rifles.' Sword Worlders tended to be traditionalist. Especially when weapons were concerned, they didn't trust change. And this was a perfect example. They had been using the same two versions of that rifle for centuries. Even after they had newer technology to replace it. The 7mm slug thrower had been the standard for the army, navy and the marines. It had only been in the last twenty years that they had finally started to replace it with the more advanced gauss rifles. The older ACRs used a small electrical charge to set off the chemical propellant, firing the copper and lead bullets. Myra's side arm used the same technology. They were pretty much the upper limit of what could be done with a chemically powered gun. The Gauss rifles used an electromagnet to

accelerate a steel needle. They had a much higher velocity, almost no recoil and they hit harder. But they were new and so, not trusted. Never mind the fact that almost everybody else that had the tech to make them preferred them. New was bad.

Well, it used to be anyway. After the last humiliation at the hands of the Imperium, the Confederation had re-evaluated all the technology it used. From top to bottom, everything had been looked at. From starships to small arms and everything in between. Training, tactics and strategy had all been examined as well. Nothing was sacred. And over the last sixty or so years, things had slowly changed as new technology had been made available. The marines had been the first service to completely switch over, then the army. 'Her' marines were equipped with the latest combat armor, lighter and tougher than the old style, no complaints there. Four of them had the new rifles. They had gotten used to them, but that wasn't the same as trusting them. The fifth marine, the support gunner, was also equipped with a new weapon. But no one had any reservations with this. It was a PGMP, plasma gun man portable. Basically it was a small energy cannon. It made a loud BANG and flash when it fired. And an even bigger BOOM when it hit. The Sword Worlders all loved it! Even though it was shorter ranged than the rocket launcher it replaced and it tended to set fire to ... well, everything. Including the gunners hair and clothes, if he wasn't wearing heavy, fully enclosed armor. It could also take out even the toughest enemy. The navy, on the other hand, was still dragging its feet. At least where personal weapons were concerned. Ships, space suits, basically everything else had slowly been replaced. And yet, despite the changes in technology and tactics, the basic character of their society and people had remained the same. Much to the disappointment of their neighbors, they were still the same stubborn, arrogant, hyper aggressive myrmidons they had always been.

Of course, none of that occurred to the any of the Sword Worlders now. What did occur to Myra was

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Raconteurs' Rest

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how best to use what she had available. But first, she needed more information. She switched channels on her comm. "Verner, please turn the boat's sensors on the shack and the woods behind it. We need to know how many people are there."

The boat's sensors included thermal sensors which would enable them to see through the thin sheet metal walls of the shack. Not to mention letting them see who or what was in the woods.

"Aye, aye, Miss Brun." It didn't take him long to get back to her. "Miss Brun, there's only one person in the shack. They appear to be watching the door.

There are two groups of two people lying down in the woods. I'll patch the images down to you three."

Myra looked at Myerson and smiled. "Spot on, sergeant. Speaking of, Verner, can you give us a view of the buildings by the docks next? I think we have some more company that way."

As the image shifted to the south, the small group talked briefly. Then, the green-as-grass cadet began to issue orders. The veteran marines and spacers never questioned her, never doubted her confident manner. They simply followed the orders of a natural leader: the pretty girl with the gleam in her eyes and the voice of a Valkyrie preparing for battle.



Doing It My Way

Nature Red In Tooth and Claw— Move Over!

By Rob Garitta

Author's Note: Thanks to That's Gameable community for inspiration.

In many SF games the local animal life is a distinct threat to adventurers. Whether it's a water moccasin in your moccasin or a grizzly leaving you grisly you're well advised to pack some firepower on those long trips referees seem to love to railroad you into. After all, some of those animals living in the *Traveller* encounter table weigh as much as a T-rex and lack its charm.

I'm not talking about them today. I'm talking about another kind of enemy that bullets are useless against: plants. Even on Earth a plant can mess you up. Plants have evolved defense mechanisms over millions of years. If they hadn't, the animals would have eaten them all by now.

Thorns

Thorns on a plant are a no-brainer. If the plant has resources animals require or just like it will have some sort of objectionable cover: thorns, nettles, brambles, etc. Having a plant that can shoot its thorns is regarded as cheating by some players.

However, some Earth plants, like cucumbers, use gas to fire their seeds at new spawning fields. Why not a rose analogue that shoots thorns to annoy pesky animals? Some seed distributors could be more energetic than Earth cukes. Imagine walking through some innocent plants only to have them erupt and pepper you with seeds or thorns. The garden variety rose produces exceptionally sharp and painful thorns, as I have learned over the years.

Instead of a tomb or plunder site being guarded by robots (needing maintenance and power), a savvy culture might seed such plants around the entry.

Toxins

The part you were waiting for. Amiright? Plants emit any number of deadly substances: allergens, poisons and (much) worse. The results could range from a stuffed nose to horrendous rashes to anaphylactic shock or burns. This may vary by species so it is possible some hard-pressed locals might pay a group of (relatively) immune offworlders to clear a deadly species from vital areas. Just bring plenty of skin lotion. Okay, itchy skin is kind of weak when it comes to driving a story forward but it's perfect to teach PCs some humility (or at least why you should get some Survival skill).

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Doing It My Way

Many decorative plants are also poisonous or have poisonous oils or sap. Some are quite pretty (rhododendrons, oleander, wisteria) so be careful crawling through that garden.

Adventurers should be wary what they use for their campfires. Oleander, for one, is so toxic that even the smoke from burning it will cause poisoning. Other alien plants may cause any number of hallucinations or worse. See M. Night Shyamalan's *The Happening* for more on this.

Movement

Plants move. They usually do it slowly. Bamboo, though, can grow nearly a meter a day. Bamboo analogues could result in a path that was easily traversed a day ago to becoming nearly impassable or hide the entrance to the latest loot site. Or imagine the looks on your players' faces when they emerge from their latest foraging underground to find their ATV lofted two meters in the air by what looked like grass a few days ago.

Some plants move faster and can actually catch animals or have trap mechanisms. So far as modern science knows there are no plants capable of trapping a human (sadly, the Man Eating Tree of Madagascar is only a legend). That does not have to hold true on other planets. Even so, a thorn-lined mouth closing on a foot will convince characters not to wear open-toed shoes. Having a group of characters wake up with their sleeping bags held down by vines is also fun.

Symbiosis

Some plants are vital for some animal species for food or shelter. Intelligent enough animals (or one manipulated by pheromones released from flora) may rush to attack people damaging the plants. Imagine a killer bee hive primed to attack you because you picked a flower (mind the thorns!) Suddenly people are not so blasé about cutting through a jungle, are they?

Bizarre Plant Life

Let your imagination soar. Within reason (or not). Psionic plants? Sentient plants? Why not? Solar

energy may limit their movements (especially at night or in the cold seasons). They may have to spend some time rooted in order to 'eat' and get water (a hibiscus bending over for a drink at a creek is a great way to tell people they're on an alien world.)

A Word to the Players

I may seem to pull for the referees; that's because I was a referee and often felt outnumbered (though my players years later claimed the same). Here are a couple of tips to deal with carnivorous vegetation and other local color.

1. Always, *always*, **always** read up on the worlds you visit. If possible speak to a traveler who visited or is from there. Buy them a drink and you won't be able to shut a referee mouthpiece up.
2. Find means other than combat to achieve your goal (though combat is a good secondary option in many cases). Perhaps in the examples above dangerous plant life can be rendered dormant with pheromones, darkness, or other means. The flora may be inactive and safe at different times of day and seasons. Learn about the locals. Some filter masks and disposable hazmat suits are easy enough to pack and transport.
3. Equip yourselves. Again, talking to locals is the way to go hear. Not necessarily the ones selling you gear though. Travel societies and hiring halls may be able to get you a licensed guide or accredited academic. Not so much Crazy Ivan of Crazy Ivan's Trigger Happy Firearm Palooza, LLC. Scout Surplus™ is where you want to go (yeah I just made these businesses up).
4. Reconnoitre. If you're a Scout or a Free Trader playing Final Frontier there will not be any library data to look at or guides. Look before you leap is good. Look before you land is even better. Even in modern day Earth many nations will kill for orbital reconnaissance.
5. When all else fails shotguns are pretty effective all around. Laser cannons do a fine job combining cutting and burning.
Happy landscaping! 🌱

2300AD: Libreville: Corruption in the Core Worlds

reviewed by Megan Robertson

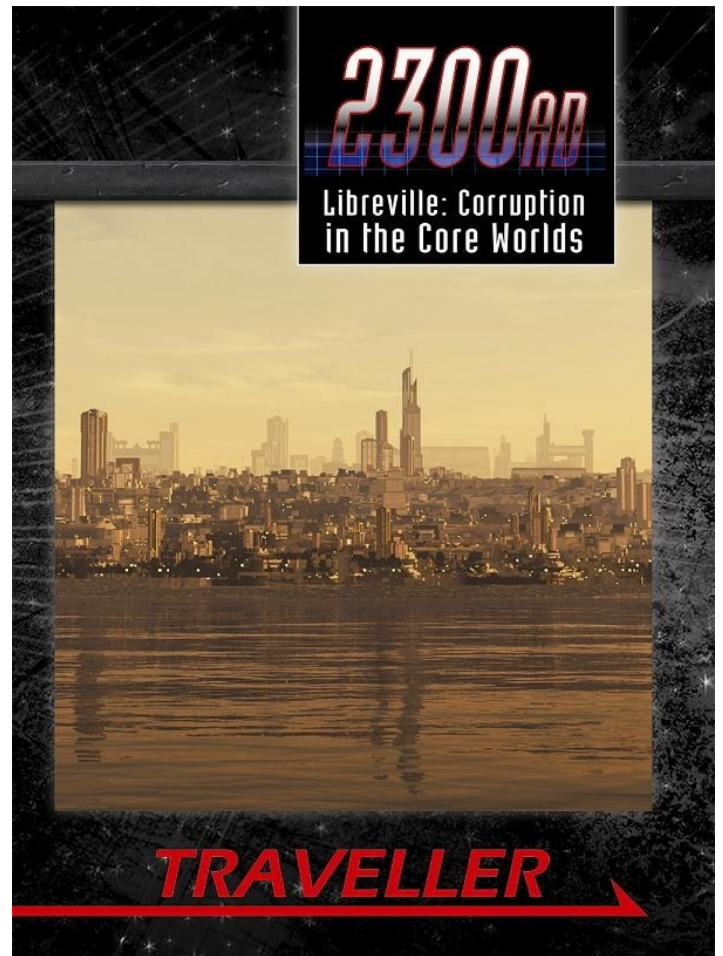
2300AD: Libreville: Corruption in the Core Worlds. Wesley Street. Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com> 70pp., PDF US\$11.99/UK£9.03

This review originally appeared on rpg-resource.org.uk in March 2016.

Libreville is an Earth city that will be familiar to anyone with thoughts of leaving the planet—it's the base of the Beanstalk and has several spaceports nearby, as well as being a major shipping centre and port for water-based transportation. Just about every corporation and foundation has offices there as well, but whilst this massive city has areas of great wealth there are also some appalling slums. This book is both a sourcebook for Libreville and its surroundings and a full-blown adventure. There are also sample vehicles, spaceships, robots, NPCs, and random encounters relevant to Libreville which you can use whenever your plot takes the party there.

The first chapter, History, contains just that, the story of how Libreville came to the prominence it has today. Africa survived the wars of the 21st century relatively unscathed, but without the steady stream of aid from the West many nations struggled until South Africa—now under the name Azania—and Mozambique began to flourish and France started taking an interest and brought many former colonies back into its sphere of influence. This included Gabon, in which Libreville is to be found, which is now a full department of Metropolitan France, represented in the French Chamber of Deputies and with all citizens being considered as French.

This is followed by a chapter on Geography, including maps, weather patterns and notes on wildlife (including game stats, should your party wish to mix it with a hippo or an elephant). There are also some details of police equipment and vehicles—now, are the Gendarmes Gabonaise more or less scary than a hippo? Maybe your party will find out!



We then move on to Life in the City. French public relations firms describe Libreville as a Xanadu on the Atlantic, but it's not quite as idyllic as this might suggest. It is a place of extremes, with the abject poverty of the 'Mudville' slums contrasting with enclaves run as gated compounds by corporations for their employees and the central business district where their offices and the residences of the truly wealthy are to be found. There's a map and description, along with some sample spaceplanes and aircraft to be found in the ports outside the city. There's even a sample bus from the city streets, a taxi and a dustcart—familiar sights to any resident or visitor. There's material about surveillance and advertising, common trends and fashions, all manner of little details that helps bring the place to life. Ideas for encounters and even more detail of what's to be found downtown and in corporate enclaves add to this information, and Mudville life is covered as well.

An added dimension comes from the final two 'sourcebook' chapters: Politics and Power, and Per-

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Critics' Corner

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sonalities. Here we learn how Libreville is governed, administered and policed, as well as about the major corporate players. There are also foundations and other non-commercial enterprises and of course criminal gangs, organised crime and other less desirable groups. The Personalities chapter presents a host of notable individuals which the party will hear about on the news, even if they never get to meet them... but plenty of ideas are provided to embroil the party in their affairs.

Finally comes the adventure, Mud Sticks. Violence in Mudville is on the rise and the party is hired to investigate. The whole thing hangs together well although it's admittedly rather linear, chasing

from clue to clue. You might want to mix things up a bit if you feel it railroads the characters excessively. There's a lot here, loads of people to talk to and the odd opportunity to brawl, although this is the sort of urban adventure where brawling tends to be frowned upon, although infiltration skills will come into play.

Everything is very atmospheric, you can almost feel the African sun and smell the jungle (and urban) smells. Groups which like urban intrigues will find this an interesting place in which to become involved, and anyone leaving (or arriving) on Earth is likely to at least pass through. Make this sprawling city a vivid feature of your game, you now have the tools to make it so. ☼

The Shipyard

Fram, Burke, and Foible-class Destroyers and Variants

designed by Ken Pick

*The stripped hulls, slinking through the gloom,
At gaze and gone again —
The Brides of Death that wait the groom —
The Choosers of the Slain!
— Rudyard Kipling, "The Destroyers", 1898*

Destroyers originated at TL5 as "Torpedo-boat Destroyers", intended to screen other ships from attack by torpedo-boats. Mounting torpedoes themselves for offensive punch, they soon became large torpedo-boats themselves, larger and more seaworthy, until by TL6 the original torpedo-boat had become extinct.

Torpedo-boats became submarines, submerging to sneak up on their targets; by TL6, destroyers in turn had become anti-submarine and anti-aircraft escorts, their own torpedo attack capability relegated to a secondary role. Through TL7 and TL8, destroyers grew in size and capability with new generations of missile weaponry, until by TL8 "destroyer"

had come to mean a relatively-small general-purpose warship, differing from a cruiser only in size. It retains this definition in *Traveller* navies.

This is a family of 4-5kt destroyers intended for small TL11-13 navies, but could also be used as general-purpose destroyers for any size of fleet. All are general-purpose ships, as small navies must cover a variety of roles with a limited number of ships.

Three variants of each cruiser are provided:

1. TL11, Jump-2, 6-G (for "low-tech *Traveller*")
2. TL12, Jump-3, 6-G (typical of the pre-3I campaigns profiled in *Other Roads*)
3. TL13+, Jump-4, 6-G (typical Third Imperium performance requirements)

To achieve this performance using stock Book 2 engines, these ships are assumed to have multiple engines.

In addition, there is a special "TL11bis"; these are TL11 ships whose easily-replaceable TL11 systems have been upgraded to TL12. This usually takes the form of upgrading computers from Model/5 to Model/6 and installing nuclear dampers. Similarly, "TL12bis" upgrades such ship systems to TL13.

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Fram-class Destroyer (DD)

The *Fram*-class destroyer began as an attempt to approximate a typical Foible Federation destroyer using the CT/Beyond Book 2 design system enhancements. (The miniature used for DDs in that campaign—Valiant Miniatures' *Stardate:3000* "Escort Cruiser"—had two obvious heavy "gun" mounts which translated into laser bays.)

Fram-11 DD (TL11). 4000 tons. Armor-4. Jump-2, 6-G. 920 tons fuel. Twin bridges and Model/5s. 60 staterooms, 60 low berths. Two 10-ton laser bays, one 100-ton missile bay, 10 triple turrets (BSB). 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 1270 tons cargo. Streamlined. 60 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 1767.6; 35 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay.

Using a custom 4000-ton hull, the *Fram-11* is a general-purpose beam destroyer. It mounts jump drive-Y, twin maneuver drive-Z, and twin power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-2 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 920 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-2. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/5. There are 60 staterooms and 60 low berths. The ship has two 10-ton bays, one 100-ton bay, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. Two 10-ton laser bays, one 100-ton missile bay, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 1270 tons; the ship is streamlined. The hull is armored to Armor-4.

The *Fram-11* requires a crew of about 60, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 120. The ship costs MCr 1767.6 at TL11, and takes 35 months to build.

The TL12 version increases its jump capability to Jump-3 and adds a nuclear damper without sacrificing much in the way of price or interior room:

Fram-12 DD (TL12). 4000 tons. Armor-4. Jump-3, 6-G. 1320 tons fuel. Twin bridges and Model/6s. 60 staterooms, 60 low berths. Two 10-ton laser bays, one 100-ton missile bay, 10 triple turrets (BSB). Nuclear damper. 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 1105 tons cargo. Streamlined. 65 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 1740.3; 35 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay, Nuclear Damper.

Using a custom 4000-ton hull, the *Fram-12* is a general-purpose beam destroyer. It mounts jump drive-Z, dual maneuver drive-Z, and dual power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-3 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1320 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-3. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/6. There are 60 staterooms and 60 low berths. The ship has two 10-ton bays, one 100-ton bay, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. Two 10-ton laser bays, one 100-ton missile bay, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 1105 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-4, and a TL12 nuclear damper is fitted.

The *Fram-12* requires a crew of about 65, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 120. The ship costs MCr 1740.3 at TL 12, and takes 35 months to build.

The TL13 version further increases performance to Jump-4 and armor from 4 to 6 at a heavy cost in price and interior room, providing an approximation of a Third Imperium DD:

Fram-13 DD (TL13+). 4000 tons. Armor-6. Jump-4, 6-G. 1720 tons fuel. Dual bridges and Model/7s. 60 staterooms, 60 low berths. Two 10-ton laser bays, one 100-ton missile bay, 10 triple turrets (BSB). Nu-

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The Shipyard

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clear damper. 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 455 tons cargo. Streamlined. 70 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 2148.4; 35 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay, Nuclear Damper.

Using a custom 4000-ton hull, the *Fram-13* is a general-purpose beam destroyer. It mounts dual jump drive-Y, dual maneuver drive-Z, and dual power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-4 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1720 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-4. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/7. There are 60 staterooms and 60 low berths. The ship has two 10-ton bays, one 100-ton bay, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. Two 10-ton laser bays, a 100-ton missile bay, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 455 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-6, and a TL13 nuclear damper is fitted.

The *Fram-13* requires a crew of about 70, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 120. The ship costs MCr 2148.4 at TL13, and takes 35 months to build.

Burke-class Missile Destroyer (DDG)

The *Burke*-class missile destroyers differ from the *Fram*-class primarily in armament: Two missile bays and one laser bay. Otherwise, they are identical.

***Burke-11* DDG (TL11).** 4000 tons. Armor-4. Jump-2, 6-G. 920 tons fuel. Twin bridges and Model/5s. 60 staterooms, 60 low berths. One 10-ton laser bay, two 100-ton missile bays, 10 triple turrets (BSB). 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 1180 tons cargo. Streamlined. 60 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 1758.6; 35 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay.

Using a custom 4000-ton hull, the *Burke-11* is a general-purpose destroyer with missile-heavy armament. It mounts jump drive-Y, twin maneuver drive-Z, and twin power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-2 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 920 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-2. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/5. There are 60 staterooms and 60 low berths. The ship has one 10-ton bay, two 100-ton bays, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. One 10-ton laser bay, two 100-ton missile bays, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 1180 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-4.

The *Burke-11* requires a crew of about 60, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 120. The ship costs MCr 1758.6 at TL11, and takes 35 months to build.

***Burke-12* DDG (TL12).** 4000 tons. Armor-4. Jump-3, 6-G. 1320 tons fuel. Twin bridges and Model/6s. 60 staterooms, 60 low berths. One 10-ton laser bay, two 100-ton missile bays, 10 triple turrets (BSB). Nuclear damper. 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 915 tons cargo. Streamlined. 65 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 1731.3; 35 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay, Nuclear Damper.

Using a custom 4000-ton hull, the *Burke-12* is a general-purpose destroyer with missile-heavy armament. It mounts jump drive-Z, dual maneuver drive-Z, and dual power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-3 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1320 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-3. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/6. There are 60 staterooms and 60 low berths. The ship has one 10-ton bay, two 100-ton bays, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control.

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One 10-ton laser bay, two 100-ton missile bays, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 915 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-4, and a TL12 nuclear damper is fitted.

The *Burke-12* requires a crew of about 65, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 120. The ship costs MCr 1731.3 at TL 12, and takes 35 months to build.

Burke-13 DDG (TL13+). 4000 tons. Armor-6. Jump-4, 6-G. 1720 tons fuel. Dual bridges and Model/7s. 60 staterooms, 60 low berths. One 10-ton laser bay, two 100-ton missile bays, 10 triple turrets (BSB). Nuclear damper. 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 365 tons cargo. Streamlined. 70 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 2139.4; 35 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay, Nuclear Damper.

Using a custom 4000-ton hull, the *Burke-13* is a general-purpose destroyer with missile-heavy armament. It mounts dual jump drive-Y, dual maneuver drive-Z, and dual power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-4 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1720 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-4. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/7. There are 60 staterooms and 60 low berths. The ship has one 10-ton bay, two 100-ton bays, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. A 10-ton laser bay, two 100-ton missile bays, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 365 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-6, and a TL13 nuclear damper is fitted.

The *Burke-13* requires a crew of about 70, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 120. The ship costs MCr 2139.4 at TL 13, and takes 35 months to build.

Foible-class Destroyer (DD)

The *Foible*-class destroyer is an enlarged *Fram* with an additional missile bay, giving a balanced missile/beam main battery.

Foible-11 DD (TL11). 5000 tons. Armor-4. Jump-2, 6-G. 1180 tons fuel. Twin bridges and Model/5s. 70 staterooms, 70 low berths. Two 10-ton laser bays, two 100-ton missile bays, 10 triple turrets (BSB). 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 1550 tons cargo. Streamlined. 65 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 2358; 36 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay.

Using a custom 5000-ton hull, the *Foible-11* is a general-purpose destroyer. It mounts jump drive-Z, triple maneuver drive-Z, and triple power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-2 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 1180 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-2. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/5. There are 70 staterooms and 70 low berths. The ship has two 10-ton bays, two 100-ton bays, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. Two 10-ton laser bays, two 100-ton missile bays, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 1550 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-4.

The *Foible-11* requires a crew of about 65, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 140. The ship costs MCr 2358 at TL11, and takes 36 months to build.

Foible-13 DD (TL13+). 5000 tons. Armor-6. Jump-4, 6-G. 2180 tons fuel. Dual bridges and Model/7s.

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70 staterooms, 70 low berths. Two 10-ton laser bays, two 100-ton missile bays, 10 triple turrets (BSB). Nuclear damper. 200-ton capacity shuttle bay, 457 tons cargo. Streamlined. 75 crew, 40 Marines.

MCr 2467; 36 months. Special Rules: Multiple Engines, Hull Armor, Laser Bay, Missile Bay, Nuclear Damper.

Using a custom 5000-ton hull, the *Foible-13* is a general-purpose destroyer. It mounts dual jump drive-Z, triple maneuver drive-Z, and triple power plant-Z, giving a performance of Jump-4 and 6-G acceleration. Fuel tankage for 2180 tons supports the power plant and allows one jump-4. The ship has dual bridges (main and backup), each with a Computer Model/7. There are 70 staterooms and 70 low berths. The ship has two 10-ton bays, two 100-ton bays, and 10 hardpoints with fire-control. Two 10-ton laser bays, two 100-ton missile bays, and 10 triple turrets are installed, each with two beam lasers and a sandcaster; 20 tons of sandcaster magazines holds 21 rounds per sandcaster. A dedicated hangar bay holds up to 200 tons of ship's vehicles. Cargo capacity is 457 tons. The hull is streamlined and armored to Armor-6, and a TL13 nuclear damper is fitted.

The *Foible-13* requires a crew of about 75, and can carry a 40-man platoon of ship's troops/marines for landing/raiding operations (single occupancy for officers, double occupancy for enlisted men); total life-support capacity is 140. The ship costs MCr 2467 at TL13, and takes 36 months to build.

Variant: Destroyer/Minelayer (DM)

Mines are basically modified "delayed-action" missiles which can be "laid" from any missile bay or turret. In a Destroyer/Minelayer, the "cargo" capacity is used for mine magazines, feeding into the missile bay(s) which are used to "launch" the mines into their minefield positions. At one ton per heavy mine, a DM can lay an extensive field.

Usually DMs are converted from older, second-line destroyers (such as the TL11 versions of the

above in a TL12+ navy), as their lower Jump performance frees up interior room for mine magazines.

Variant: Destroyer/Transport (DT)

In a Destroyer/Transport, the "cargo" capacity is used to carry Marines and their landing craft, providing a fast, well-armed platform for commando raids. Like DMs, DTs are usually older, second-line destroyers, as their lower Jump performance frees up interior space for additional barracks, heavy equipment, and shuttle bays.

Design Notes

All the above ships are inspired by TL6-9 "Wet Navy" designs.

The basic *Fram*-class DD is named after a US Navy acronym of TL7: Fleet Refit And Modernization. At TL7 during the early Cold War, the US Navy found themselves with a lot of TL6 ships (built round-the-clock in the Second World War), which were all becoming obsolete at once. FRAM was a refit/rebuilding to stretch the service life of these older DDs by modernizing them into anti-submarine screening ships. All weapons except two main gun mounts (127mm twins) were stripped from the old DDs and a "pepperbox" anti-submarine missile launcher was mounted in place of the torpedo tubes; electronics and sensors were brought up to state-of-the-art TL7. Though not as effective as new construction would have been, they provided a cheap augmentation to purpose-built ships. The *Traveller* version is scaled from the armament: laser bays for the main gun mounts and missile bay for the missile launcher; ten turrets were added for close-in and anti-fighter defense.

The *Burke*-class DDGs are based on the US Navy TL9 class of the same name, which carried two missile launch arrays (similar to *Traveller* missile bays) and a single automatic gun mount. In like fashion, the *Traveller Burkes* pack a single laser bay and two missile bays.

An enlarged *Fram*, the *Foible*-class most resembles the US Navy's TL8 *Spruance*-class DDs. These were a large hull (more cruiser-sized than destroyer)

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designed for a long service life, with a lot of interior room to accommodate weapons and electronics refits over time, preventing obsolescence. Four large “bays” of hull (two forward, two aft) were reserved for weapons systems (usually two 127mm autocannon mounts and two missile launchers) and their magazines, with plenty of “waste space” for future expansion. Though initially denounced as expensive and under-armed, the concept worked in the long run: the *Spruances* served for decades as the medium-sized “workhorses” of the US Navy well into TL9, with constant refits continually upgrading their capabilities and Tech Level. The *Foible* packs two missile bays and two laser bays, in the same combination as the *Spruance*.

Destroyer/Minelayers are based on the TL6 US Navy’s DMs. These were older destroyers modified by adding mine rails for up to 100 mines along the main deck; the torpedo tubes were removed to compensate for the increased weight. The result was a high-speed tactical minelayer to sow offensive minefields in enemy shipping lanes or ports in a hit-and-run raid or lay fields across the path of enemy fleets.

Destroyer Transports are based on the TL6 US Navy’s APDs (“High Speed Transports”). These were converted from old or small destroyers by replacing the torpedo tubes and some of the gun armament with Marine accommodations and two to four landing craft. Carrying up to a reinforced company of Marines, these fast transports were intended for hit-and-run commando raids on Pacific islands. ❁

Raconteurs’ Rest

Bad Things Happen

by Andrea Vallance

Part 4

97th of 2026 (288-94): A funeral on the beach, Askisfant

Ora was almost pleading with me, “I want you to come, please. It’s not only for my children, it’s for your brother too.”

“Nobody will want me there. They’ve never wanted me to come before, inappropriate I was told.” I was lying.

She sat beside me. “You’re wrong, that was over a year ago. You’re part of us now. The children already put a *sesherin* on the wall for him. They’ve composed a *narin*²³ for him. You have to come, Isabella.”

My eyes were filling with tears. “I just can’t, Ora, I can’t. It’s too much. Your children, my brother, Sish’s love, there are twenty eight *sesherin* on that wall, now, Ora. How many more, Ora?” It was my turn to plead, beg for some understanding.

She took my hands and looked at me, there was an odd type of kindness in her voice. “As many as it takes Isabella, *efepkammosaryn Edtyassos*.”

The Luriani build their temples on the shore; I guess that makes sense for a people who live on a world that’s mostly water. Everything is white, it’s their colour of mourning, representing the crest of a wave, apparently. I didn’t quite get the symbolism, but it seemed to fit. Luriani funerals aren’t really that sad. None of the wailing and breast beating you get in some places. You remember those who’ve gone. I had to talk, tell them about Pedro, I managed a few words before I broke down. My eyes stung with tears as they burnt the four empty coffins and scattered the ashes into the breakers. They sang, but all I could do was cry, so much pain, so much death, that place, just so much hurt. I stayed after the ceremony; I wanted some time alone. The temple was a peaceful place, a good place to sit and think. I saw My Lady Manish kneeling in a corner. I watched her; she lit a candle and seemed far away. I didn’t intrude; she was still a mother with a son at war.

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I stood by the shore, I was so tired. This was never going to end, they'd keep fighting until there was nobody left. I just wanted to go home. I walked out into the water, it was warm. I started to swim. I knew how close I was, but there wasn't a part that wanted to save me this time. I swam for a few minutes and then I felt the first jolt. I stopped and trod water. Thirty five years. I struck out, only a few strokes then that blinding moment of pain. I started to sink, I didn't try to fight, no point. I saw something through the water, a white shape, a young *sesherin*. It came up under me, rolled over and nudged me up gently onto its belly²⁴. It swam slowly, carefully towards the shore, its powerful flippers delicately holding my head above the water, its long tail fluke rhythmically sweeping the water. I guess it wasn't my time to die after all.

Nashu Manish was praying. She didn't really believe, very few *Mmarislusant* did, but, well, it couldn't hurt. She was totally lost in her own thoughts when she heard the tracker scream. She pulled it out and looked. Horror spread across her face. She yelled and screamed for help. A young priest came, she explained. He sprinted into the water, robes flying in all directions. Blandii came running, she told him to find a boat.

Apparently no one has figured out how the *sesherin* call each other; some say ultrasound, some movements in the current, some pheromones, some even think it's psionic. But regardless of how they do it, they do it. More *sesherin* came; they surrounded me, taking me closer to shore. I saw somebody swimming, a young priest. He joined the *sesherin*; he didn't try to interfere, just smiled and stroked the *sesherin*. A boat, My Lady and Blandii, they pulled me from the water.

My Lady Manish came to me later "Is it really that terrible here, Isabella? So terrible that you

would wish to die?" I said nothing. "You have friends here, people who care for you. Whatever is between us, why would you wish so much hurt on them?" She sat beside me on my bed. "Do you know what the Luriani call people who are saved by the *sesherin*? *Ysesheshal*, Sesh's beloved." My mouth formed a tiny smile; I knew enough Luriani to realise what it actually meant. "They say they're marked for a great destiny." She peered into my eyes trying to find something. "Why, Isabella? Why?"

She was right; I would have hurt people I didn't want to hurt. But this place was insane. My Lady had sent me to be tortured and then treated me with so much kindness and compassion. They loved their children so much and then sent an endless stream of them to die in war. I just wanted to go home. I locked my eyes on hers. "You said once I didn't understand. I don't; explain it to me, why am I here?"

She took a long slow breath and considered carefully. "It is complicated, Isabella." She thought a moment. "The Luriani have much in common with their beloved *sesherin*, playful and placid normally. But you threaten them and they become something very dangerous²⁵. A pod of angry *sesherin* is something to be feared. It is not pleasant to see what is left of a desperate or foolish *liadtee*²⁶ that attacks a pod. They will tell you *sesherin* don't harm people. That is incorrect. Every so often a visitor to this world will swim with the peaceful *sesherin*, do something stupid and end up beaten to death. The *sesherin* don't harm us because we have the good sense not to threaten them."

I was insulted. "So you're saying I was raped and tortured because I threatened them!"

"In a way, yes. Not you, but the Imperium and you suffered for it." She hesitated "Four and a half thousand years ago *Edtyassos* happened. And in many ways it kept happening for over another two thousand years. Have you heard of *sishgukhidtar*?" I nodded, I'd learnt about it with the children at school. To be honest, I'd been shocked that they'd expose young children to something so horrific.

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"That is part of *Edtyassos*. It is what the Vilani did to those who defied or opposed them. And horrific as *sishgukhidtar* is to you or I, it holds a very special horror for the Luriani. Not only agonisingly painful, but it forever sundered them from their people. For so social a people, there could be little worse."

She paused to draw breath; I was getting irritated. "Are you going to explain or give me a history lesson?"

She smiled. "Patience, please, just a little Isabella, I am getting there." Another breath, regaining her thoughts. "Some are surprised we expose our children to such things, especially at such a young age. We do it so they remember, so they know what can and has befallen when other control our fate."

I could see what she was saying, but I couldn't see how hurts from so long ago were relevant "But that, all that, *Edtyassos* was thousands of years ago."

"Ah yes, but they, *we*," she emphasised the *we*, making sure Isabella understood that she was part of them, "are a very old people, almost beyond imagining. Over a hundred millennia ago the great raft ships were reaching every corner of this world. The Luriani developed trade, diplomacy, statecraft, even war all before agriculture or metalwork²⁷. The Luriani had a single world-spanning civilisation while my ancestors were hiding in caves from Ancient war-machines. What is a few thousand years to a civilisation that is over a hundred thousand old?" She paused a moment. "You've doubtless heard the phrase *efepkammosaryn Edtyassos*? Do you know what it means?"

My irritation had not subsided. "Siish told me it means a lot of things."

"No, it's *used* for a lot of things, but it only *means* one thing. *We won't let it happen again*. The rest of the universe may have forgotten, but we remember. *Efep-*, weird, isn't it?" I nodded; I still didn't understand that. "The future occurring in the past. Or the future occurring because of the past. Our experience

of control by others was... not encouraging. So we remember; we are an old people and we make a point of it. But that long memory has a price. Some become obsessed by it, blinding them to all else. They call it *Edtyassoswislad*, *Edtyassos* madness. Padter *Kolnel-Lekhtenant*, your tormentor, suffered from it, and for her *Edtyassos* can justify anything." She looked sad. "You recall when you first came here? When you first met Siishubuu, how you lashed out in fear?" I remembered the poor man clutching his hand. "This war, this slaughter is us lashing out. If Sherin *Adtmral* had spent even five minutes to talk, all this could have been avoided. But he saw a threat and he reacted. If we didn't fear conquest so much, Sesh Liryn would have remained small and carefully controlled. In many ways, Isabella, the entire Protectorate suffers from *Edtyassos* madness."

I understood what she was saying, but it didn't help. "All that, all that may be true, but it's no excuse."

Her voice grew heavy. "No, no it is not. You recall, when I first met you, I said it was pointless to apologise for what we did? It is, it was unforgivable, but it was done, done without regard to the consequences. Now all we can do is try to undo what we did. That is why you are here."

I sat, considering what she'd said, "When you sent me there, to that place. Did you know what would happen to me?"

Her eyes became downcast, "That you would be treated so badly, that you would be tortured and raped, no. Of that, I had no idea. That it would be hard, that you might be hurt, yes, I knew that."

"And, how did it come that I was taken out of that place?" The pain was still there, dull and distant now, but still there.

She sighed heavily, "That, Isabella, is the thing I am most guilty of. Sesh Liryn is not taken lightly. There are protocols that are supposed to prevent what happened to you from happening. Supervision, checks, weekly reports. I trusted in them far

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too long. The only reason you were saved is I stopped trusting them. Isabella, apologising may be pointless and I won't insult you by asking for forgiveness, but I am so very sorry for what happened."

I sat trying to take it all in, considering all the things she'd said, all I'd seen. Her with Iikush, the candle for Siish, even how she'd treated me. I sighed "I don't think I can ever forgive My Lady Manish, but I think I can find it in my heart to forgive Nashu Manish." Forgiveness, it's odd, but I think I needed to forgive her, for my sake. I just couldn't hold on to the hate any more. It was destroying me.

Her face grew into a small smile, "Thank you." She paused as if on the edge of a question. "I hope one day I might be able to call you 'my dear' again."

I returned her smile, "One day, Nashu, you will, but not today." I may have been able to find forgiveness, but there was still too much pain for that.

100th of 2027 (291-95): The First Battle of Daramm, Askisfant local hospital(28)

It had been a year since I'd forgiven, the pain that was that place had faded. It wasn't gone; I don't think it would ever be gone, but it was different, like some old wound that occasionally would flare but didn't control my life. Nashu had managed to 'bend' the rules. I had my practice licence and worked two days a week in the local hospital. It was usually mundane stuff, minor injuries, routine sickness. Anything serious went to Antiavash. I worked with the children mostly. They called me Issee *Dokhtor*. Most of Askisfant accepted me; I was one of them now. I knew I had a 'home' tens of light years away, but this was my home too. And these people, they mattered to me.

I was at lunch; Ora had brought me some *Shugane*. She liked to come and talk. We were laughing about my family's latest message. My aunt had remarried; the video of them all dancing was kind of

funny. Odd, you danced a lot here, but it lacked the formality of the Imperium. I looked up, I don't know why, maybe I was thinking of home. I saw a very faint blue flash, then another, more, four I think, though they tell me there were thirteen in total, spread around the world. I'd been in space enough to know what they were. I didn't think much of it; Daramm is a busy world, ships come and go all the time. I turned back and watched with Ora.

We were sitting laughing at my father dance when we heard the sirens blare. We didn't panic; just another drill, we assumed. We stood and started to move towards the shelter in the hospital. I remember feeling the blast as the first salvo hit and seeing Ora fall forward. Another missile hit near by, I didn't hear it, I couldn't hear anything past the ringing in my ears. I saw people running, the next flash and bodies thrown into the air. I looked over at Ora, a dark patch was spreading beneath her. Luriani blood is just so much darker, almost black. I felt a dampness spreading over my own face. I reached for Ora and rolled her over. I didn't cry, there was no time, just closed her eyes and stood. I saw a young girl cowering. My hearing was returning, I heard screaming and explosions. *Dtinal Verasrasti* appeared carrying the limp body of a child. I took the child and told him to bring more. I laid the dead boy on the ground next to Ora. I took the girl and ran for the hospital.

The bombardment lasted maybe five minutes at Askisfant, but the injured kept coming. The hospital was frantic, wounded in the corridors, the dead laid out on the grass outside. I checked another child, so many children here, a dislocated shoulder. I held him and told him to be brave, there was no time to be gentle, I was needed elsewhere. He screamed as I snapped the arm back into place. I wanted to stay with him, but I was needed elsewhere. I left him with a young *Iadtlu*²⁹ medic, she was hardly much older than he was³⁰. I saw Nashu, covered in blood. She was weeping and cradling something. I think I

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already knew what it was, but like I said, needed elsewhere.

Nashu was gone three days. An urgent Council meeting. Eneri couldn't get back the first day. Antiavash had been hit badly, over a thousand dead, but they released him as soon as they could. Kamsi was in shock, just wandering. I'd had to sedate her. I was exhausted; Eneri tried to help as best he could, but in truth he wasn't much better than Kamsi. Nashu found me in the dining room, cramming breakfast. "Isabella, how much sleep have you had?"

"A few hours last night, I think."

She looked so tired and haggard. "You are not the only *dokhtor*, Isabella. Blandii tells me you've hardly been home, working eighteen or twenty hour shifts. We all are grieving for Munush, Isabella, but working yourself to death does her no honour."

I slowed my eating. "The news says they captured the commander, that she'll be executed."

Nashu sighed, "Yes, she was captured; but, no, despite Lord Assemblyman Kaito Minomoru's rather unwise comments, we have no intention of reverting to that kind of barbarism³¹."

Blandii had brought her some breakfast. It was weird to see him in his *Iadtlu* fatigues at table, but he'd been pulling shifts every bit as long as mine, looking for survivors, digging out bodies, doing whatever he could. "So, what will happen to her?"

Nashu seemed to consider for a very long time before answering, "Nothing. She will be treated as any other prisoner of war."

I suddenly felt anger race through me; it caught me quite by surprise. "She blew up the school, Nashu! She killed twenty two innocent children!"

She looked at me, her eyes heavy with sadness. "She, or her ships, killed rather more than that, far more than the one hundred and twenty six in this small town. The death toll is well over twenty thousand. But there is no evidence they deliberately tar-

geted civilians. This is war, Isabella; bad things happen. I am just thankful we protect the archologies so well³²." She could see the anger in me. "If it helps, her life here will not be... pleasant, Isabella; she will be... thoroughly interrogated, and there will be no parole for her, if only for her own safety."

I shuddered ever so slightly. "Sesh Liryn?"

There was no joy in her reply. "Do you know, Isabella, that is the first time you have ever used its name? But, yes, that is very likely."

It didn't help, but my anger did subside. I thought of Munush. "Nashu, I think it is time you started calling me 'my dear' again."

252nd of 2027 (078-96): The Second Battle of Daramm, the Manish Estates(33)

The school had been moved to the estate while a new one was built. Blandii grumbled about turning the ballroom into a classroom, but I think he secretly liked having the children about. Nashu was in Wascir, attending the Council. We heard the distant wail of sirens from Askisfant. Nobody took the sirens lightly now. The children started to cry, the teachers and I shepherded them to the cellar as quickly as we could. Kamsi and the staff joined us, she was clutching Iikush in her arms. Blandii appeared, rifle in hand, *Iadtlu* fatigues over his other arm. It made the children feel better to see him, they knew nobody would get past him. We sat in the cellar, singing songs and telling stories. I looked at my watch; fifteen minutes—this was no drill. Blandii saw and nodded. I went to leave, the children mobbed me, trying to keep me there. I told them it was alright, I was *ysesheshal*, Sesh would look after me. I left.

The house was eerily quiet. My footsteps echoed as I walked the empty halls. I looked out a window. I saw flashes like lightning high above us, definitely no drill. I got my bag from my room and went to the garage. Kamsi's grav-bike. I kicked off and rode. The sun was bright, the birds singing. A pleasant summer afternoon. I saw a huge fireball streak across the

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sky. *One of ours or theirs?* I wondered. I had to laugh, Siish and his crews, they were 'us' now, the Imperium 'them'. They'd made a mistake coming back, the first time had only confirmed what they thought and now they were fighting to defend our homes and we'd die for that. I saw a pod of *sesherin* swimming off the shore; I wondered if they knew, were they waiting to help? I reached the hospital. I could see *Dtinal Verasrasti* organising the *Iadtlu*, young children and the elderly mixed in, ready to search or fight. A squad of Guards, the *serganet* far too young for this. Wagner and Ziishuu *Dokhtors* were preparing supplies and readying for wounded. I joined them and waited for the casualties that never came.

20th of 2028 (192-96): The Manish Estates, Askisfant

Nearly three years, I'd been here so long. I'd even managed to almost forget Sesh Liryn, that occasional ache now rare. My leash was held very loosely, I had 35 kilometres, more than enough to wander and do most things. If I needed it, Nashu could arrange more. Kamsi had recovered, well as much as any mother could. Gamaagin was pregnant, another new life. Here in Askisfant I was accepted, I was one of them. Elsewhere not so much. There were whispers and glances. Well I was still 'the enemy', I suppose, but they still hurt. I had discovered that Nashu loved to matchmake. I had been introduced to more than a few 'suitable young men' and even a few 'suitable young women'; Nashu liked to cover all the options. I smiled at that, Nashu meant well, but there were still some wounds that hadn't healed. It was breakfast time, I'd dressed, Nashu did so insist on correct attire. I entered the dinning room, Blandii had already laid out the plates. "Ah, Isabella, you slept well I hope?"

"Yes, thank you, very well." The nightmares were rare now.

"Good, good. Kamsikinash is planning a little shopping trip for this afternoon, she asked if you'd come."

"I was hoping to check in at the hospital, Nashu; young Shen Rida is in again, a broken leg this time."

"Ah, that boy, adventurous doesn't quite cover it, does it?"

I smiled slightly, "No, not quite."

"But I really think you should go with Kamsikinash; you will be needing a new gown."

"Oh?" Nashu was up to something.

"Yes, my dear, I'm having a small affair tonight; there's somebody you simply must meet." I just rolled my eyes.

162nd of 2028 (353-96): The Manish Estates, Askisfant

I was packing; I'd be going home soon. The war was over, my leash had been switched off, I could go where I pleased now. My family would be waiting for me, just over the border at Puluke. They'd been offered to come here, but they'd not set foot in Protectorate territory. But my heart was breaking. It would mean leaving Augustine. Nashu's 'somebody' had turned out to be wonderful, funny, intelligent, attractive; the last five months had been bliss. I was in love and I didn't want to lose him. I remembered the night two months ago, the first time we were together. For the first time in three years I felt whole again, finally at peace with Sesh Liryn. He was waiting downstairs, I wasn't looking forward to saying goodbye. I went down, he was in the drawing room, Nashu was there, too, smiling. He stood as I entered, he always did, but he seemed nervous this time. Nashu nudged him. What was going on?

"Isabella Julia Sanchez y Montoya *Dokhtor*," so very formal; he usually just called me Issee, "Would you please do me the great honour of becoming my match?"

213th of 2028 (039-97): The Manish Estates, Askisfant

I was on my bed in tears; I'd spent most of the past three days there. My beautiful new life had fallen apart. I'd thought very carefully, but in the end I'd accepted Augustine's proposal. The Imperium had declared me a deserter, stripped me of rank and

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medal. My family had written disowning me, calling me a traitor, saying I'd disgraced my brother's memory. I'd known this would be the price, but I was in love. However, Augustine had not arranged it properly with his family. And the Sherins did not approve. Nashu had tried to intervene, invited Madam Caroline Sherin, the family matriarch, for afternoon tea. She'd told Madam Sherin that I was a fine woman, one she should be proud to have as a daughter. That's when it had fallen apart. Apparently a 'dirty Imperial' was tolerable as a lover, but most certainly not as a wife. I had never seen Nashu lose her temper before. If my heart had not been breaking it might have been amusing to see the two powerful matriarchs screaming at one another. There was a knock at my door. "May I come in, my dear?"

I managed, "Yes."

Nashu entered and came to sit beside me. "I am so very sorry I ever introduced you to that spineless brat. Can you ever forgive a meddling old woman?" Guilt, real guilt, I had only ever heard guilt in her voice when she talked about Sesh Liryn before.

I forced a smile, "I'm sorry, too, and of course I do."

Nashu took my hand, "Now, my dear, I've made a few enquiries. There is an opening in paediatrics at Antiavash Central, excellent prospects, would you like me to arrange an interview?" She asked rather than simply did; she very genuinely was sorry.

"I will think about it." I couldn't face any prospects right then.

"Siishubuu is also here; he wishes to speak with you."

"Siish, Nashu? What about?"

"He wouldn't tell me. And it brings up another matter. I would prefer if you no longer called me Nashu, I would..."

I felt my heart shattering again. "Why! What have I done wrong?"

Nashu grinned, "Nothing my dear, quite the opposite in fact. If you had let me finish, I would much prefer it if you called me 'Mother'. Now your brother wishes to see you."

216th of 2028 (041-97): Askisfant War Memorial

Tomorrow I started a new life, left this place I'd called home for three years. There had been forms to fill out, papers to sign, goodbyes to say. The children were upset, but I promised I'd come back as much as I could and promised them stories when I did. There would have to be a ball as well, any excuse for a dance here, but we'd come back for that. Gifts, too; an apartment, to get me started when I needed it, and something to get me around. I smiled at that. But now I had somewhere I wanted to be. It was night but the sky was bright, both Aryn and Mrai were above the horizon. I stood before the dome and looked at the wall. One hundred and ninety three *sesherin* carved in cold granite, each with a name below it. I found Ora, her children, my brother, Munush, Rosa Wolke's mother, Despi Lasani's brother, so many names. You could touch the name to see them, to read of them. I paused to say a prayer, then entered. The school was the same as that day, preserved for eternity. I walked carefully through the playground, swings and climbing frames twisted and charred. The school rooms. The wall inside, thirty seven faded paper *sesherin*. I wanted to do something, to mark their loss, but here you didn't touch. I stood lost in my memories. I heard someone behind me "I thought I might find you here, my dear." Nashu.

"I wanted to say goodbye."

She came and stood beside me. "They're not gone, you know, not as long as they're remembered. And they will always be remembered." I knew this, the Luriani are a very old race, and they make a point of remembering.

We stood in silence awhile. "I must thank you Nashu..." the slightest of cough "...sorry, Mother; but I think the apartment is far too big for me."

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"Oh, I'm sorry too my dear, but you are a Man-ish now; we do not squat in two room bedsits. Besides, I have watched you for three years. I think actually it may be too small, I am rather expecting a lot of grandchildren from you."

I chuckled, just a little under my breath. Yes I did have hopes, one day. "I was surprised at the bike Na... Mother. After the... accident and all."

There was a mischievous look on her face I'd never seen before. "I doubt that will be an issue again. And anyway I took some pains to ensure more than adequate safety equipment was installed."

There was something I needed to tell her; I had held it for so long, and she had done so much. I turned to face her. "Mother, Sesh Liryn, there's something I need to tell you."

Her face betrayed no emotion. "Yes, Isabella?"

"There was something I was hiding, something I knew, something important. Vilis, he showed me..."

She placed a finger on my lips. "Shush, my dear, you mustn't tell me." She smiled "Padter *Kolnel-Lekhtenant* would be most pleased to hear that, though, she swore right up to the end that you were, that her actions were justified."

"But you didn't believe her; that's why I was released."

"Oh, on the contrary; I was sure she was correct. You were released because it was the right thing to do."

I was confused. "But don't you want to know?"

"No, my dear, I do not. I am convinced that whatever your secret is, it is all that kept your mind intact there. So I'd much rather you kept that secret."

"What happened to Padter *Kolant*?" I didn't feel any anger or hate, just curiosity.

"A secure mental institution..." She sounded a little smug, "...though Oskar Sherin has been pushing for her to be released for some time. He sees her as... too valuable a resource to waste."

I felt myself shiver ever so slightly at that. "Do you think he will be able?"

She took my hand. "Not as long as I am head of the Security Committee. That I will guarantee. But even if he does, you have no need to fear, you are my daughter now and Sishubuu's sister when I pass, protection more than enough."

"Thank you, Mother, but it's not me I'd be afraid for."

"I have two final 'gifts' for you." She handed me an identity card.

I had to laugh; surprised wasn't quite the right word "Er... thank you, Mother; I'm not quite sure what I'll do with this." A *Mrigadeer* in the *Verasal* intelligence branch, perhaps a little unusual. To be honest I'd more than had my fill of the military.

"Oh, my dear, that one is more for me than you. Shen Rida, when Siishubuu was a boy, he'd have given him a run for his money. My dear son does have a habit of getting himself in trouble. The rank is the minimum required for a white five security clearance. You may find it has a myriad of uses. Think of it as a courtesy; you won't actually be expected to serve, I would never ask that of you."

I took the card and placed it in my pocket, perhaps it might be useful. "And the other 'gift', Mother?"

She pushed a data chip into my hand. "I thought you may wish to have these. Perhaps with the journal *Eneri* suggested you keep."

"What are they, Mother?" I think I already knew.

"A copy of your records from Sesh Liryn. Your suffering deserves remembrance just as much as those remembered here."

Notes

23. *Narin*, a traditional Luriani funerary song. One of the few Luriani musical forms without an associated dance style. Usually incorrectly translated as lament. The *narin* is a fast paced upbeat form. A celebration of a life rather than a mourning of a passing.
24. *Sesherin* are highly social animals and this behaviour is seen in the wild to protect an injured podmate. There are recorded instances of *sesherin* acting in this manner to save Luriani in distress. The Luriani regard it as mark of Sesh's favour

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Raconteurs' Rest

and such individuals are known as *Ysesheshal* (Usually rendered as “Sesh’s beloved” but literally “Sesh’s lover”).

25. *Sesherin* defend themselves by blows from their powerful flippers and fluke. Their intelligence and social nature means a pod will co-ordinate their attacks, making them extremely dangerous.
26. A large marine apex predator native to Daramm.
27. The unusual rise of civilisation on ‘stone age’ Daramm is normally attributed to two factors. First is the abundant sea life and minimal seasonal variations that allowed year round food surpluses and the establishment of permanent settlements without agriculture. The second is the very high concentration of heavier elements throughout the entire system. This resulted in the evolution of a number of plants that could be treated with easily obtainable minerals, producing materials comparable to bronze and, in the case of the *arbusodt* tree, mild steel (*Arbusodt* wood remains an important building material on Daramm today, used as a more aesthetically pleasing alternative to steel). Many anthropologists and sociologists have theorised that this peculiar rise of civilisation has had a profound effect on Luriani culture. While the Luriani urbanised early, the lack of agriculture placed severe restrictions on the size of their cities (limiting them to the low thousands), leading to a highly social culture with a strong preference for informal authority and a seeming inability to organise large states.
28. Commodore Rebecca Bat Elam’s raid on Daramm is considered one of the most daring Imperial actions of the Luriani War and one of the few successes of the Ley Fleet. She managed to take her destroyer flotilla deep into Protectorate territory undetected and strike at the capital itself. Her plan called for deliberately ignoring safety protocols and exiting jump space by crossing the 100 diameters limit of Daramm itself. The raid caught the defenders unprepared and she was able to bombard the surface for almost fifteen minutes challenged only by surface based fire. Bet Elam’s flagship, the light cruiser *Al-Hassan*, was crippled covering the escape and she would spend the rest of the war in captivity.
29. The *Iadtlu* are the traditional Luriani militia dating back to pre-contact times. Many Protectorate citizens were members, joining in their early childhood and remaining well into adulthood. It served both as a reserve pool of trained personnel allowing the rapid expansion of the Protectorate military and a civil defence force in times of disaster and emergency.
30. In addition to its military and civil defence functions, the *Iadtlu* also served as a youth training corps, encouraging good citizenship and moral values (akin to ancient Terran Scouting movement). Children as young as 8 could and regularly did, join. While *Iadtlu* members could not volunteer for regular military duty until 18, any member over 12 years of age could volunteer for service in a local defence unit. During the Luriani War, many young children did volunteer for such service. While considerable efforts were made to restrict such service to support roles, they were trained for combat.
31. The death penalty had been abandoned by the Luriani in the early years of the First Protectorate and generally most Protectorate citizens regarded the concept as barbaric. However Bet Elam’s raid resulted in brief calls for its reintroduction.
32. During the final years of the First Protectorate, the Luriani fought a bitter series of wars with a neighbouring pocket empire. During those wars, Daramm’s vulnerable archologies were deliberately targeted. As a result, the archologies feature extensive defence systems.
33. The Imperium’s attempt to repeat the success of Commodore Bet Elam’s raid was a costly failure. The Protectorate had reinforced the defences and Vice Admiral Manish’s squadron forced the Imperial raiders low into Daramm’s gravity well. Trapped between Manish’s liners and withering ground based fire, the Imperial battlecruisers were destroyed without inflicting any damage on Daramm. 🌟

TravellerCON/USA 2016

TravellerCON/USA 2016 is planned for the weekend of October 7–9, at the Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center in Lancaster, PA (same place as last year). Registration is open; the full weekend is \$30 for referees or participants (age 12+ only) and may be paid at the door; vendor registration is \$60, and must be prepaid. Prepayment for both is handled through PayPal. There is a discounted room rate at the Resort; mention TravellerCON when making your reservation. Those who attended last year and were ... underwhelmed ... by the Resort should note that they are under new ownership and extensive renovations are under way. Come play with us! More information will be found here and at the Con website (<http://www.travellercon-usa.com/>) as it becomes available. 🌟

In a Store Near You

Everfresh Sandwiches

by Ken Murphy

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2003.

With the popularity of their Gea's Sandwiches chain, Stoker Laumb Ironmongeries, through its subsidiary LeHatte Foods and Plastics, decided on trying something of a spin-off; bringing, as it says in the advertisements, "From the Goddess. Comfort Food. Anytime, anywhere", with a line of sandwiches guaranteed to stay fresh for 40 years, provided their seals remain intact.

Seventy-eight different varieties of sandwich are available in the 'Everfresh' line (including 8 not to be found at any Gea's Sandwiches); each individually sealed in a tamperproof, opaque, heavy polymer wrapper.

Through a production error, the initial run of sandwiches lacked any sort of identification—the specifics of a particular sandwich remaining unknown until the package was actually opened.

This anonymity began an almost endless stream of complaints which have continued, unabated, to this very day. As the complaints hadn't seemed to adversely affect sales, LeHatte, in a bit of inspired marketing, wisely decided to leave the packages unmarked, and play up the mystery associated with the sandwiches in a series of quirky advertisements; each ending with the contrite "Goddess knows".

A very popular series of spots which premiered one year during the Imperial Hurling Championships showed several Marines (including a pair of well-known actors) digging into a crate of Everfresh sandwiches, opening each in turn, with varying, but still good-natured reactions to what was revealed. Each of this latest batch of commercials ends with a scrawny Corporal (an obvious pseudo-bio robot sporting the likeness of a popular comedian) always managing to get just the sandwich he'd hoped for. At the end of the final spot in the series, the group of Marine breaks up and head toward different off-screen destinations; left sitting alone, the scrawny Corporal looks into the camera and smiles slightly as his last sandwich unwraps itself and floats up to a point in front of his face until he takes a bite. Instead of the usual "Goddess knows", this final spot ends with a voice-over cautioning "Watch out! Even Zhos love our sandwiches!"

With the 'Everfresh' sandwich having become a staple with Imperial quartermasters some 130 years back, many units have acquired their own unit-favorite (or most loathed, yet consumed with pride) sandwich—for example, the favorite of the Marines aboard *INS Blue Mountain* is the buffalo-chicken bacon reuben. Aboard *INS Almighty*, meatloaf with cilantro, sun-dried tomato and pepperjack cheese is preferred, and on *INS Otomi*, the Marines gravitate toward the spicy chicken club. ❁

Up Close and Personal

Cyd Annasser

profiled by Jeff Zeitlin

Cyd Annasser will generally be encountered in his role as the proprietor of "Club 101", a "gaming" (gambling) club within the extrality zone of a starport on a world near the border of the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation, where meetings between officials of the two polities occur out of the public eye. He is always well-dressed, showing

wealth and elegance without being showy or ostentatious. He is unfailingly polite, even when making it clear that a particularly incivil soon-to-be-former guest is to become a former guest as quickly as possible, preferably without needing the assistance of one of his "safety escorts".

To be admitted to his club, one must either be known to be a member by the doorman (who is also one of the "safety escorts"), or accompanied and vouched for by someone who is. Membership may

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Up Close and Personal

not be purchased—one may be identified as a suitable potential member and interviewed by Cyd himself, after which, if Cyd is satisfied, the new member will receive a card signed by Cyd, which will only need to be shown once or twice in the future, until the “safety escorts” all recognize the member.

His staff, whether “safety escort”, steward, croupier/dealer, or administrative staff, all fit in to the “elegant but not ostentatious” image that Cyd presents, and would not look out of place in any high-end tasteful establishment.

Cyd’s only real criteria for membership—or permitted guest—center not around the person’s actual wealth or occupation, but simply on the question of whether the image of the club is maintained. A loud boor who could spend a million credits would be shown the door, while a manual laborer, brought in as a guest, but who can wear a borrowed suit well, be polite and soft-spoken, and hold his intoxicants without disgracing himself would be welcomed back in the future, even if his bets were only centcredits to the other guests’ kilocredits.

The club itself carries through with the same theme—elegance and wealth without ostentation. Wood and stone, both finished to bring out innate beauty, but otherwise with little in the way of carving or other similar decoration, dominate the decor, with tapestries and drapes hung to make the rooms acoustically quiet. Gaming tables in the “play salon” and dining tables in the “dining salon” are spaced at comfortable intervals, with reservable rooms available for private affairs.

Referee’s Information

It’s all a front. Cyd (not his real name) is really an agent of the Imperial Office of Intelligence, as is his entire staff, and the club games are crooked when Cyd wants them to be. While the information above regarding members and guests is accurate, if the player is in a position where he might be able to get information of interest to Imperial Intelligence, Cyd and the staff will be a bit more tolerant of otherwise unacceptable behavior. Once Cyd determines

that the player is, in fact, in a position that would be of use to IOI, Cyd will carefully “feel out” the player to determine if s/he will willingly help Cyd and IOI, without actually cluing the target that s/he is being recruited; if the target is found unwilling, the games will be subtly “adjusted”, with the ultimate objective of getting the target into a financial position where s/he will be ripe for recruitment. As is usual in such situations, the threat of exposure of the debt will be held over the target’s head, and the information initially requested will be relatively unimportant. Over time, however, the information will become more and more important and sensitive, with exposure of the target’s past assistance being an additional threat.

Encountering Cyd

If the PCs encounter Cyd, it will be because they have something that he needs—or which will at the very least make his current task(s) easier. That might be anything from gathering information about his current target, to sitting through some deportment lessons if needed and filling out a table in his club to isolate a target and make it easier to “work” him, to acting as couriers for information or money, to ... whatever. Generally, as the PCs are not IOI, he will keep as much information as possible from them, but he also will not knowingly or willingly place them in a compromising or dangerous position—not that that has prevented problems in the past. ❁

Your Input Helps

Freelance Traveller is always on the prowl for new ideas for sections of the magazine, as well as new material to include. If you have ideas, whether for sections or specific articles you want to write, and you want to propose or discuss your ideas, please email editor@freelancetraveller.com.

We’re also working on updating our submission guidelines so that you can get all the important information in one place, set out clearly. If you have any questions or comments about what you think should be in them, write to the same address. ❁

Clement Sector Player's Guide

reviewed by "kafka"

Clement Sector Player's Guide. John Watts.

Gypsy Knights Games <http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com>

113pp., PDF

US\$9.99/UK£7.75

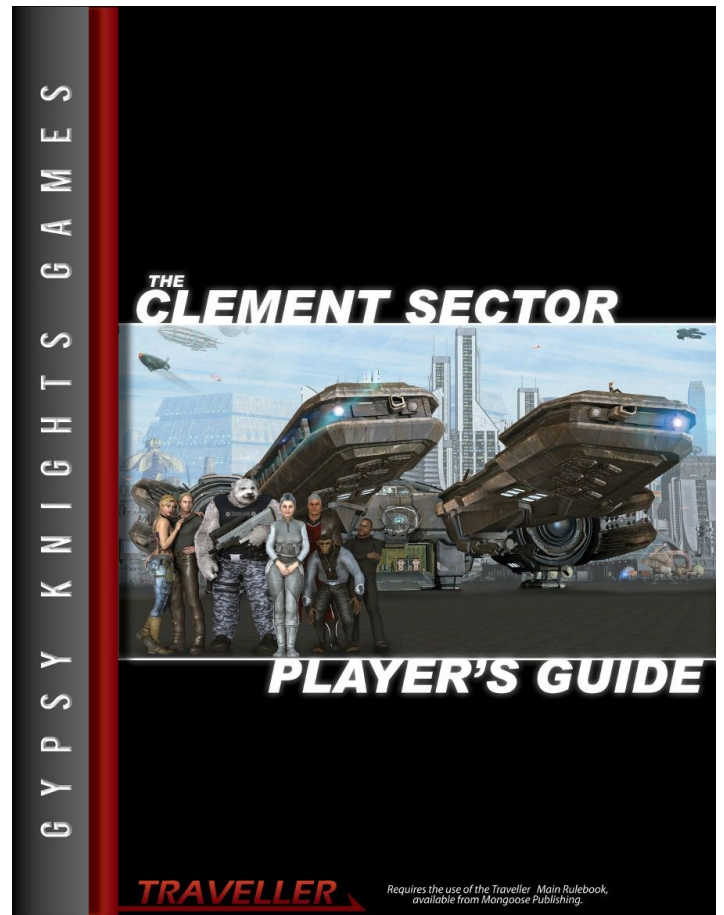
This review originally appeared on rpg.net in December 2015

The Good

As a freebie or low cost, this is a great product; as printed booklet (assuming you can survive the shipping costs from Drivethroughrpg), this is a great product. That said, it is product very much designed to supplement both the 1e Mongoose *Traveller Core Rulebook* and GKG's *Clement Sector Core Setting* book; it is chock full of *Traveller* goodness that really bring to life the Clement Sector. It fills in vital statistics niche that Mongoose has yet to do in the 1e products, by introducing concepts, like chargen for the adolescent years through a random or points buy system. And, it is worth remembering that *Traveller* is sometimes criticized as a game where Older Adults kick ass. So, if you do have a problem with that you might not like this product, but, it is likely you have the same trouble with *Traveller*-like games. Which is the beauty of rules now provided for adolescence. You can build equally rich characters who have only completed one term (internship) of an active service, as those veterans, who are already in the 50s and set to retire with a starship their own. Furthermore, it adds the level of language which granted are Terran languages, so transferability may be limited to games similar to the Clement Sector and/or Solomani space. And, if that were not enough there are six new careers: celebrity, free trader, system defence forces (Wet Navy and Ground Forces) and a vagabond. Along with a new suite package.

The Bad

It is largely material that one would hope could be contained somewhere else either as an appendix to the Clement Sector book or in a more revamped



and consolidated book. And, as it an add-on for MgT 1e and, in spite of, GKG commitment no additional costs will be incurred by the buyer of their products—it is still a product of MgT 1e thinking and paradigms. When this item was free, I thought it was a bold and courageous move on behalf a truly excellent small publisher. But, when the PDF jumped to have a price point, it is hard to say that there is \$10.00 worth of content encompassed within. GKG does have frequent sales and price reductions (so I do think it is value to money) but I can see that hitting the barrier for the newbie to Clement Sector. As GKG's line requires some buying into (both as a metaphor and as an actual practice) keeping this at a very low price point (especially, as the USD continues to rise) might be a corrective.

Secondly, and, this is the crime of *Traveller* itself, and, especially MgT—there are lots of Tables and Charts. In an era, where industry leaders are moving away from 'rules' *per se* and toward more narrative, this product has a long way to go. It does have

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Critics' Corner

the purple prose and fantastic illustrations well paired with the text but a player's guide is there to stimulate and encourage the imagination. Looking at how Wizards of the Coast did the *Players Handbook* for 5e or Chaosium's *Investigator's Handbook* (for *Call of Cthulhu* 7e) is a model to follow. Of course, WotC has Hasbro's plethora of professional game and graphic designers at their disposal. However, difficult it may be to achieve it, does set the standard for player's guides.

The Ugly

Well, related to the fact, there is a lot of text that directly does not speak to the new player. I was somewhat perplexed that the Medic career path was not included, as that was a very early GKG product that could have had a revised and second look, especially, in light, the popularity of medical and quasi-medical dramas (like CSI). Also, there was nothing in the book that could be handed out to players, as the introduction to the Clement Sector, as what usually happens is one person buys a book and shares it with the rest—and that is usually the Referee—thus a quick guide to the Clement Sector milieu would not go awry.

The Bad and the Ugly does not mean that this is a terrible product, instead, it is a product that speaks to the converted both to MgT and the Clement Sector—sadly. As I happen to like both makes the review difficult. However, GKG has been on the vanguard of change, it is distressing to see that this product does not live up to previous offerings.

Getting buy-in for SFRPGs is a difficult task, unless part of an established universe and even then, how to bring in new players. GKG has also to prepare for the tweaks that MgT 2e will/might bring. Therefore, I understand the pressures that they are under but this product or a similar product will need improvement before reaching a wider market. Perhaps, when *Traveller* achieved hegemony over the SFRPG market these chrome fittings would have been unnecessary, but, *Traveller* may dominate the market now due to widespread distribution of Mongoose products and their sales good. *Traveller* has lost the imagination of many newbies because it is perceived as too difficult. Clement Sector and GKG were a useful remedy by concentrating adventure into one standard sector with familiar tropes. I just wish more of that was reflected into this product. The writing is solid and artwork is good. But, as someone recently remarked about the original *Dungeons & Dragons*, Gygax could so easily design tables and charts, because he saw them every day as an insurance underwriter. RPGs have been steadily moving away from the *Rolemaster* School of Roleplaying. It is hoped that future GKG be part of that trend rather than reverting back to another and now-dated model. So the strength of the good points, especially, if you already have buy-in to what GKG is attempting to accomplish is balanced by the bad and uglier parts. So it is with that reluctance that I approach this product. The product satisfies a niche. 🌀

Active Measures

Discordia Pacis

by Michael Brown

The heroes guard delicate trade negotiations from hostiles on a planet of pacifists.

Discordia Pacis is a Classic *Traveller* adventure for 3-6 characters of diverse prior careers and backgrounds, assumed to have been traveling and working together prior to the adventure. Interpersonal

and diplomatic skills such as Liaison are useful but not essential. Life support gear such as vacc suits or oxygen tanks are required.

Pre-Adventure Prep

The referee should select or create:

- A planet with an Atmosphere type A (Exotic)
- A party consisting of up to five Merchants or Diplomats. These individuals work for the PCs' patron.

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Active Measures

- An opposing party, with numbers and arms.
- A minor race (or minor Human race), referred to in the text as the Seriani. The referee may substitute another race of his or her choosing.
- (Optional) a floorplan of the negotiation venue.

The adventure begins on a world no more than six parsecs away from the world mentioned above.

The leader of the opposing NPCs, Aydrin Vance, can be male, female, or transgender as the referee sees fit. Thus, this individual is referred to in the text with the gender-neutral pronouns *xe* and *xir*.

Players' Information

Arnid Rusten is a successful businessman with a subsector-wide sphere of influence. For some years now, he's been trying to expand his operations into the neighboring subsector. However, the Seriani, the native inhabitants of the planet along the only viable route into that subsector, have rebuffed all his overtures. Expansion of Rusten's business operations can't happen without favorable dealings with the Seriani.

After dogged perseverance, Rusten finally wore down the Seriani's resistance and won an audience with several of their trade ministers. He is in the middle of equipping a negotiating party consisting of himself and up to five fellow merchants, traveling to the venue on one of his Type R Fat Traders. He wants to hire the adventurers as bodyguards at the rate of Cr150 per PC per day, including during jump. He's willing to go up to Cr300 a day if they're in a mood to haggle.

Referee's Information

The PCs will no doubt want to know what they'd be guarding Rusten against. Years ago, he had a falling out with a friend and business partner. Aydrin Vance vowed revenge, and *xe* and Rusten have been feuding since. Vance has resorted to violence before, and Rusten has no reason to believe that might not be the case now.

His would-be trading partners are from a world with Atmosphere type A (Exotic). Short-term exposures to the naturally occurring chemical com-

pounds in the air have a sedative effect on humans. The gases produce feelings of pleasure, euphoria, and relaxation but also impair alertness and coordination. The individual suffers -1 to STR, DEX, and INT per minute of exposure and for (12 - END) hours afterward (minimum 1.) Once the victim goes unconscious due to STR or DEX loss, the gases do 1D damage per minute until the victim dies. Oxygen tanks and/or vacc suits provide complete protection from the gas mix; the Seriani, of course, have no trouble with it.

In addition, the Seriani also zealously adhere to a strict religious code with a central tenet of non-violence. Not only are they complete pacifists, they refuse to deal with anyone using violence for any reason other than pest control. This is another reason why Rusten wants to hire the PCs: they're deniable assets. As nonparties to the deal, they're free to deal with opponents however they like with less chance of wrecking the trade deal. Rusten of course won't bother telling them this, but he does inform them of the Seriani's beliefs.

Once onworld, Rusten and his team meet with representatives of the Seriani in a specially-chosen venue. The referee may make this area as easy or as difficult to get to as desired, but it's not sealed against the atmosphere. The talks occur in three phases; each takes 1D+2 days to complete. After each phase, the referee should throw for the Seriani Reaction. An 8 (Interested) or better (DM: Liaison skill) moves the talks to the next phase. Any failure of a Reaction throw represents some *faux pas* on the part of Rusten or his team. An immediate, secondary Reaction throw with an additional DM of -2 is required to salvage the talks, along with an additional 1D days. If the secondary result fails, the talks end. Any Reaction throw of a natural "2" (regardless of modifiers) also ends the talks and the Seriani then request that the party leave immediately. If all three phases are successful, Rusten pays the PCs a 10% bonus.

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Active Measures

(Continued from page 33)

The adventurers can affect the talks through their actions. Any display of violent behavior witnessed by the Seriani imposes a negative DM on the Reaction throws of -2 or one-half of the damage they inflict, whichever is greater. Likewise, solving a problem peacefully adds +2. The referee of course judges what is violent or peaceful.

After the first day of negotiations, the referee should throw 9+ each day for Vance (who has discovered what Rusten is up to) to arrive onworld with a team of malcontents numbering the same as the PCs plus 1D. Their aim is to scuttle the trade talks; using nonviolent tactics at first, such as spreading unflattering rumors, making the Rusten

team late for appointments, or goading the adventurers into committing violent acts. But if the talks enter the third phase, Vance drops all pretense, arms his party with pistols, and assaults the negotiation venue with the aim of taking out Rusten, Seriani, and anyone else concerned. This of course, ruins forever any hope of either Rusten or Vance of winning trade concessions from the Seriani, but at that point Vance won't care.

Even at this juncture, the adventurers can still salvage some of Rusten's mission if they find a way to nonviolently stop Vance and his group. Doing so leaves open a slim possibility that Rusten can reopen negotiations at a future date. Again, the referee is the judge of what constitutes nonviolent. ❁

Up Close and Personal

Mark Admag

profiled by William Wilson

This character was originally published on the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website in 2009.

Mark Admag Male Human (Mixed)

UPP: 697BA7 (SDEIES) Genetic UPP: 465 Age: 38 (38)

Life Stage: 5 DOB: 121-1209

Homeworld: Regina (1910 Spin Mar A788999-D Hi Cp 303 Rr)

Starport: Excellent; Size: Medium; Atmosphere: Dense;

Hydrosphere: 80%; Population: 3,000,000,000;

Law Level: High; Tech Level: Average Stellar;

Trade Codes: Hi Cp

Mark grew up around starships. His family ran a restaurant in Regina Starport. He spent his days reading as many starship technical manuals he could get his hands on (in between helping his folks run the eatery), and, on his 18th birthday in 1227, left home and signed aboard the subsidized merchant, *Intrepid Pedagogue*.

Normally, life on a subbie is about as exciting as watching Hivers mate, but things in the Regency made things more colorful. Deteriorating Regency

policies were wrecking havoc on the profits of many a free trader in the former Domain. Mark got injured during a Regency Customs inspection when one of the inspectors accidentally mistook a pressure tank for a smuggling compartment (because the tank looked "non-standard"). Ignoring Mark and the other crewmembers' protest, the inspector had an explosive placed on the tank. The inspector was killed and Mark was badly hit with shrapnel and hot radioactive steam. With the aid of advanced medical treatments and cloned skin grafts, Mark recovered.

The rebellions on many worlds (as well as the systematic squashing of these rebellions by Regency loyalists) made red zones out of the most stable systems in the past 100 years. The *Pedagogue* made quite a few paramilitary support runs—usually in favor of the Regency (they had the money). News, as well, as personal witnessing, of the atrocities Regency (now called Imperial Regency) forces were heaping on the rebel worlds, caused the *Pedagogue* crew to switch sides. The following years into 1240 were spent running supplies to worlds that would later join the League of Spinward States. When Regina made its separation from the IR in 1232, the *Pedagogue's* crew

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Up Close and Personal

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supported it...mostly. The few who didn't left at the next port of call.

On 137-1242, the *Pedagogue* was attacked and couldn't get away. IR forces, in the form of patrol cruisers, captured the fat trader and Mark was headed to an internment camp deep in IR territory. On the way, however, Mark escaped from his cell through the aid of a fellow prisoner who managed to slip out and crack the ship's computer's security to release the subcraft while the cruiser was refueling at a gas giant. Most of the prisoners (a few captured from other ships) came with him. By piloting deep within the planet's thick atmosphere, he evaded the cruiser and hid for as long as he could before life support got critical. He then made it to the main world, sold the craft, divided the money among the captives, and signed aboard the Far Trader *Argent Dawn*.

When Avery's call for his campaign against the Dominate came, some of the crew of the *Dawn* were willing to respond. Mark wasn't. He was a trader; besides, with what the IR has been stirring up, there was plenty of excitement here. Mark had an investment as well. He used his portion of the loot to buy quite a few of the *Dawn's* shares. The last four years were spent trading among the various worlds in the LSS. At this time, 001-1248, Mark's captain told him that he was retiring.

The captain had made his pile and was going back to his home on Emerald (1006/Spinward Marches). He sold the ship to Regina Shipyards. Mark immediately purchased it back with the share chits he had obtained plus financing the rest. Since the ship was already a few decades old thus the price reduced, the remaining 29% of the value was a very reasonable deal for a 40-year plan. Mark hopes to pay it all off long before that.

Mark is looking for a new crew; the others have moved on. He has 71% of the ship in his name. The 1276th Bank of Regina has the rest. One day, he will

pay off the mortgage and the ship will really be his. Now, to find a new crew...

Summary

Career(s): Merchants (Free Trader)

Terms: 5

Final Rank: Captain/Owner

Awards and Decorations: Fame-7 (Continental)

Skills: Streetwise 0, Craftsman 0, Admin 1, Trader 3, ACS Ships 2 (3 effective), Computer 1, Steward 1, Power Plants 2 (3 effective), Gambler 1, Astrogation 4, Slug Throwers 1, Language: Gvegh, Grav 1, Turrets 1

Knowledges: Pilot 1, Engineer 1, Fighting 0, Driver 0, Gunner 0, Career: Merchant (Free Trader) 0

Talents: none

Life Pursuits:

1st: Ship's Pilot: Dex, Pilot, C+S=12

2nd: Ship's Astrogator: Int, Astrogation, C+S>13

3rd: Free Trader: Int, Trader, C+S>14

Certifications: Pilot, Astrogator, Engineer

Inventory: Far Trader (*Argent Dawn*, Type A2 *Garu-Class*), 10 of 14 shares owned; Autopistol; Cr. 25,000

Breakdown

Homeworld Skills: Qualifies for Streetwise, Craftsman, and Admin

Term 1: Merchants

Successful entry (2D v. Int B = 9)

Risk failed (2D v. Str 4 = 8) 4 HP lost (recovered all).

Rank: Casual Hire (0)

4 Skills (Trader, Pilot(ACS Ships), Computer, and Trader)

Continue successful (2D v. Str 4 = 4)

Term 2: Merchants

Risk Succeeded (rolled 2D v. Dex 9 = 7)

Reward Succeeded (2D v. Dex 9 = 6) 1 Ship Share

Promoted to 4th Officer (1) (2D+2 (Int 6+) v. 11 = 9) Received Steward

5 Skills (+1 Str, +1 Str, Engineer(Power Plants), Gambler, Astrogation)

Continue successful (2D v. Str 6 = 6)

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Up Close and Personal

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Term 3: Merchants

Risk Succeeded (2D *v.* End 5 = 4)
Reward succeeded (2D *v.* End 5 = 5) 1 Ship Share
Promoted to 3rd Officer (2)(2D *v.* (Terms×2)+3
(Int 8+) (total 9) = 7) Received Engineer(Power
Plants)
5 Skills (+1 End, Pilot(ACS Ships), Astrogator,
Pilot(3rd time chosen. Full Pilot knowledge
gained), Engineer(3rd time chosen. Full Engineer
knowledge gained))
Continue successful (2D *v.* Str 6 = 6)

Term 4: Merchants

Risk Successful (2D *v.* Int 11 = 3)
Reward successful (2D *v.* Int 11 = 6) 1 Ship Share
Promoted to 2nd Officer (3)(2D *v.* (Terms×2)+3
(Int 8+) (total 11) = 9) Received Astrogator
5 Skills (Str +1, Merchant: Admin, Language,
Trader, Fighting(Slug Throwers))
Aging: No effect (2D *v.* Life Stage 5 = 7, 8, 11)
Continue Successful (2D *v.* Str 7 = 7)

Term 5: Merchants

Risk Successful (modded: 2D *v.* Dex 9-3 (6) = 4)
Reward Successful (modded: 2D *v.* Dex 9+3 (12)
= 10) 1 Ship Share
Promoted to 1st Officer (4)(2D *v.* (Terms×2)+3
(Int 8+) (total 13) = 11) Received Pilot(Ships)
5 Skills (End +1, Astrogation, Trader, Driver,
Gunnery(Turrets))
Aging: -1 Str (2D *v.* Life Stage 5 = 5, 9, 10)
Continue unsuccessful - Experience generation
terminated. (2D *v.* Str 6 = 11)

Muster Out:

Fame: 7 (base 4 for Merchant Rank 4, +3 Flux)
Benefits: Autopistol (from Fighting-1), Life Insur-
ance, Ship Shares 6 (Hit 3 times), Director-
ship (irrelevant for Free Trader merchant.
Changed to Ship Shares), Cr. 35,000 🌟

Confessions of a Newbie Referee

A Column by Timothy Collinson

#24: Dare to Go There?

Religion is often a subject avoided in *Traveller*. And for very good reason, given the conflict it can generate, the deep held beliefs of some players, and the difficulty of representing a spiritual dimension in game terms. The advice usually given is: don't go there. Even amongst mature and like-minded players this can be an area fraught with difficulties.

However, there are those who feel that, whether you're a believer or not, religion is too much part of the human – and perhaps alien – condition to simply be ignored. There is too much potential for in-game conflict, adventure, scene setting and flavour to simply abandon it altogether. Hence the many references you'll actually find, despite the above advice, to various religions in *Traveller* and indeed my own small contribution to the topic in *101 Religions*

(which I wrote a tenth of and edited half of) and which was inspired by DGP's Universal Religion Profile in *Grand Census* or *World Builder's Handbook*.

It seems to me there are four levels at which you can include religion or spiritual matters in *Traveller*. The first is to ignore it or make a deliberate decision it will not be included. This of course already says a lot about the universe of adventure but is perfectly reasonable. The second is to use it as window dressing – there in the background and providing the odd plot point or character motivation but kept fairly low key. This is the approach that the general body of *Traveller* work takes and was all that *101 Religions* aimed at in its fairly simple notes. It's also the approach I've taken thus far in games I've run at TravCon where I've not majored on it. (About the most religious event in any game I've run was the noble son of a Count being asked to deliver "the

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Confessions of a Newbie Referee

(Continued from page 36)

third reading” when visiting a formal, liturgical church service with aim of ‘being seen’ and in the hopes of picking up rumours. That the player in question gamely delivered an actual reading was quite a thought provoking moment.)

A third level is one in which religion is thoroughly embedded in the setting and becomes a driver for much of what goes on even if the characters aren’t necessarily religious types. This is the approach taken by the astounding body of work from one person that is the periodical *Stellar Reaches* (<http://stellarreaches.nwgamers.org/issues/>), and the website *Ancient Faith in the Far Future* (<http://ancientfarfuture.blogspot.co.uk/>) which is doubly interesting in that it comes from an Orthodox perspective. In the former, the Empty Quarter is lovingly detailed (and fabulously illustrated) with a complex array of faith and politics, organizations and

politics, characters and worlds. It’s not a safe place for characters, and perhaps even players, and it’s not always easy to understand Mr Plummer’s writing, but it is an interesting place. Over at *Ancient Faith*, there is much non-religious material but the blogger Robert Weaver sometimes makes explicit some of his setting choices rooted in his Orthodox faith, and I, for one, would love to visit and explore.

A fourth level, which I’ve never seen in *Traveller*, would be for there to be an overtly spiritual dimension added to the game which I understand is modelled in some niche RPGs, possibly peculiar to the United States. I’m not entirely sure I’d like this, but in a ‘safe’ space with mature and probably like-minded fellow believers, this would certainly be an interesting experience to try at least once. I’m not sure I’m brave enough to try developing rules or refereeing such a game however. But who knows what the future holds? ❁

In A Store Near You

Light Duty Line-Throwing Tool

by Les DeGroff

This was the winning entry in Freelance Traveller Contest 2008-04, and originally appeared on the pre-magazine website that year.

The Mark 18, TL10 Hand held, light throwing tool is found throughout Imperial space (and almost identical models, deliberately designed to take the same ‘ammunition’, can be found in the various human states bordering the Imperium) and with a variety of rounds can serve in diverse locations including space, in forests or jungles and in and on water environments. In many locations with high restrictions on weapon possession, the Mark 18 slips through a loophole as a non-weapon tool. In spite of this, a hit with a bolt, explosive setting head, harpoon or free bar can kill.

The Mark 18 and its generic cousins are not easily concealable, as they have a 30cm-long, 2.5cm-wide barrel, and typically a spool holder of about

15cm diameter and 10cm wide under the barrel. The mass of the unloaded device is approximately 3kg. A variety of cable types are available but very common is a 3mm diameter line with a standard spool holding about 250 meters of line. This material has a tensile strength of around 1000kg (and a working load of about 600kg).

Ammunition for a line thrower appears similar to blank (non-projectile) 2.5cm shotgun rounds and is available with an amazing number of different loads from pop caps that will launch a plastic sticky round at a centimeter per second up to high loads that can send a kilogram harpoon or bolt down range at 300 meters a second. It is also common to find flare, smoke flare and illumination rounds designed for the unit. Loads used in space, for pushing cables or connections between tend to the low side while hunting and forestry uses are higher power.

Range in space tends to be the limit of the line in a spool; on planetary surfaces, friction and gravity

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In A Store Near You

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tend to limit range, with high power loads only good for a couple hundred meters.

Device prices tend to be similar to shotguns, 100 to 500 credits but propellant charges are expensive, 1 credit each for set loads, 10 credits each for higher technology variable loads. The rare sets manufactured for corrosive environments can run 20 times the price of a standard unit. Simple harpoons, piton and cable pulling projectiles run about 12 credits and are generally reusable, more specialized projectiles such as those containing sensors and electronics up into the hundreds each. Explosive placement and bomb harpoons are not reusable; most glue heads are also consumables. Line spools are about 50 credits empty, and line costs vary by the technology from fractions of a credit per meter for conductor, fiber optic and simple cables or ropes up to 20 credits per meter for high technology super cable and sensor embedded wires.

One of the nice features of a Mark 18 is that it can hold 6 propulsion rounds in a grip magazine with one in the chamber however each projectile must be seated against the seal manually. Multiple projectiles and cable spools are generally carried on a utility harness described in more detail in the accessories section below.

Frequently Encountered Bolts and Heads.

In many cases, bolts are light and sabot-ringed to fit the barrel. The weapon has a positive action seal or collet to hold one round in place. The most commonly encountered bolts and heads are given, but this list should not be considered exhaustive.

1. Marine harpoon, barbed head, stays connected to line
2. Detach harpoon, barbed head, frees from line at some predefined force
3. Bomb or explosive harpoon. In addition to barbs of head connected to line, an explosive charge is include to wound or kill large organisms.

4. Tagging harpoons. These come in a variety of sizes from delicate ones for implanting trackers in small game, to heads that can monitor large organisms for years, thousands of kilometers. Variety of release forms, quick detach, programmed delay, signal delay. These heads are generally not reusable.
5. Piton or anchor pin bolts
6. Explosive head Piton or anchor pin bolts
7. Glue squish heads, several types of glue chemistry, these are designed to stick to impact surface without penetration. Sizes range from couple centimeters to expanding units with deployed heads of over a meter diameter.
8. Fiber optic and conductor pulling heads
9. Throw-over bolts, intended to be shot over targets so the line falls to where it can be secured
10. Super injector rounds
11. As mentioned above flare, smoke, incendiary and illumination rounds. Many have parachutes for hang time. At TL11 and above units may have anti-gravity or maneuver units built in.
12. Flashlight/LED mounts on squish or barb heads
13. Monitoring sensor heads. These also include infrared, ultraviolet, and visible-spectrum remote cameras.
14. Rocket assisted heads, additional range but not more than double on planetary surface.

Available Cable Spools

As with the bolts and heads, these are the most commonly encountered spools, but this list should not be considered exhaustive.

1. 1mm super tensile, encapsulated woven monomolecular, Typical spool 800 meters, TL11 and above, requires special fittings for connections. Tensile strength 4000kg but susceptible to kink and nick damage reducing the rated values a lot.
2. 1mm fiber optic communications; typical spool 1000 meters, TL9, Tensile strength 50kg
3. 2mm 4-pair twisted communications wire (silver or copper); Typical spool 750 meters, TL8, Tensile strength 50kg to 100kg.


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In A Store Near You

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4. 3mm standard, woven high performance; Typical spool 250 meters but some go to 325, TL10
5. 3mm macro coated molecular filament with fiber optic pair and three conductor strand included. 2500kg test. TL10
6. 4mm high flex plastic rope, TL10, tensile of 500kg. Typical spool of 125 meters but elongation up to 100%
7. 5mm standard, woven high performance fibers; Typical spool 100 meters, TL9. Breaking strength 1500kg. Suitable for climbing safety, line crawlers.
8. 5mm high voltage three-conductor insulated wire. Typical spool 80 meters with 50cm bare of insulation at both ends.
9. 5mm, "Stiff Stuff", chemically treated fibers become rigid on exposure to environmental conditions, (moisture in some environments, exposure to vacuum in space, air in other cases)

Common accessories

1. Vests and holsters to carry device, rounds, spools and heads. Because of bulk of the line spools, a holster with weapon, two spools and ammunition is often taken as a low technology computer or communications unit bag.(45 cm tall, 12 cm wide, 20 cm front to back)
2. Optical and electronic sights, with range finding and projectile trajectory estimation are common but pricey 1500 credits.
3. special crimpers and connecting hardware
4. Heads up display caps for sensor, monitor and camera heads.
5. Folding or extending stocks, like most hand arms, adding a stock so it can be braced against body greatly improves possible accuracy.
6. At high tech levels, a system of line pulling rounds with a drone style controller handset and heads up display (CrImp 3000) 

Active Measures

The Petrified Forest

by Joe Webb

A version of this adventure originally appeared in response to an informal adventure contest on the (now defunct) Journal of the Travelers' Aid Society (JTAS) at SJGames in 2002.

This mercenary ticket adventure was designed to take place in the author's version of the Vanejen system, but it can take place in nearly any backwater system, ideally one close to the Vargr frontier. The action takes place in a forgotten base orbiting a distant companion star. There should be no gas giants or other reasonable sources of hydrogen fuel in this star system.

For more detailed maps (to resolve firefights, for example) the floor plans in *GURPS Traveller Starports* are ideal. Or just draw a maze of boxes on a grid.

Background

Pirates have been raiding the meager shipping of a cluster of backwater worlds. Generally, they'll enter a system disguised as normal shipping (with a spoofed transponder), enter normal space lanes, and attack outbound shipping. They specialize in hijacking, boarding a ship and usually dumping the passengers and crew in lifeballs. The IN had brought up their forces, ready to deal with these corsairs, and in fact destroying one pirate ship, when analysis of the attacks pointed out the pirate's likely base. Then the problems began.

Apparently, the likely candidate for the pirate port is not a normal port gone renegade, but an abandoned refueling facility. The problem became one of jurisdiction and blame. Centuries ago, the base had been established by the IISS. Sometime later the IN (for long forgotten reasons) decided they needed the base, and moved to take over operations.

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Active Measures

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The Scouts resisted, eventually leading to dual control. Later, the base was closed. Now, if the base is being used by pirates, a question of who was overseeing that base, and who could be found negligent in allowing the base to fall into pirate hands comes up. Is it a Scout base or a Navy base? Neither the Scouts nor the IN (actually, the local commanders of the two services) wish to be found guilty of being asleep at the wheel, and allowing millions of Credits and a dozen lives to be taken. The subsector Duke is away at the Core, so the problem will not be resolved anytime soon.

While the services bicker, the pirates continue their raids. Some of the local nobility have decided something has to be done, but do not want to risk offending one or the other service. Household troops or colonial fleets are therefore out of the question. The answer lies with mercenaries.

The PC mercenary company is approached, covertly, by either the local Count, a planetary noble, or even a major shipping company. They will be asked to jump to the region of this forgotten base, investigate it and engage any possible pirates there. If the pirates should outgun them (analysis of attacks say this is unlikely), they are to return to the homeport as best as possible, after gathering as much forces data as possible. They will be paid half their normal fee. If the PCs should engage the pirates and destroy them, or at least win over the base and free any hostages, the mercenaries will earn four times their normal fee, plus individual bonuses based on any injuries or (documented) acts. If the mercs can gather other data (such as the source of those spoofed transponders, for example), the Ministry of Justice will likely give out rewards based on the usability of that information.

Referee's Information

The Forgotten Base

Gikuk, a dim, M9 star, revolves around its primary in a highly eccentric orbit. Centuries ago,

when the base was operational, it was quite close to the central system, but currently it is nearly 160AU from the mainworld. No bodies of great size or worth orbit Gikuk, but a base was planted on the largest body in the system when water-ice was detected. Named for the first commander of the base, Phebe was little more than a refueling depot, armed against possible attacks from commerce raiders or pirates. Eventually the water mines (the only sources of hydrogen fuel around this particular sun) played out and the base closed as Gikuk's orbit took it farther and farther away from the shipping lanes.

Phebe Base is situated on a small (200-kilometer diameter) asteroid. Gravity is negligible. When the base was abandoned, it was stripped of literally everything that was economical to move. In subsequent years scavengers took most of what was left, basically leaving only machinery too outdated to be useful and too big to be sold for scrap.

The base consists of a central dome, surrounded by a ring of defensive turrets. Connected to the dome by wide corridors sitting on the surface is a ring that in turn connects all of the starship berths. Each berth is underground, access gained via a huge iris door in the roof. Observation ports dot all the above ground access ways.

Thermal imaging will reveal that the central building in the dome (the Mall, see below), several floors below that, a few turrets and three of the berths are in use. Neutrino scans will reveal a fusion plant, probably stripped from a large star ship, in the heart of the base, as well as several ships sitting in the active berths. The rest of the base is at or near the background temperature of the asteroid.

While life-support has been restored to the Mall and immediate underground levels, the rest of the base is in vacuum. The berths and the turrets that are operational have power running to them, through jury rigged cables, but are otherwise equipped with machinery scavenged by the pirates from cannibalized ships. Only certain sections of the Mall have grav plates; treat the rest of the base as zero-g (or close enough).

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Active Measures

The Pirates

The leader of these outlaws is an ex-Navy, out-cast noble, Nathan Americodelsur. Drummed out of the service for thievery, and told by the family patriarch never to show himself in the home-system again, Nathan wandered the Domain of Deneb, and eventually the Vargr Extents, leaving a trail of increasingly serious crimes in his wake. Very charismatic, he eventually found himself near the leadership of a midlevel Vargr world. Unfortunately, his planned coup didn't work out. He fled with his surviving troops into the Imperium.

While still in the IN, Nathan found out about the abandoned base, and had run a scheme to strip any valuables out of it (not profitable, as it turned out). He remembered this location when on the run from the Extents, and made for it with all speed. He and his troops set up operations at Phebe, hoping to sell the transponder spoofing algorithms he had acquired, to fund another coup attempt back in the Extents. Events got out of his control.

The criminal organization he was going to sell the algorithms to decided they liked Phebe Base so much they would set up shop here. Nathan wasn't given a choice but to join forces.

So there are really two forces at Phebe; Nathan and his mixed gang of Human and Vargr criminals/politicians and the Electric Dogs, a Vargr-organized crime syndicate operating across the subsector. Nathan's group are the warriors, a battle hardened team numbering 12. Each is heavily armed and armored (at least equivalent to the PCs, max GTL of 11). The Electric Dogs, on the other hand, are small time when it comes to combat. They are lightly armed, have minimally armored vacc-suits (if armored at all), and are used to back alley gang-warfare. There are lots of them (say 25, enough to keep the PCs busy). Most of them do the grunt work at the base, including stripping stolen ships.

Others at the base include a near-mad Vargr mathematical genius, Kfozorr Tsu Kfolgzar, attached to Nathan's group, who has figured out the

cryptography protecting the latest batch of Imperial ship transponders. Hostages include a group of five technicians kidnapped by the pirates to help with operations (the PCs will know that nearly a dozen ships crewmembers have been taken by the pirates—the referee should determine if others are present or have been spaced). Last, but not least, is the charismatic, persuasive and totally amoral leader of the Electric Dogs, Khaegzur Kso, a definite non-combatant, non-worker, here only to oversee operations. He should be the biggest challenge to the PCs, playing on their greed rather than fighting them (if it comes down to that).

Three turrets have been outfitted with weapons stripped from stolen ships (enough to slightly out-gun the mercenary ship[s]). While there are three ships docked at the base, only one is a warship (a Vargr corsair). The others are a yacht (belonging to the Electric Dogs and usual location of Khaegzur Kso) and a recently-hijacked *Beowulf*. These two are only lightly armed (sandcasters and single lasers).

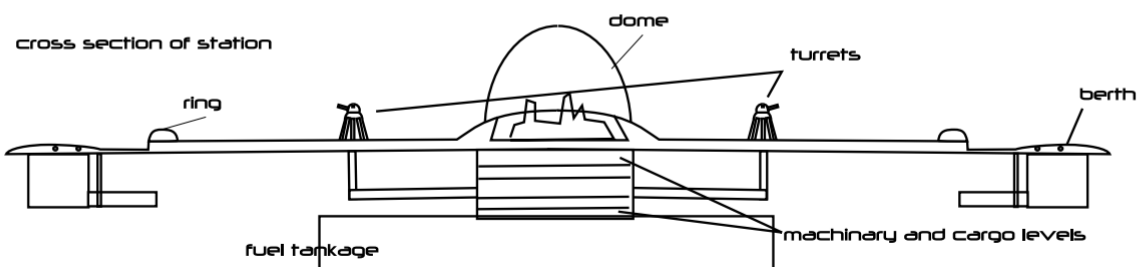
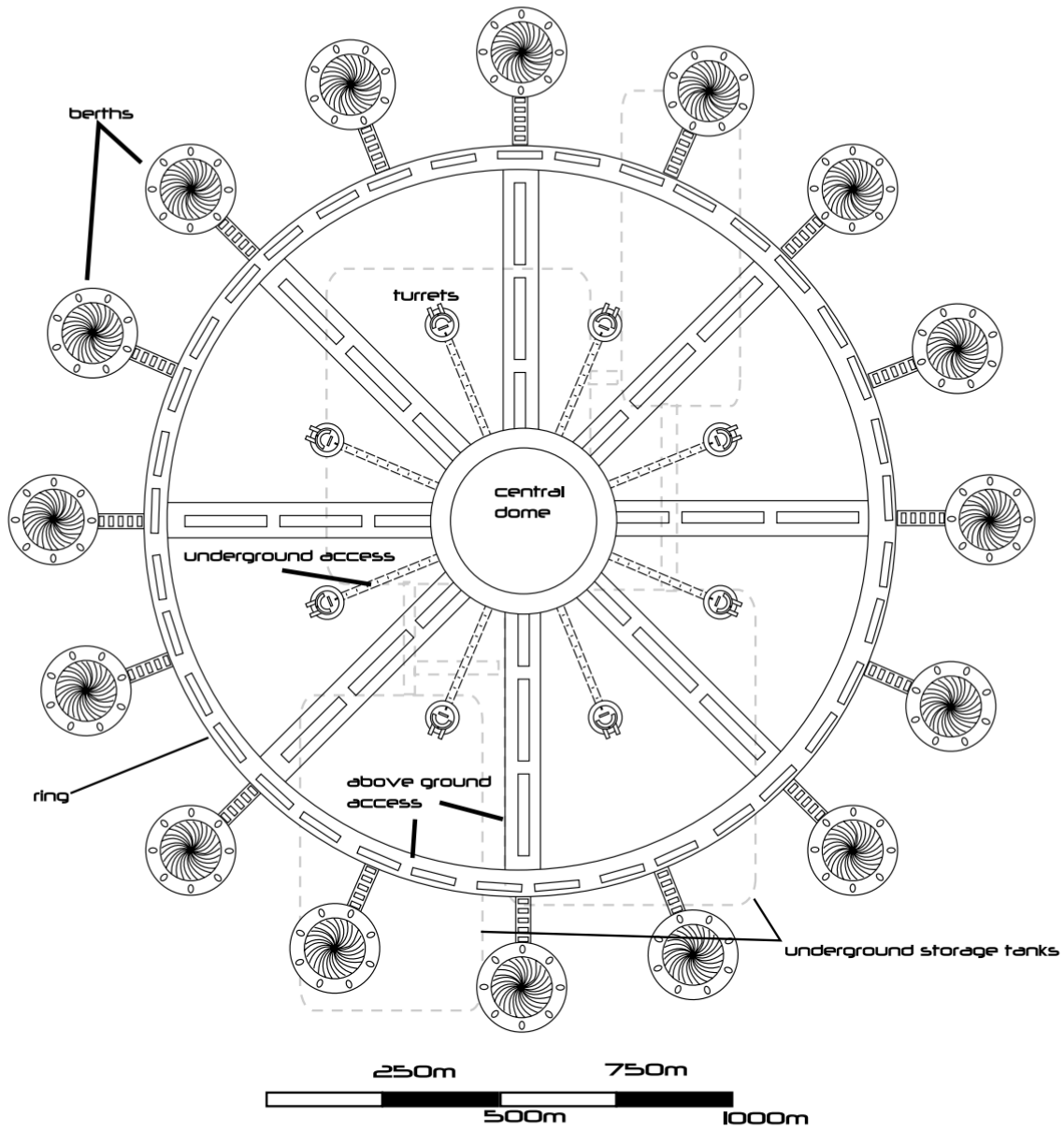
Map Key

(The map appears on the next two pages)

1. **The Petrified Forest:** This area, sitting on top of the Mall level, was once an artfully crafted landscape of miniature mountains and dense jungle. When the base was abandoned, most of the animals were rounded up, but the plants were left in place. The air was evacuated and the forest freeze-dried. It has rested undisturbed since. In the bloody light of Gikuk, and the deep shadows of the inner dome, the forest is eerily forbidding, a haunted jungle out of ancient legend. While the tree trunks are still sturdy, the smaller branches and the leaves are very fragile. Swinging through them (in zero-g, running is more like bouncing from tree to tree) will cause the leaves to literally explode in a cloud of dust. This might make rapid movement through this area rather noticeable to anyone in the condominiums. Careful movement, however, can mask a trooper very well.

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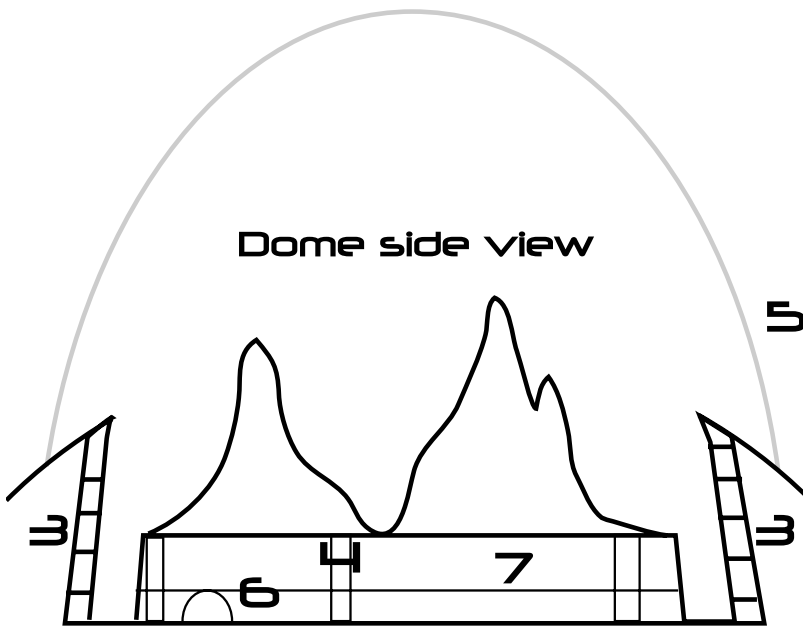
Phebe Station



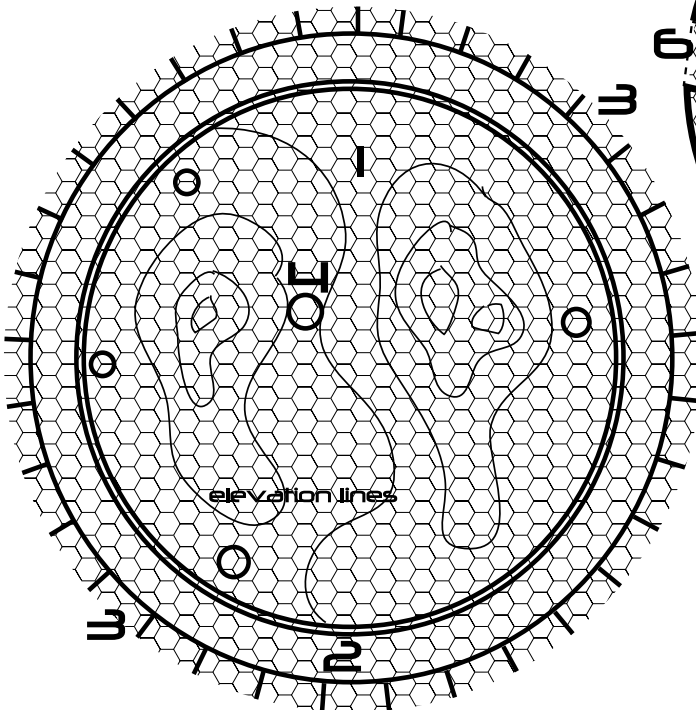
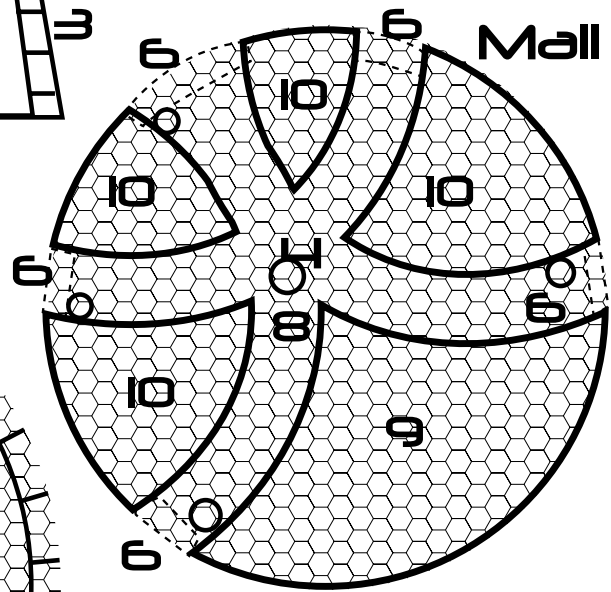
Phebe Station

○ = ~25 ft or ~8.3m

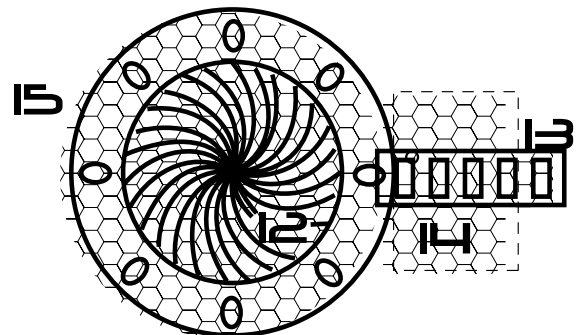
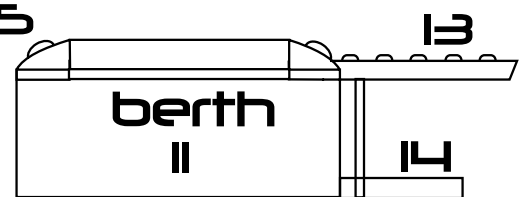
Dome side view



Mall



Dome floor



Active Measures

2. **Main Street:** The wide boulevard between the condos and the base of the Forest. At one time an ornamental trolley-car system ran the circumference of the street. All that remains today are the recessed tracks and an occasional bench station. Painted marks on the ground controlled the little vehicle traffic the street saw.
3. **Condominiums:** This is where the inhabitants of the station lived. In their time they were luxurious apartment homes, each with a wide living room, several bedrooms, freshers and a couple of auxiliary rooms (to be used as dens, playrooms, gardens, etc.). All feature windows and balconies that look down into the central dome area. All were sealable against vacuum, just in case of dome breach (although the seals may or may not have failed over the years of neglect). The bottom level is the foyer, with elevators (inoperable), small shops and the occasional office or school, all stripped of valuables (but perhaps featuring abandoned signs, paperwork, and drawings by children—brittle and dry after centuries in hard vacuum, falling to dust at the slightest touch).
4. **Elevator trunks:** Just very large elevators, with operational airlocks (20 minutes to cycle) at the Forest level, used to connect the Mall to the Forest. If they have power, the machinery would still be useful, operating on magnetic principles, instead of gravitic (which would have been salvaged). These also connect down into the engineering, cargo hold and fuel tankage levels.
5. **The Dome:** Made of hexagonal sheets of artificial diamond set in a geodesic grid, the Dome is no longer airtight. Years of neglect have allowed various support struts to sag; several of the huge hexes have fallen out of the dome to crash into the forest below.
6. **Mall Entrances:** These doorways are actually huge airlocks, sealing the mall against dome breaches. Very rugged, these are still usable. It takes nearly 8 hours to fully cycle one, due to its size and the inefficiency of the equipment. All have been repaired by the pirates.
7. **Mall:** The Forest garden rises like a mesa from the floor of the dome. On the ground floor of this structure is the Mall, the one time heart of the Phebe Base business district. Along with shops and other services for the inhabitants, the Mall housed several hotels as well as the government offices. In the area above the Mall the life-support and various other machinery used to maintain the Forest existed, now only a huge maze of pipes and empty machine brackets, all in vacuum. The entire structure is heavily compartmentalized, so just breaching the walls will not expose much of the area to vacuum.
8. **Halls:** With restored air and gravity, this wide and echoing hallways offer little in the way of concealment. The occasional pile of crate or even a few standard cargo containers are the only things in these wide, empty halls.
9. **Maintenance:** This area is a maze of rooms, corridors and piping trunks. It once was part of the complex machinery that supported the Forest, but most of that equipment was long ago torn out. The pirates have put their life-support machinery here, as well as a miniature fusion plant to power the complex.
10. **Shops and Hotels:** Here are the remains of once-seedy bars, food markets, clothing shops and a couple of small hotels. Again, all fixtures of any worth were either taken when the base closed, or looted by scavengers. The pirates have refurbished some areas for their own use.
11. **Starship berth:** A fairly typical berth in a hostile environment starport. About 30m deep, with an iris hatch that could allow in a ship over 80m long. They were usually pressurized when occupied, although all passageways into the area featured airlocks. Today all are in vacuum, including the three the pirates have repaired and use.
12. **Iris hatch:** Like the normal shipboard hatch every traveler is familiar with, except for its size.

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Active Measures

(Continued from page 44)

13. **Access Hallway:** Used to get people and cargo from the berths and into the port, these halls feature huge skylights and two (no longer functional) slidewalks. Cargo would be lifted via crane or gragsled from the bottom of the berth, into the observation ring and then transferred down these corridors into the base.
14. **Offices/Temp cargo storage:** Small offices for ships operations and crew were in these rooms, along with a large area for temporary cargo storage, as well as the access panels for the fuel and power couplings (the outlets in the walls of the berth). A magnetic elevator connects the office to the access way above.
15. **Observation Ring:** With several skylights overhead, the large plate diamond giving a view of the berth below, the observation rings often held cargo, unused items and machinery, and just plain junk. Many still do. The machinery for the iris valve is located in the floors of this area.


Resolving the Mission

The PCs need to take out the defense turrets and any possible ships (to prevent attack or escape). They need to take the base in detail, rather than blasting away from orbit, in order to retrieve any information valuable to the MoJ as well as to protect any possible kidnap victims. Evidence that they did not attempt to protect victims/evidence will bring charges from the MoJ. Therefore the ground battle will probably involve small arms in the airless corridors of the port, and probably a room-by-room search of the Mall. Some of the warriors or the Electric Dogs will likely attempt to hide out in the Forest, attempting an ambush.

Three days after the PCs arrive, another pirate ship (a Vanderbilt yacht, armed to the teeth) will jump in. An Electric Dog “patrol” ship, it is here to pick up any loot and rotate some crew out. If challenged it will only stay long enough to offer escape to any surviving pirates, Electric Dogs preferred. It will attempt to retrieve Khaegzur Kso primarily (who is expecting it), but will attempt to escape if too heavily outgunned.

Five days after the PCs arrive, an IN destroyer and two escorts arrive. The Navy finally decided to get their act together (learning of the PC’s mission a few days after they jumped). The PC mission must be completed by then or the Imperials will take over operations—and the PCs’ employer will not want to pay if that happens.

Considerations and Possible Alternates

- There are millions of Credits in cash and merchandise in the Base. This can represent a moral dilemma for PCs who run across it. Or Khaegzur Kso will use it to bribe the players to keep him hidden from the MoJ/IN—and there is more where that came from, after all.
- Nathan and the Electric Dogs don’t get along too well. They may not support each other in a fire-fight, especially if things are getting tough. When the escape ships arrives, they may well attack each other, fighting over the limited seating...
- A Count backs the Electric Dogs. Wishing to disrupt trade in the County of a rival, especially while the Duke is away, a renegade Count has encouraged piracy in this area. There might be some evidence of his/her involvement at the Base, and that IN Destroyer might be there not only to deal with pirates, but also to make sure certain names don’t get mentioned... 

RPGSuite

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Purchasable at <http://www.rpgsuite.com>.

Price variable, depending on options.

Disclosure: The author was "comped" a copy of the Complete Core Materials Package.

Reviewer's note: All prices mentioned in this review are as of the time of writing.

RPGSuite currently consists of two programs, the Traveller Character Generator (TCG) and the Digital Character Sheet (DCS), plus associated add-on packages for careers, races, and equipment. Both programs use the Mongoose *Traveller* 2nd Edition rules. Additional programs are implied to be in the future, such as shipbuilding and worldbuilding programs, as more material from Mongoose is released for *Traveller* 2nd Edition.

In its most basic form, the TCG is free, but only supports creating a Human Drifter, and only provides a basic set of equipment to purchase and equip your character. To create other races or careers, or to get a better selection of equipment, you will need to purchase the appropriate add-ons, with equipment packs being \$3.99 each, and careers \$5.99 each. Alternatively, you can purchase the "Complete Core Materials Package" for \$39.99, and get all of the careers, skills, races, equipment, etc., from the *Traveller* 2nd Edition *Core Rulebook*. Hopefully, as 2nd Edition add-on volumes become available from Mongoose, such as *High Guard*, additional races, equipment, careers, and so on will be released.

The DCS allows you to track what happens to your character over the course of a campaign, and automatically calculates skill rolls, modifiers, etc., and tracks damage and healing. There's also a log so that you can add notes about things that happen during the campaign, and refresh your memory next time. I can't speak about much beyond presentation on this as I don't have a current campaign to use a character with.

The programs are both started from a common launcher, which prefers that you have an active net-

work connection, so it can check for updates. If you do have the connection, and there's an update available, it will be downloaded and installed on the spot. The individual programs also prefer that you have an active network connection when you start them up, but everything, including the launcher, still works even if you don't have the active network connection.



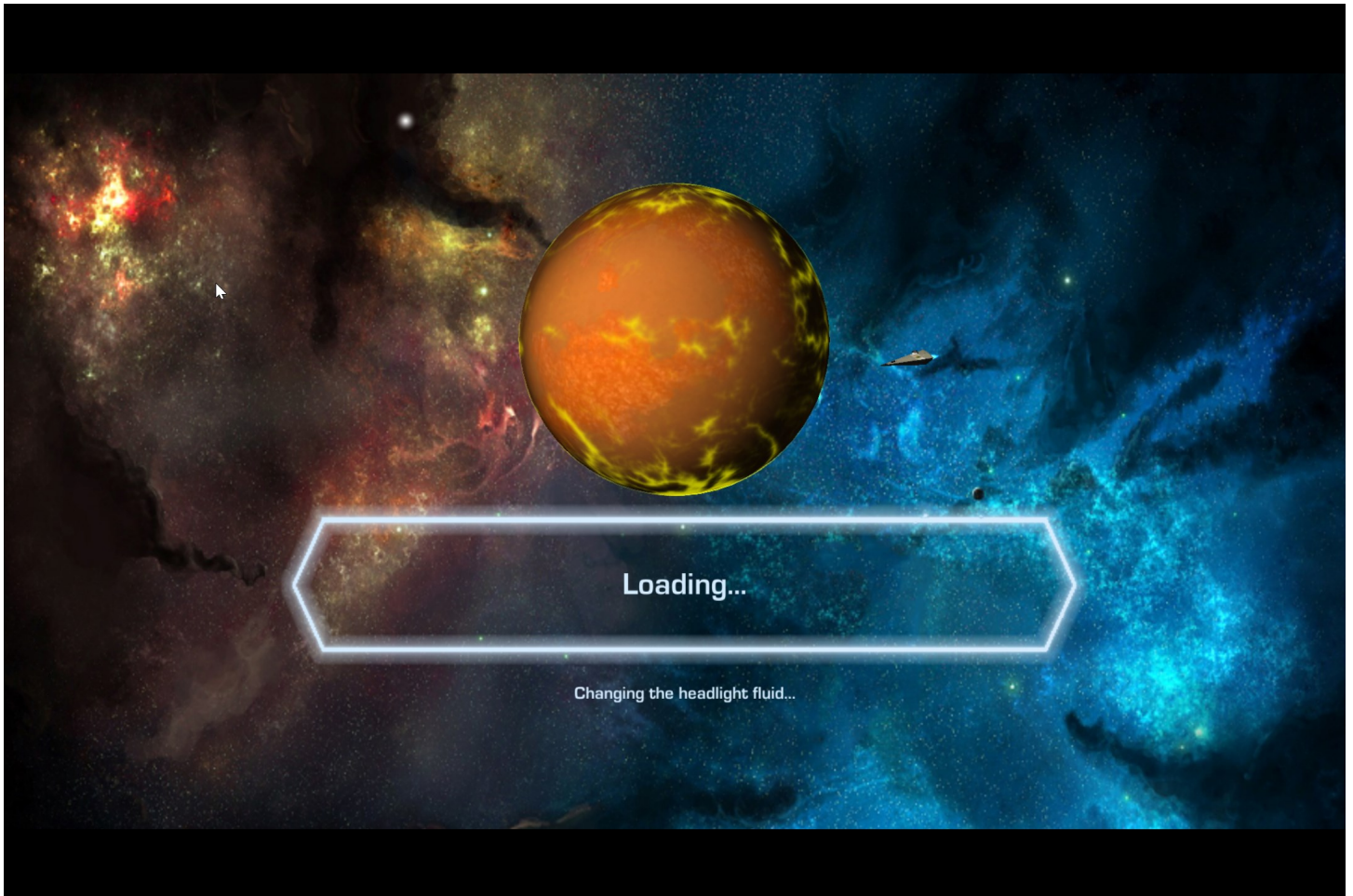
The RPGSuite common launcher

The Windows version works well under Windows 10 (both initial release and Anniversary Update) on a (maxed-out) Surface Pro 3. There are no bobbles using touch vs. the mouse; I haven't tried using the on-screen-popup keyboard instead of the physical Type Cover 3. I also use the Surface in landscape orientation; I haven't tried it in portrait orientation. Both programs ask you about screen resolution and graphics quality at startup; I've run the TCG as a full-screen app (it letterboxes a little on my Surface Pro 3), and the DCS in a window.

Mac OSX versions of both programs are available. I can't comment on them as I'm a Windows guy. There are also versions for Linux systems, but they're specifically called out as experimental. A little bit of poking around in the program installation folder and the AppData folders it creates seems to suggest that it's built using Mono, the open-source 'clone' of Microsoft's .NET; now that Microsoft is taking .NET itself cross-platform and open

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Starting the Traveller Character Generator. There's some possible influence from *The Sims* here; 'Changing the headlight fluid...?'

-source—and PowerShell with it—perhaps some documentation of data structures et cetera from the publisher will lead to community add-ons, or perhaps even a command-line (PowerShell) interface to the program. Or not; there are good arguments either way.

There's a lot of eye candy here (as you can see from the pictures), but it's not distracting. Except for the occasional long description of a skill when choosing a table to roll for skill on, everything is readable (you do have to like Eurostyle as a general-use font). The difference in quality of the graphics when set to "fastest" vs. "fantastic" isn't really perceptible to my eye on the high-resolution display of the SP3.

One might suspect that the authors were influenced by EA's *The Sims* series of games; the intro-

ductory "progress bar" is reminiscent of that from the various games from that series, including the "announcements" of "current action" ("changing the headlight fluid?"); the models of the characters being created also have the same sort of random fidgeting that characters in the Create-a-Sim tool did.

Using TCG vs. sitting with the book and rolling dice doesn't make a *big* difference time-wise, but the convenience is a plus; there's no page-flipping involved, and no looking up entries on a table—that's what the program does for you. A nice touch is that when you're choosing a table to roll on for a skill, you get a description of each skill on the selected table, and an indication of your current level for that skill. When you're done creating and saving a character, you get four files that you can move around: two graphic images of a character summary, and

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Critics' Corner

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Picking a homeworld for your character. You can filter by trade codes, rather than scrolling through all 600-odd worlds in the Marches

two PDF character sheets. One of each is printer-friendly, in that it doesn't use large regions of intense color; they're in greyscale instead. The other is heavily colored, in the same set of shades of blue that are the dominant color of the programs themselves. (Page 49 of this issue shows the front of the printer-friendly PDF; page 50 shows the back, both as they appear on the screen, with the form fields made visible.) Both PDFs are structured as fillable forms (and work as such in both the Adobe and Fox-It readers), and thus easily editable to update your character.

The homeworlds you can choose from are all in the Spinward Marches, which makes the omission of a Vargr language as a specialization of the Language skill a bit surprising—your choices seem to be Anglic, Vilani, Zdetl, and Oynprith. Presumably, if you

roll up a Vargr or Aslan, your default language would be the appropriate language other than Galanglic, but the Big Three—Galanglic, Trokh, and Gvegh—really should be options, especially for Diplomats or Agents. Again, this might well change when Mongoose releases relevant supplemental volumes.

In the program, all skills are shown as though they're independent, even if they're part of a cluster. Since they're on the character sheet in essentially the order you acquire them, the cluster skill (e.g., Language) and the specialization (e.g., Vilani) can be far apart. However, on the saved PDF character sheets, they are grouped together under the cluster heading skill.

Although you can add details for connections in the TCG when you finalize the character, you can't do so for Allies, Contacts, Rivals, or Enemies in the

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NAME Eneri Gaamilaa
AGE 42 **SPECIES** Human
SPECIES TRAITS All stats are standard.
HOME WORLD Mora: AA99AC7-F

CHARACTER NOTES	FINANCES
	PENSION
	Cr 12,000
	DEBT
	Cr 0
	CASH
	Cr 50,000
	SHIP MORTGAGE
	Cr 0

STR	5	-1
DEX	4	-1
END	5	-1
INT	12	2
EDU	12	2
SOC	9	1
RADS		

ALLIES	CONTACTS	ENEMIES	RIVALS
Elder Statesman Explorer		Inveterate Gambler Corporate Executive	

ARMOR				TOTAL PROTECTION >	0
Type	Rad	Kg	Options	Protection	

SKILLS									
Admin	1	Life Support	0	Philosophy	1				
Advocate	1	Power	3	Physica	0				
Diplomat	0	Investigate	1	Planetology	0				
Drive	0	Language	0	Psionicology	0				
Hovercraft	0	Anglic	0	Psychology	1				
Mole	0	Vilani	0	Robotics	0				
Track	0	Zdell	0	Sophontology	0				
Walker	0	Oynprith	0	Xenology	0				
Wheel	0	Medic	2						
Electronics	0	Science	0						
Comms	0	Archaeology	0						
Computers	1	Biology	0						
Remote Ops	0	Chemistry	0						
Sensors	0	Cybernetics	0						
Engineer	0	Economics	0						
M-Drive	0	Genetics	0						
J-Drive	0	History	0						
		Linguistics	1						



CAREER HISTORY

Branch	Title	Term	Rank	Benefits	Events
Scientist		0	0	Drive 0, Diplomacy 0, Medicine 0, Investigate 0, Electronics +1, New Ally: Elder Statesman	Sorry, you were passed over for promotion this term. It's time they start respecting you for all your hard work!
Scientist		1	1	Admin +1, Estate [Linguistics] at least 1, Estate [Science] at least 1, Advocate +1	You have the opportunity to cheat in some fashion, advancing your career and research by stealing another's work, using an alien device, taking a shortcut and so forth. If you refuse, you gain nothing. If you accept, roll Deception 8+ or Admin 8+. If you succeed, you gain DM +2 to any one Benefit roll and may increase any skill by one level, but also gain an Enemy. If you fail, gain an Enemy and lose one Benefit roll from this career. [Rejected] You were promoted.
Scientist		2	2	Int +1, Advancement Modifier [2], Estate [Computers] at least 1, Engineer +1	You make a breakthrough in your field. Gain DM +2 to your next Advancement check. You were promoted.
Scientist		3	3	Int +1, New Ally: Explorer, Estate [Investigate] at least 1, Engineer +1	You were promoted. You're doing a great job! Not only did you get a promotion, they insist you stay another term.
Scientist		4	4	Engineer +1, Gained 1 (overriding out benefits), Science +1, Science +1, New Enemy: Inverian Gambler, New Enemy: Corporate Executive, Medico +1	You are called upon to perform research that goes against your conscience. Accept, and you gain an extra Benefit roll, a level increase of any two Science skill specialties and D3 Enemies. [Accepted] Multiple Outcomes Randomize. You were promoted. Reduce their physical attributes by 1. Modified Str by -1, Modified Dex by -1, Modified End by -1.
Scientist		5	4	Medico +1	You have the opportunity to cheat in some fashion, advancing your career and research by stealing another's work, using an alien device, taking a shortcut and so forth. If you refuse, you gain nothing. If you accept, roll Deception 8+ or Admin 8+. If you succeed, you gain DM +2 to any one Benefit roll and may increase any skill by one level, but also gain an Enemy. If you fail, gain an Enemy and lose one Benefit roll from this career. [Rejected] Sorry, you were passed over for promotion this term. It's time they start respecting you for all your hard work! After 6 terms, this will be your last. It's time to leave. Maintain Out Benefits: 10000 credits Maintain Out Benefits: 5th +1

AUGMENTS

Type	TL	Benefit
Type	TL	Benefit
Type	TL	Benefit
Type	TL	Benefit
Type	TL	Benefit

WEAPONS

Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	KG	Magazine	Traits

EQUIPMENT

TOTAL CARRIED MASS >

0

Troika - Engineering Specific 8k4b [TL 12]						
[3] Ship Shares [TL 12]						
Computer, Portable - Computer 5 [TL 14]						

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Picking a table to roll for skill on. You get a description of the skill—which sometimes is difficult to read, because lots of text in small box—and your current level of the skill

TCG at all—instead, you have to load the character into the DCS and edit those details there.

The DCS would be a great program to have on iOS or Android devices, and one of the changes for version 2.7 called out in the changelog on the website suggests that Android and iOS versions are either in development now or planned. I wouldn't recommend trying to use the DCS on a phone or 'phablet' screen; a full tablet of at least eight-inch diagonal measurement, and preferably ten, is probably optimal, and higher resolution is better.

Both programs have options for editing various aspects of your character. Using the program without editing the character manually gives you "RAW" (rules as written) results, including home-

world 0-level skills and career basic training skills; if there are any particular "house rules" you want to play by, you'll have to work out the results and edit them into the character.

The authors provide a 'tutorial' YouTube video (<http://youtu.be/tIstKLldiPA>), but you really don't need it. I installed the package and just dived right in, feeling my way around—and it wasn't at all difficult to do so; the program itself essentially walks you through the fundamentally linear process. There's also a quick overview video of a more expanded (and apparently later) version of the TCG; this is at <http://youtu.be/F-N2KtJFqNE>. Shawn Driscoll has created a video showing both programs in action, at http://youtu.be/L_m0A8Jfpei4.

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Critics' Corner

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A look at your summary character sheet during generation. This is usually miniaturized and in the lower left corner, but click on it and it expands as shown. Note that the skills aren't in any particular order, as compared with the final PDF.

When giving you the opportunity to choose a career or a specialization within the career, you get a calculated display of your chances of commission and advancement (percentage); you also get a graphical indication of the likelihood of succeeding at rolls such as survival, advancement, continuation, and so on. These are shown as a line of hexagons with the possible values for that roll, including relevant bonus DMs. Those rolls that represent success are shown as green hexes; failure rolls are shown as red hexes.

There is a textual history of your character generation in the upper left corner of the screen; this can be hidden by clicking on the clock icon above it. Below the history is an unreadably-small character

sheet; click on it and it expands and covers the right side of the screen, as shown above. Some areas are editable; click on the red 'edit' flag at the upper right corner of the desired section. Click on anything else in the character sheet, and it will shrink back into the lower left corner. Whenever something in a section of the character sheet changes during character generation, that section will briefly blink.

Although for some reason it's not shown in the pictures here (and didn't appear while I was rolling up a character to get the screen shots), there's usually a model ('avatar') standing on the thing that looks like a transporter pad to represent your character, of the correct species and sex, dressed to match your career. In the TCG, you get the default appearance; in the DCS, there's some customization available for

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Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 52)

The screenshot displays the Digital Character Sheet (DCS) for a character named Eneri Laagariida. The interface is dark-themed with blue and white text. At the top left, the character's name and basic stats (42 years, Male, Human) are shown. Below this is a 3D model of the character. To the right, the character's home world (Iderati) and log (001-11) are displayed. A status bar shows 'fatigued' and 'unconscious' with corresponding icons. Below that, a health bar is visible. The character's stats are listed on the right: STR 7 (0), DEX 4 (-1), END 7 (0), INT 10 (+1), EDU 10 (+1), and SOC 13 (+2). At the bottom right, financial information is shown: Pension 12000, Debt 0, and Cash 105000. The interface includes several tabs: SKILLS, WEAPONS, EQUIPMENT, CONTACTS, and CAREER. The SKILLS tab is active, showing a list of skills with their ranks and categories. The skills are organized into three columns. The first column lists skills like Admin (3), Advocate (1), [s] Airship (0), [s] Anglic (0), [s] Archaeology (0), [s] Biology (0), Carouse (2), [s] Chemistry (0), and [s] Comms (0). The second column lists [s] Computers (2), [s] Custom Skill (0), [s] Cybernetics (0), Diplomat (1), [s] Economics (0), [P] Electronics (0), [P] Flyer (0), [s] Genetics (0), and [s] Grav (0). The third column lists [s] History (0), Investigate (0), [P] Language (0), [s] Linguistics (0), [s] Ornithopter (0), [s] Oynprith (0), Persuade (1), [s] Philosophy (0), and [s] Physics (0). At the bottom of the skills list, there are buttons for '-', '+', and 'ROLL'. The interface also includes a 'MENU' button at the top right and a 'COMBAT' button below it.

The Digital Character Sheet. There's more here than meets the eye in this single snapshot of the main screen.

things like build, skin tone, and which career the character is dressed for.

The DCS, as previously noted, tracks what happens to your TCG-created character during the course of an adventure, including elapsed time. This includes all changes, both temporary (like wounds or healing, current weapon or armor, etc.) and permanent (buying or selling equipment, earning skill increases, collecting pension, and so on).

While RPGSuite is already quite a good program, you might turn up a bug, or just have a ques-

tion or suggestion, and the company wants to hear from you when you do. Support is via ZenDesk, but I've sent comments and bug reports to an address on the RPGSuite.com website and received good response; it's pretty clear to me that the authors really do want to make this a *good* program, and not leave it as a semi-unfinished-but-would-have-been-promising hobbyist project.

The complete package is definitely worth the price, especially considering that updates are free. The concept is good, and the execution is better. 🌟

Jump Destination: Zeimbo

by Leslie DeGroff

This is a mildly edited version of one of the two winning entries from Freelance Traveller Contest 2008-02, and was posted to the pre-magazine website in August 2008.

Zeimbo A63695A-D 304

The view of this world—and specifically the human habitat—from space gives it its most common nickname, Gray Worm.

There is no lore recorded about where the official name came from. It was given by the crew of the initial colonization missions, recorded in Solomani archives, and given as the planetary name during recontact.

A Port (Build starships/Jump Drives), Diameter 9,500km, Very thin atmosphere (breathing/presure apparatus required), 60% Hydrographic, 3 Billion population, Feudal Technocracy, Extreme law (No weapons), TL D
4 Gas Giants

Zeimbo is just off the end of a major Jump 1 main, at jump 3 from last populated system in the main. There are three uninhabited systems at jump 2. One of these is extremely dangerous: a triple system with a white dwarf in tight orbit and a 3 solar mass black hole at 7 AUs. Another of these generally uninhabited systems has an automatic fuel refinery and fuel dump with 25000 dtons capacity.

Next closest are a pair of low population very poor systems at jump 3. There are another three low population systems at jump 4 and four more at jump 5. One of the systems at jump 5 is interdicted because of a developing alien society, and appears to contain high technology artifacts of ancient or pre-ancient creation. The current society may not be descendants of the original technology creators but are defended by it. They are definitely fully sentient but have a social organization built around their limited breeding season. Technology is Neolithic and pre-agricultural. Several members of this species have been brought to Zeimbo and are protected research projects living in special isolation areas.

Zeimbo's relative isolation from other populated systems has encouraged a great deal of societal self-reliance; as a result, trade flowing through the world is noticeably lower than might be expected. The system government does, however, accept major Imperial subsidies to maintain three general-purpose 40kdton J3 ships, running two of them at any given time on a six-month loop covering the populated neighboring systems, including the interdiction station, the fuel dump, and the system at the end of the main. These ships have bays for internal transport of up to one 500-dton plus two 200-dton ships and these bays can generally be leased at a reduced rate.¹

The ships also carry a company of planetary marines seconded to Imperial subsector command (with Imperial officers as cadre). The majority of this force are convicts or social removals from Zeimbo due to weapons violations. Some have had brain surgery or psychological treatments to adapt them to service.

The system was colonized by a fairly well-equipped (at TL10) group early in the long night, and the current population and infrastructure to support them has grown primarily from that base. Of principally Solomani descent, they maintain several Terran languages, English, French and Arabic but are essentially uninvolved in Imperial politics.

The planet is in a geological phase where the majority of land mass is gathered into a megacontinent centered on the equator.

The very thin atmosphere means that daily living and agriculture must be in a pressurized environment, but rather than multiple round domes, most life and activity exists in a linear complex running worm-like about 4000 miles along the spine of the continent. Fifteen miles wide, 2 miles high with structural barriers and anchors about every 20 miles, this megastructure is one of the finest examples of high TL10 technology in the Imperium. With more

1. Author/Designer's note: I have done a lot more ship designs than worlds but for frontier(ish) worlds, traffic is important and for a rich, high-tech, A-port, semi-isolated world like Zeimbo, the interstellar traffic structure matters a great deal.

(Continued from page 54)

than 200 thousand-story skyscraper complexes on the anchor barriers, the inhabitants are actually space-rich.

Internal pressures are kept high enough so that upper floors, at the top of the arches, are at about .9 bar, 12.5 PSI.

Agriculture, including hydroponics and biotechnologic synthetics, is more than sufficient for local needs. Claims have been made that current capacity is sufficient to support more than twice the current population, although food exports for sale in the form of prepared rations and emergency blocks is less than 400 dtons per year. It is also believed that government maintains several years' supply of emergency food reserves.

Agriculture is conducted under nearly natural light on roughly 50,000 square miles under the arches, with large areas using land for multiple purposes. Most habitat towers also have fruit and ornamental gardens. The original colony had a corps of agricultural biotechnologists which has grown to several large development departments in the planet's technology schools, and recognized as a branch of the government. By contrast, neither animal agriculture nor medical biotechnology have the same level of recognition in the social order, though neither lags in tech level relative to the general planetary technology.

Food customs are not meat-centered, but neither is there a strong vegetarian ethic. Synthetic 'meat' products, similar in taste and nutrition to the original animal products, are widely served.

Power generation is via a number of fusion plants, located in subsurface tunnel complexes. Exact areas, products and production are not secret but are not easily available information either.

The 'great worm' structure has a fork, about 200 miles from the coast line, and the main space port is located in the Y of this fork. Strictly speaking, it is not an Imperial starport—no cession for extraterrito-

riality has been made, and the construction, maintenance, and operating costs are paid from the Zeimbo government budget, but the Imperial Starport Authority operates the port in accordance with Imperial Standards. The port can construct ships up to 40,000 dtons but for the last couple of centuries it has been operating in "maintenance" mode, constructing slowly two or three at a time, 1000 to 4000 dton jump 3 ships, to more-or-less standard patterns. These are constructed at TLs ranging TL10 to TL13, with many systems being maintainable as low as TL8. The highport does not have any construction or repair facilities, but a large collection of repair and maintenance craft capable of work on the largest of Imperial ships is available on call (at least in theory). Manufacturing of repair and construction craft is one of the planet's exports with several hundred dtons typically loaded on each loop of the subsidized trade ships. A significant majority of these are constructed at relatively low tech levels; the local design groups maintain templates and train engineers to TL 8 and above. The economics of this appear to be irrational but the technocratic social order honors and rewards skills for "retro" TL.

In addition to the main surface complex, many areas of the city have large complexes of tunneling running out many miles from the main structures. Many of these are poorly mapped, and not tracked in the planetary databases.

There are two major transportation systems: a double loop of subsurface 'express' trains that go the entire length (an 8000-mile-plus loop) of the complex, and local/regional elevated monorail or maglev loops, generally suspended from segment structural members, that cover one or two segments (and offer transfer points with the subsurface system, though not themselves going underground). With tens of millions population in each set of barrier towers, most traffic is actually in the local loops.

Historical Highlights

The system has never been invaded, nor been involved in a war. This and the sometimes fragile

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nature of their artificial habitats supports the logic of the extremely high law level; essentially all weapons are forbidden. The government is functionally divided into seven bureaus (Space Technology, Biotechnology and Food, Structures and Tunnels, Power and Life Support, Mining and Surface Resources, Consumer Goods, Communications and Entertainment Delivery, and Transport), and citizens are sworn to a particular bureau, but those who show intelligence and skill are rewarded, and those who additionally show the ability to learn and work across the domains of more than a single bureau are also rewarded and generally achieve rank within the system. Political dominance of the government by a particular bureau has varied throughout history, but the realization that all bureaus have essential roles has generally kept them generally cooperative, and even those groups excluded from government, such as medical practitioners, military and law enforcement, and artists and entertainer (content providers), are able to do well economically.

Local history has included over 20 major disasters related to technology dependence and segment structural failures or damage, each with death tolls of over 5 million. These have included two meteor impacts, half a dozen multisection arch failures and three fusion station failures. Another three were essentially political failures in infrastructure investment which resulted in starvation and medical problems, and were of decades-long duration (including recovery). There is one volcanically active region near the main habitat line; it was responsible for one disaster and is now under active engineering management, providing power for a dozen segments.

The system had a number of contacts with Imperium prior to its incorporation as a member. Several of the poor worlds on the Zeimbo trade loop are considered client worlds by Imperium, though their respective local governments may not agree.

Membership in the Imperium strengthened the Space Technology bureau of the local government, and enabled the upgrading of the ship yards to fully support TL 13 construction and larger capacity. Being in a fairly safe region, the Imperial Naval presence is limited to a small maintenance and fueling reserve force.

The scout service has a base, slightly larger than average because of the need to support high-jump ships. Much of the time the scouts will have a jump 4 or jump 5 cruiser in system, and they maintain a courier support ship, but not regular runs. The system is not on the X-boat net, and does not see regular courier traffic from other systems.

The original population of about 100,000 has slowly grown to the current level of about 3,000,000, with immigration contributing very little to that growth.

Possible Adventure Seeds

This should not by any means be considered an exhaustive list of possibilities.

Smugglers' Service

Violating Zeimbo's weapons laws is considered a serious crime. Offenders are often sentenced to serve in the Zeimbo planetary marines, seconded to Imperial Subsector command. Those who are not believed able to adjust may be subjected to intense psychological treatment, and in some cases, brain surgery may be considered an option. (Referees might want to make this known to characters before they decide to smuggle weapons in.)

Technology Acquisition

With its technocratic focus, for hundreds of years the planetary government has sponsored "Investigations", a cross between scholarships and research grants given to several hundred students and researchers each year to travel off-world for up to a dozen years and collect or study technology. Some of these missions, consisting of multiple members, may verge on industrial spying; some distance

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Kurishdam

up the nearby main are a couple of high technology worlds that forbid such groups visitation visas.

Habitat Containment Breach

There are no local life forms, and most areas with life support are in use and monitored. There is always the risk of contamination or escapes near a spaceport, however.

Lava Light

There is a geothermal power station complex near the volcanically-active region of the continent; like much of the rest of Zeimbo's infrastructure, it suffers from occasional underfunding and under-maintenance. A major tremor or eruption could kill power in several segments, and send molten rock through the complex—or worse, into the subsurface tunnels of nearby segments. ❁

In a Store Near You

The Promenade

Chandlers

profiled by Jeffrey Schwartz

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2009.

Many starports, some spaceports, and a few air/sea ports have a “Chandlers of (insert world name)”

Chandlers is a chain of shops carrying a variety of TL9-12 ‘comfort items’ suited for space travel. The majority of their inventory consists of small, easy-to-pack tools, ‘toys’, and devices, but you can also find luggage and various types of carry-bags, and a selection of popular entertainment media, ranging from books (both hardcopy and data) to audio and video recordings suitable for use with most personal computers or media devices.

Everything purchased from Chandlers bears the Chandlers logo. About two-thirds of the inventory will be the same from shop to shop, and will bear a ‘generic’ Chandlers logo. What makes Chandlers special is the remaining portion of the inventory that is devoted to “Chandlers of ___” goods. These are locally made items that aren't exported, but are sold by Chandlers exclusively at that one location. They also carry the Chandlers logo, but with the world name as well—this creates something of the old “steamer trunk with many stickers” mystique when you see someone who's been around the galaxy sporting a “Chandlers of Regina” jacket with a stylish “Chandlers of Jewell” carry-bag over one shoul-

der, and a pair of “Chandlers of Aki” black leatheresque boots.

The locally-made goods are uniformly of good quality materials and workmanship, and generally showcase local materials, esthetic motifs, and crafts. The Chandlers logo is placed on the object by the local artisans, using appropriate tools and artistic styles (e.g., a locally-made carry-bag of animal skin may have the logo tooled in, branded on, or sewn on in beadwork, depending on the artistic style). On worlds with early-industrial technology levels or below, and where local law permits, Chandlers will offer native suppliers the option of taking payment in store credit, which will usually be redeemed in useful mid-tech items not otherwise available on the world—for example, a native supplier of hand-sewn carry-bags may supply the local Chandlers with four such bags every week, and may take a solar-recharged flashlight or two in payment.

Common Goods

All Chandlers shops carry these goods. They are all TL9+, and (where applicable) can stand up to wear-and-tear somewhat beyond ‘normal’, though concerted abuse will generally be more than they can handle.

With most items from Chandlers, if a compass, knife blade, or other gadgets can be added for no apparent reason, it often will be. Glow-in-the-dark parts—or sometimes, the whole object—may be included, again without a lot of rhyme or reason, other than it makes them easier to find in a ship cabin that

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you've not yet gotten used to, and thus aren't sure if the nightstand lamp is on the left or right side of the bed.

Some examples of the Chandlers basic inventory are below. These come from the portion of the store that is always the same, no matter where you go. They bear the Chandlers logo without specifying a particular world name.

"Alexandria" hand computer: Exclusive to Chandlers, these hand-computers come standard with a huge built-in entertainment library, and are thus sought after. Selections are updated annually, and generally include the most popular works, both overall and in specific genres, of the past five-to-ten (standard) years. A number of perennially-popular multi-player games are included, and may be played over an ad-hoc wireless network that may be established between Alexandria hand computers, or over a planetary net whose protocols conform to Imperial standards (subject to local regulation). The device includes a camera for taking holiday photos or videos. The computer, including all ancillary functions such as the camera, is battery-powered, but includes a light-activated charger that can recharge the battery from 'insufficient power available' to 'fully charged' in 4 hours of 'normal sunlight' (defined as a mid-range G-class star through a standard atmosphere). The built in compass, flashlight, corkscrew, knife blade, screwdrivers, tweezers, and toothpicks are handy bonuses, and many a vacationer has been pleased that the device can be submerged in 3 meters of water for an hour without problems. The standard price of Cr1500 at any Chandlers makes it a very popular item.

(Hardcopy) Books: Cr3 to 10 per book, depending on popularity, type (fiction, nonfiction, reference, etc.), and subject matter. These are generally the widely available low-price editions, though usually with a Chandlers-exclusive binding (and bearing the Chandlers logo). Some editions are bound suitable for display or gifts; these editions usually run about twice to three times the price above (and are more durable under ordinary use). Some refer-

ence books are also available in special extreme-durability editions; these are printed and bound on materials that require special effort, tools, or chemicals to damage or destroy. These extreme-durability editions command premium prices of as much as Cr10 additional over the display/gift editions.

(computerized) Books: Cr1 to 5 per book. Most selections are from the library included with the "Alexandria" hand computer, or current popular works not yet included in the "Alexandria" library; locally-acclaimed works, even if not currently popular, may be available on specific worlds. Purchaser must supply computer or other standard compatible -interface device for storage and/or display. Chandlers recommends the "Alexandria" hand computer (available as an additional purchase).

Music: Cr1 per song. Most selections are from the "Alexandria" entertainment library, or current popular songs not yet included in the "Alexandria" library; locally-acclaimed works, even if not currently popular, may be available on specific worlds. Purchaser must supply computer or other standard compatible-interface device for storage and/or playback; Chandlers recommends the "Alexandria" hand computer (above), the "Carnegie" music player (below), or the "Hollywood" or "Hollywood Studio" video players (below) (all available as additional purchases).

"Carnegie" Music player: Cr100. Includes interface cable and adapter plugs for most standard compatible-interface data sources, wireless capability for Imperial standard networks, standard commdots, or the "Alexandria" ad-hoc network, and unobtrusive earphones for listening privacy. Holds approximately 40 hours of music. Includes a small but bright emergency flashlight rechargeable in sunlight (6 hrs from 'insufficient power' to 'full charge' in normal sunlight; provides 4 hours of constant illumination if music is not played). Sized to fit comfortably into most clothing pockets (1cm x 1cm x 0.5cm). The outer surface provides limited control (volume up, volume down, next song, previous song, pause/resume playing) on the basic unit, but an enhanced version

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with a holodynamic projected screen/console (Cr150) offers additional control. The on/off switch is an actual hardware switch rather than a soft control. Holding it to the on position for more than 1 second activates or deactivates the flashlight mode. The device also functions as a timepiece with 8 time zones (including local time divisions) and four alarms, each of which can be linked to a song in memory.

Video: Cr2 per episode of popular video serial, Cr5 per feature-length video. Most selections are from the "Alexandria" entertainment library, or current popular works not yet included in the "Alexandria" library; locally-acclaimed works, even if not currently popular, may be available on specific worlds. Purchaser must supply computer or other standard compatible-interface device for storage and/or playback; Chandlers recommends the "Alexandria" hand computer (above) or the "Hollywood" or "Hollywood Studio" video player (below) (all available as additional purchases).

"Hollywood" Video player: Cr250. All of the capabilities of the enhanced Music player (above), plus the ability to project videos onto a vertical flat surface at distances of up to approximately 10m. Storage enhanced to approximately 250 hours of video playback, at the cost of not fitting into most clothing pockets (but suitable for carrying in even a small personal carry-bag). Includes a small built-in screen/control panel.

"Hollywood Studio" Special Edition Video Players: Cr500 to 1500, depending on videos included. These are functionally the same as the "Hollywood" video player (above), but are pre-loaded with all the episodes of a video serial or series of feature-length videos, plus additional recorded material such as all scripts (text), pre-production photos, cast interviews (video and text transcripts), selected "out-takes", etc. They are usually packaged with tie-in goods such as T-Shirts, key chains, and other goodies inspired by the video(s). Where appropriate, the player itself may be made to look as though it were a prop from the videos. Note that

Hollywood Studio selections may not be included in the "Alexandria" library.

Fluffy Pillow: Cr25. This pillow is made of memory foam material tested and certified to not cause allergic reactions in most travellers. It comes in a variety of colors and is easy to clean. When purchased, it appears as a small box about 3cm × 5cm × 1cm, with the small ends being metal touch-plates. Touching the plate with the Chandlers logo stamped in it causes the material to shift to the 'foam' state, expanding to the size of a 'firm' standard bed pillow. Touching the other plate causes it to revert to the 'solid' state for storage or transport. Very useful when sitting in a starport waiting for your ride which won't arrive for several hours.

Blankie: Cr100. The Chandlers blankie is a throw blanket 1.5m square. It has three layers: the inner layer is a soft fleece, the outer layer is a water-repellant breathable surface, and the middle layer is a programmable soft memory plastic with several programmed states. One is 'folded'; when put into this state, the memory plastic stiffens and folds itself (and the rest of the blanket with it) into a 10cm × 5cm × 2cm block. The folding process takes less than a minute, and will halt if it detects something being folded into the blanket. When unfolded, the plastic is soft and flexible, but the threads of that layer can move something like the slats in a Venetian blind. When fully 'closed', the blanket stops all airflow and is as insulative as a starship or spacecraft emergency blanket (which it can serve as, if more are needed than are normally kept in the ship's locker). When fully 'open', it lets air go through easily and the blanket is not much warmer than a simple fleece throw.

VacBuddy: this product is a messenger bag that has a triple-seal allowing one to move objects through vac without exposure. The total volume of 'cargo' is about 3 liters. What makes the VacBuddy more fun are a pair of metal canisters in the bottom of the bag which are set up with valves to the inside and outside of the bag that can be operated while

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the bag is closed. You can fill them with air while inside the ship, and use them to freshen the air in the bag while moving your small pet. You can evacuate the canisters while outside the ship, then load bulky clothing into the bag aboard ship, seal the bag, and trip the canister so that the clothing is collapsed for easier carry. There are standard vac-suit fittings on the canisters so they can be pressurized to 50 atmospheres. If you put a few beverage containers in the main pocket, leave the top open, and vent both cans, the pressure change will cool the contents of the bag to a drinkable level. Other uses are limited to the user's imagination. If you're not the type to be going outside the ship, you can usually get a steward to take it to the airlock and empty the cans or hook to the vac suit rack and charge the cans for you for a Cr5-10 tip. The bag costs Cr 150, and is (of course) watertight in addition to being airtight. It has the main vac-safe pocket, the two cans in the bottom, and a flap with 1 large and 3 small pockets.

Local Specialties

These items are locally procured, and will be of the local tech level. The workmanship will be of high quality, but the durability will be limited by local materials and production techniques.

Most low-tech worlds have nice hand-made carry-bags, jackets, and/or boots using local animal skins, suitably treated, as the material. The Chandlers logo will be tooled in by hand, done in sewn-on or glued-on beadwork or stonework, or burned or etched in, depending on the local craft. Bags will range from Cr10 to Cr25; jackets from Cr20 to Cr50, and boots from Cr 20 to Cr75. Musical instruments may also be available, generally for Cr50 and up. Where the local tech level supports reliable sea travel, such nautical items as water-resistant boots or hooded cloaks, manual sun-sighting or star-sighting gear (quadrants or sextants), or watch timers (usually a sand-glass or water-glass in a pivoting frame) will be available, usually also from Cr50 up. Some navigators like propping a Chandlers Sextant

on the shelf in their quarters as decor – especially the gothic-style ones.

Chandlers carries a variety of pocket knives, small tools and mechanical gadgets on these worlds as well, all bearing the appropriate logo. Sometimes a low tech (TL4) world will attempt to produce a local variant of a higher tech item, which gives a very 'steampunk' effect. Some items are meant for shipboard use, for people leaving the world to keep as a useful souvenir. These generally are Cr10-25, and include things such as:

- Writing sets with elegant parchments and fountain pen, ink well, and inks.
- Small cigar humidors or snuff boxes (or local equivalent) that can also be used to hold other things
- Elegant brass and wood slide rule type analog computers, usually pre-set for common shipboard calculations. These aren't used that often, but are great presents for someone who's just passed an engineering or navigation exam, and can be engraved at time of purchase.

Some are meant for use off a ship, when people from higher tech worlds are exploring the back country. One example sold for Cr50 is a 'Device Charger' – this is a 25cm × 10cm × 10cm wooden box with a shoulder strap, weighing 3kg. One places it on a table, opens the latches on the sides, and unfolds the box to reveal a base with a small Stirling engine and generator plus a number of plugs for various electronic devices. One can either put very hot water in the hot side, or put a standard camp stove fuel tablet, or twigs and small pieces of wood in and light them to run the device. Such items are very popular when staying at a hotel that does not offer electric power.

Mid tech worlds have items with the cool "retro" look that's fashionable in some circles. Some of the Chandlers Luggage Trunks from TL6 Dictatorship worlds look like they were made with a "Use Bigger Hammer" mentality: "Electricity for making aluminum is expensive. We use aluminum

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for aircraft to defend our homeland. Steel plate left over from a project in a tank factory is good enough for offworld exploiters' luggage projects." Such luggage is prized by those who don't have to carry it from ship to ship, as there are no concerns over it being accidentally damaged or the contents jostled. Cr 150 is a small price to pay for such assurance.

Another popular item from TL7-9 worlds is retro space hardware – these worlds can make precision hardware and in cases where they re-developed technology during the long night, they went round-about compared to what was developed in the Imperium, making the item a usable conversation piece.

High tech worlds have their own things, of course.

Provisioning

Chandlers originated as a ship's provisioner, and hasn't forgotten those origins. They still carry a full line of foodstuffs, both for the galley and for emergency rations, which can be ordered in bulk for stocking up any starship from a one-person Scout/Courier all the way up to passenger liners. Provisions from Chandlers have a reputation for both quality and consistency, and some shipping lines rely exclusively on Chandlers for provisioning their ships.

They have, however, expanded beyond that, and sell retail quantities of many snack foods, emphasizing products that can either be eaten immediately 'on the run', or stored as personal emergency rations. In addition, local specialties of similar nature—trail mixes, jerked meats, dried fruits, sausages, etc.—are also often available, in packaging of local style. Most of these, especially meat products such as sausages, jerkies, or pemmican, while still of good quality, will be quite variable in taste, especially at lower tech levels, where both preparation techniques and the recent diet of the particular animal that went into them can affect the flavor.

ChanBars are available in a variety of flavors for Cr1 each. These are typical calorie- and vitamin-packed 'energy bars' preferred by athletes looking for a quick energy burst, or people 'roughing it' looking for compact emergency rations. Packaging them in TL12 materials extends their shelf-life, and reduces incidents of accidental puncture (and subsequent spoilage). Some sell at Cr2, but include either a chemical chiller or heater to make the treat more appetizing. A ChanBar 'Chocolate Ice Cream' is a nice treat that sells well on warmer worlds. The content are a liquid goo normally. Squish the end of the wrapper, knead for sixty seconds, and then open and you'll find soft serve ice cream at about 5C. One positive selling point is that the ChanBars are always the same recipe and taste, no matter where you go—something that gives the heavy traveler a consistent "taste of home."

Local treats start at Cr1, depending on what they are. Sometimes Chandlers will ship out a processing/packaging machine, in which case the cost goes up to cover shipping for empty package materials. Sometimes the product is sold in locally produced packages. These are more 'charming' in some cases, and have added benefits. For example, the various 0.25kg summer sausages produced on various worlds are often sold in the local equivalent of a cotton baggie with a drawstring top for Cr3. The tastes of the sausages vary wildly, but people see the "Chandlers of ____" bags being reused to hold something else more often than they see the snack that was in them originally. These bags are also often used for the local trail mix or cereal snack. The issue of the tastes varying wildly from store to store is a powerful one—not only is the recipe different, but the ingredients are as well, and on lower tech worlds the taste is strongly influenced by what the animal was eating last week before it was hunted down.

All in all, Chandlers is an old friend that meets you as you arrive with a gift and a snack, and who offers a little something to take on with you when you leave so that you'll remember the visit. 🌟

Hiram Schwartzburg

profiled by Sam Swindell

Hiram "Blackie" Schwarzburg 76775C Age 46 Cr107,000
7 Terms Noble (Baron)
Carousing-2, Hunting-1, Jack-o-T-1, Blade-1, Tracked-1,
Laser Carbine-1, Navigation-1, Ship's Boat-1, Pilot-1,
Pistol-0, Vacc-0, Shotgun-0, Wheeled-0
High Passage x2, Gun belt (below) on person

The Baron ("Blackie" to friends and hangers-on) is a *bon-vivant*, a lusty liver of life who has waltzed through it largely unscathed. He is a fairly tall man, with a somewhat stocky build, often described as 'big' but never as 'imposing'. His jet black hair and fairly light complexion should be impressive, but he somehow is never seen that way. His blue eyes always seem to have a twinkle, and at least one of his thumbs seem perpetually thrust into the gunbelt carrying his blade, snub pistol and a couple of spare mags: one thumb if using the other hand for drinking, in greeting, or making expansive gestures to enhance a story; none if in bed; and both all the rest of his long days. If disarmed because of security concerns (rare; as a noble, he's often permitted arms when others are not), he will retain his gunbelt, and stick small flasks, packages of stim sticks, extra radios, and the odd bit of gadgetry in the various pouches. He has a flask which he keeps in the blade sheath for such occasions: it is made from the horn of the Reefermaddbeast from Kinorb, finished with a brass top and stopper; and highlighted too gaudily (with baubles and silver) to fit anyone's tastes but his.

Blackie has worked *aboard* merchant liners belonging to the family corporation, but has never really considered himself to be working *for* the corporation. He has treated it as a cheap way of plying the Marches in search of the next hunt, adventure, or romance. He has made a contribution, but learned more than he worked and less than he should. While not stupid, Blackie knows he is not brilliant; he's flunked out of every college he was sent to (though he has a sneaking suspicion that it was

more because the academic environment bored him that it was any inherent inability to learn and succeed). He loves to be on a ship, or a new hunting ground, and indeed it seems that excellence may have eluded him as much for his restlessness as for his lack of drive or talent.

He enjoys doing things, *experiencing* them rather than merely *accomplishing* them. While life has been kind to him, his wealth is more a matter of "what's left" than "all I ever got," having spent freely not just on himself, but others, be they the needy, his companions, his most recent lover, or someone with an interesting-sounding venture. He is also big on collecting things from past adventures or in anticipation of future adventures, often with no real plan as to how they might come together in the future. His ATV, Advanced Base, and a 2dton Big Cube shipping container with the rest of his hoard are in storage at the local starport, usually in the highport. The next hunt, though, will always be on his mind. He is looking for some ideas on that, willing to pay more than his share, and provide whatever stores he can from his own equipment. In return, he expects to keep the lion's share of whatever else the group might purchase. He is open-minded about such hunts, but is also willing to be led on another venture. Or adventure, as the case may be....

While some danger is to be expected, Blackie is no mercenary, hitman, or bounty hunter, and he knows it well. Whatever his vices, his sense of adventure is well-balanced with his sense of self-preservation. Further, he generally wishes no man ill, even those who would use his hide for a seat-cover. He also understands that being much better armed than potential assailants gives one the luxury of being a bit gentler. Not that he is above turning another sophont's neck into a smoking, stubby memorial to what it once carried, mind you, but if it comes to that, Blackie prefers to have done his part to avoid it...at which point the rush of slaughter becomes like any other pleasure: enjoyed with no backward glances.

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The Shipyard

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The Baron's Hoard

Blackie doesn't have his entire hoard to hand at any given instant, but when necessary, he can quickly get his hands on everything listed here.

Gun Belt (always on his person)

Blade
Auto Snub Pistol, 3×Mags HEAP
Trauma kit
TL15 1000 power radio
Autoinjector, Combat Drug
Autoinjector, Slow Drug
Autoinjector, Slow Drug Antidote

Transport

Tracked ATV (Ballard Designs; disassembles into 2×4dton containers)
3×6-Person inflatable assault boats
6×Bicycles (TL9, off-road)

Electronics

Hand Computer
TL13 5000 power Radio
7×TL13 500 power Radios; 27 extra batteries
2×Inertial/satellite locators
3×Magnetic compasses (TL5)
3×TL13 SensorWrites .4 kg (Cr14,000) (combination radiation counter, chemical detector, motion detector, radio direction-finder, 5000 power radio)
4×Atmospheric tester

Weapons

TL13 Laser Carbine
3×TL9 Laser Carbines, 6×extra powerpacks
5×stun Carbines (use Laser Carbine powerpacks)
10×Shotguns, 100×mags bullets, 2×mags Tranq
3×Rifles w/Electronic Sights; 12 mags
Gauss Rifle; 2 mags
6×Blades
9×Auto Snub pistols 32×Mags HEAP, 1×Mag Tranq, 6×Mags Tracer

Shelter

Advanced Base
6×6 Person and 1× 8 person tents
4×Pressure Tents
16×Sleeping bags
3×Sleeping pads
9×Folding cots
32×Folding Camp Chairs

Personal Protection/Armor

17 Combat Environmental Suits
6×TL13 Vacc Suits; 12 extra tank sets
14×Filter Masks
2×Combination Masks
9×Psionic Shield helmets
3 sets Skin Diving Gear
17×Cold Weather Clothing
4 sets cloth (universal camo)
2 Combat Environmental Suits (TL12 50 power helmet radio, IR chameleon)
10 Ponchos (TL7)

Sustenance

319×Person-weeks dehydrated rations
42×1 liter canteens
9×water filters

Misc. Personal Equipment

3×medical kits
23×cold lanterns
144×Chemlite sticks
Carpentry tool kit
Mechanical tool kit
Electronic tool kit
Metalworking tool kit
2×Chainsaws
3 sets Digging hand tools (TL4)
6×100m Climbing ropes, 3 sets climbing hardware
5×100m Plasteel cables (250 kg working load)
11×TL5 Backpacks
24×Duffle bags
3×10 liter Hard cases (water/vacuum/resistant)☼

Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
- what you think of the articles we publish
- how we can make our magazine better
- how we can make our website better
- what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
- what you think of our look
- how we can make it better

Please, give us your opinion! We've provided several ways you can do so:

- e-mail: feedback@freelancetraveller.com.

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.
- Forums:
Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg-discussion.net/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>
Lone Star at Citizens of the Imperium: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>
Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.

Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

Freelance Traveller sponsors channels for *Traveller* fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks, and the two channels are "bridged" so that if you're visiting either, you can see what's going on in the other, and talk to people there. For more information about both channels, see our informational pages at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travnet.html#IRC> and <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travchat/index.html>. Come talk "live" with other *Traveller* fans about anything at all, *Traveller* or not, and make both channels "jumping" places to hang out!

You can also run "play-by-IRC" game sessions in either channel; please stop in and ask the channel operators (FreeTrav) to schedule it, so we can ensure that the 'bridge' and the 'bartender' are set into a nondisruptive mode.

Please watch the *Traveller Mailing List*, the *Mongoose Traveller forum*, and the *Lone Star* section of the *Citizens of the Imperium* forum for announcements of *Topical Talks*!

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

July/August 2016

- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released 2nd Editions/OGL editions of *Subsector Sourcebook 1: Cascadia*, *Subsector Sourcebook 3: Hub*, and *An Introduction to Clement Sector* in print, *Skull and Crossbones: Piracy in Clement Sector* (both PDF and print), and *Clement Sector Coloring Book* (both PDF and print)
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Central Supply Catalogue 2nd Edition* in print, *Referee's Briefing 1: Companies & Corporations*, *Referee's Briefing 2: Anomalies and Wonders*, *High Guard 2nd Edition* in print, and *Spinward Marches 1: The Bowman Arm*
- **Gamer Printshop** has released *Wolverine-class Marine Assault Transport Deck Plans*, and *Hell Station Maps*
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released (under the TAS imprint) *Prelude to War: Player's Guide*, and *Prelude to War: The Rose of Death*
- **Felbrigg Herriot** has released *Game Planner*, and *Station Three: A One-Shot Scenario*,
- **Stellagama Publishing** has released *From the Ashes*
- **Grey Matter Games** has released *Maelstrom 1 Starship Battle Map*
- **North Phoenix Games** has released *Space Encounters* (under the TAS imprint)
- **Universe of Action, LLC** has released *Medieval Manor House*, *Grass Plains Terrain*, *Desert Terrain*, *Mediterranean Terrain*, and *Detention Center Map*
- **Gareth Lazelle** has released (under the TAS imprint) *Mongoose Traveller Character Sheet*, *Mongoose Traveller GM Screen*, and *Mongoose Traveller Bowman Arm Map*
- **Blue Max Studios** has released *Ships of the Galaxy: Hawking Courier*
- **Zozer Games** has released *The Universal World Profile*



Submission Guidelines

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

We're looking for anything and everything to do with *Traveller* – reviews of products, house rules, alternate settings, NPC profiles, world write-ups, adventures, equipment, starships, fiction, “color” articles... If you see it in *Freelance Traveller*, or on our website, we're interested in it. Even if you don't see it in the magazine or on the website, we might be interested; write to *editor@freelancetraveller.com* and ask.

Some things that we want that you might not think of as “*Traveller*” would include reviews of non-*Traveller* products that easily lend themselves to being ‘mined’ for ideas for use in *Traveller*, or reviews of fiction (in any medium) that “feels” like *Traveller* in some way. In these cases, your article should focus on the *Traveller*-esque aspects of the item. There may be other things, as well; if you're not sure, write and ask.

What about ...

The rule of thumb is “If it's a *Traveller* ruleset, or a setting that has been published for use with a *Traveller* ruleset, go for it!”. That includes the non-Official *Traveller* Universe settings that have been published for use with any version of the *Traveller* ruleset, including (but not limited to) *Judge Dredd*, *Strontium Dog*, *Babylon 5*, *Reign of Diaspora*, *Twilight Sector*, the two GURPS variants on the Official *Traveller* Universe, *Avenger Enterprises' Far Avalon*, and the forthcoming *Traveller Prime Directive*, and any others we may have forgotten.

...Hyperlite?

We've made the decision to support *Hyperlite* as though it were an alternate *Traveller* setting, much like *Twilight Sector* or *Reign of Diaspora*. The changes that Sceptune Games has made to *Traveller* to get *Hyperlite* aren't really much more than the differences between Classic *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller*, and *Mongoose Traveller*, and converting between any of those systems and *Hyperlite*, in either direction, should be ‘trivial’.

... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” or supported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold

the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

At the very minimum, we need the submission itself, your name (for credit), and a valid email address to contact you at if we need to.

What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

Text should be submitted in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF), Microsoft Word 2003 (DOC) or 2007/2010 (DOCX), OpenOffice Writer (ODT), or plain text (TXT). Most word processors will support one of those; if yours seems not to, please write to us for assistance. Avoid PDF if at all possible; it is difficult to reformat PDFs for our magazine or website.

Graphics should be submitted in the format that's best for the type of graphic. Most of the time, that will be GIF, PNG, or JPG/JPEG. Submitting in higher resolutions is better; we have tools to resample a picture to make it smaller if we need to – but it's not possible to make a picture larger without it becoming pixellated.

If you're submitting a graphic that you'd like to see us use for a cover of an issue, please make sure that it will fit nicely on both US Letter and ISO A4 pages – we'll crop the picture to fit, to avoid distorting shapes, so please leave reasonable “margins”; don't run “critical” imagery right to the edge where it will look bad if we crop it. A good resolution is 100 dpi or more.

Plans (deck plans, building plans, maps, etc.) may be better submitted in a vector-based format such as CorelDRAW! format (CDR) or any format that can be imported into CorelDRAW! X4. Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), Windows Metafile (WMF), Enhanced Metafile (EMF), Encapsulated PostScript (EPS), or Microsoft Visio (VSD) are some common vector formats that can be imported.

How do I get it to you?

Email it to us at our submissions address, *submissions@freelancetraveller.com*. Your subject line should specify the type of article that it is, and what section you think it should be put in, e.g., “Combat Rules for Doing It My Way”.

