



# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured:

## *The Travellers' Aid Society*

Articles by Greg Alan Caires

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## 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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# Contents

Freelance Traveller #085: Jan./Feb. 2018

**Editor:** Jeff Zeitlin

**Contributors:** Jeff Zeitlin, Megan Robertson, Timothy Collinson, Greg Alan Caires, "kafka", Ori B.L. Stone, Michael Hughes, Ewan Quibell, Sam Swindell.

## Artwork

Cover: *Ian Stead*

From the Editor: *Jeff Zeitlin*

Critics' Corner: *Mongoose Publishing, March Harrier Publishing, and Gypsy Knights Games, all from the DriveThruRPG website.*

Multimedia Gallery: *Ori B.L. Stone*

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## From the Editor

*Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 1

## Critics' Corner

Two Days on Carsten *reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 2

Hub Federation Ground Forces *reviewed by "kafka"* ..... 16

Pirates of Drinax: The Torpol Cluster *reviewed by Megan Robertson* ..... 46

Mercenary Second Edition *reviewed by "kafka"* ..... 48

## Doing It My Way

Character Generation Rules: The Travellers' Aid Society: Character Generation for Classic Traveller *by Greg Alan Caires* ..... 3

## The Prep Room

Jottings #2: Inheritance *by Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 14

## Active Measures

Getting Off the Ground: Adventure Seeds for Travellers' Aid Society Characters *by Greg Alan Caires* ..... 18

Interdiction *by Michael Hughes* ..... 27

In Loco Parentis *by Timothy Collinson* ..... 49

## Confessions of a Newbie Referee: A Column by Timothy Collinson

#32: Regular if not Frequent ..... 47

## The Shipyard

Designs for Marc Miller's Traveller (T4): Grazzagr-class Cruiser *by Ewan Quibell* ... 48

## Raconteurs' Rest

The Adventures of Gerry Fynne *by Sam Swindell* ..... 55

# From the Editor



Since going to the bimonthly schedule, we've had an easier time *keeping* to the schedule and getting issues out on time. We really have no excuse for missing our 'deadline' with this issue; failure to do computer maintenance is not an acceptable reason, nor is getting distracted by a new game. Unfortunately, both happened, and we apologize for it.

*Freelance Traveller* was started as a supplemental fan resource for *Traveller* in a period when there were a few fanzines coming out regularly in print, plus the 'house organ' for the then-current licensed publisher of *Traveller*. After the apparent demise of Mongoose's *Signs and Portents*, there didn't appear to be anything to fill the "zine niche", either licensed or fan, so we decided to try to fill it, striving for the quality of the 'house organs', while remaining an outlet for fan work. The feedback that we've re-

ceived says that we've largely achieved that aim—and from our point of view, it's due to *your* support.

*Traveller* has an active fan community that's been around for a long time. Only comparatively recently has there been the option of *commercial* fan publications, initially through the Mongoose SRD for *Traveller* under the OGL, and now also through the Travellers' Aid Society Community Content program at DriveThruRPG. With the additional publication of the *Cepheus Engine*, an OGL reworking of the Mongoose *Traveller* SRD, the commercial fan publications have proliferated fantastically—and yet still leaves enough for *Freelance Traveller* to put out sixty pages every two months, for free.

*Something* catalyzed that proliferation. I like to think that a small part of that was seeing that fans like you could put out the high-quality material that I hope *Freelance Traveller* consistently contains. ☀

### Two Days on Carsten

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

*Two Days on Carsten*. Timothy Collinson.

March Harrier Publishing (via TAS) no website found

30pp., PDF

US\$4.99/UK£3.80

*Note: The product author comped the reviewer a pre-release. The cover presented is from the final product as posted at DriveThruRPG.*

Two Days on Carsten was written to fill a gap in *The Traveller Adventure* that was covered by a single sentence: "Their voyage to Aramanx is uneventful." Mr Collinson says as much in the introductory material, and explains the genesis in a bit more depth in his "Confessions of a Newbie Referee", #31: "Off Piste", (*Freelance Traveller*, November/December 2017, p.40). The result is an adventure that can reasonably easily be slotted into any campaign when a stopover at a backwater world is useful or needed.

The adventure is written with the characters from *The Traveller Adventure* in mind, plus some extra characters from the gaming group that inspired—or perhaps "goaded" would be a better word—Mr Collinson to write this episode. Character profiles are provided; however, he explicitly says that others may be substituted, and merely cautions the reader/referee to think about the party's skill balance, both for this adventure and for any continuing campaign it may be inserted into.

The adventure is structured as a series of Acts and Scenes, most of which leave much flexibility for the PCs and the referee to fill in specific activities as they choose. Some prescribe activities, encouraging the group to play them out, with the referee determining many actual tasks and DMs more-or-less on the fly, though certain key tasks are included and defined, using the *Mongoose Traveller* (1st edition) format. At any rate, there is absolutely no cause to accuse the author of writing a railroad; instead, the referee can "let the players have their head", and simply fit the significant activities into their choices.

Descriptions of locations are good enough to give the reader a good impression of what the place

### Two Days on Carsten

Timothy Collinson

TRAVELLER

Science-Fiction Adventure in  
the Far Future



TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

March Harrier Publishing

is like, without going into excessive detail. Details like names of local notables, artwork, and so on give a 'three-dimensional' feel, rather than merely being flats for the PCs to act in front of. Even if you don't choose to use this as an adventure in your own campaign, borrowing the "scenery" isn't difficult.

Major highlights include a tour of a mine, a formal dinner, a mission to rescue some stranded miners, and an attack by a flock(?) of not-birds. Any of them can be turned into something memorable for the stopover, but at the same time, they won't affect the overall arc of the adventure. All of them have the potential to be profitable, or to lead to future profitable opportunities; all of them also have the spice of danger—even though this leg of the journey is supposed to be "uneventful". Ultimately, whether it's memorable or not is going to be up to the referee and players; Mr Collinson has simply set out the tools needed.

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

There is little in the way of illustration; most are utilitarian rather than merely decorative. Nevertheless, formatting and white space are used well, and the result does not promote eyestrain (unless you try to read it on a screen that's too small or too-low resolution).

Evaluation: A good choice for adding to your shelf of "one-shot" or "drop-in" adventures.

(Note to US purchasers: The complimentary copy I received was formatted for A4 paper (8.3x11.7). This is OK for reading on larger or high-resolution displays, but will be distorted if printed on US Letter paper. A reduction to 66% and rotation will fit well for 2-up landscape printing on US Letter paper.)



## Doing It My Way

## Character Generation Rules

### The Traveller's Aid Society: Character Generation for Classic Traveller

by Greg Alan Cairns

Ubiquitous and simultaneously unobtrusive, the Traveller's Aid Society (TAS) is one of the most enduring features of the *Traveller* universe. Somehow this Imperium-spanning, seemingly ever-present but somehow innocuous mega-corporation is frequently the locale for the opening scene of many adventures, yet it remains above reproach and beyond suspicion. The Traveller News Service (TNS) is frequently the source of adventure enigmas, clues, red herrings, missing pieces and other important information. But, despite all this, the *Traveller* canon is almost bereft of any deep examination of the TAS, or of its activities. Is it a galaxy-wide secret society? An interstellar intelligence agency? A vile and/or craven megacorporation (is there any other kind?)? A centuries old Ponzi scheme?

Or, is it exactly what it appears to be – a benign provider of inexpensive lodgings, unbiased news, a "friend with benefits" expressed through bimonthly high passage tickets, and the logical starting point for adventures? And what about the people "behind the bar"? What about the mysterious "blackballers" whose concerns can be assuaged by a simple 1MCr payment? Are they simple hosteliers and membership administrators? Or are their means and motives more sinister, or enlightened? And lastly, wouldn't some number of former TAS employees become Travellers themselves, no longer content to just hear

about how poorly the patron's assignment went but, thinking that – if given the chance – they could have done it better themselves?

While the mysteries of the TAS are many, this article gives some sense of the Society's organizational structure, operations, culture and customs as part of an expanded character generation system using Classic Traveller rules.

#### The Basics

The Traveller's Aid Society (TAS) is an Imperium-spanning private non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides a number of services (e.g., hostels, some high-end hotels at select Class A starports, news and information, legal and medical services)<sup>1</sup> to members and non-members (at higher prices) travelling throughout Charted Space.

The TAS News and Information department – The Traveller News Service (TNS) – is the major news agency of the Imperium and one of the premier interstellar news reporting services within Charted Space. The TNS is owned by TAS, and it has bureaus on most major worlds throughout the Imperium and representatives at most starports.

Just as every Marine is a rifleman and every Sailor is a fireman, every TAS Aide is, at their core, a customer service representative, dedicated to making the tumultuous and often troubled lives of Travellers as easy as possible. Want to be hired by a sketchy patron for questionably illegal services? No

<sup>1</sup> – TAS advertisement "In these troubles times, it's good to know you've got a friend," MegaTraveller Journal #1, 1991, pg. 14. This ad inspired the infamous infowebbs meme: "TAS: your friend with benefits."

(Continued on page 4)

## Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 3)

problem, just hang about a hostel's accommodating bar long enough and you'll likely find one. Need a gunshot wound patched at 0300 with no questions asked? On-site medics are available! Looking for a shipping container full of live groats for possible smuggling purposes? See the helpful Concierge in the lobby. TAS is always there for its members, skillfully riding the line between law levels and taking advantage of the benefits, and loopholes, extrality provides.

TAS has, oddly, never done a great job at self-promotion, despite having an entire department (Marketing and Promotions) dedicated to that task. A counter-argument is that TAS is so well known, it doesn't "need" to advertise. During the centuries since TAS's founding, Imperial infowebbs have been flooded with satirical advertising slogans for TAS and, as with all good satire, they are often most funny because they are at least partially true. One favorite is: "TAS – when you need it cheap, fast and legal (pick only two please)"; another goes "TAS – for when every shred of evidence absolutely positively needs to disappear overnight."

### Character Generation Process

1. Roll 2D6 six times for character UPP
  - 1a. Determine homeworld and Starport Class
2. Decide what character will do at age 18 – apply for College, for TAS Academy or Enlist in TAS
3. **College** – roll for Admission; if unsuccessful, either roll for Admission to TAS Academy, Enlist in TAS, or wait (and age) one year and roll for College Admission again.
  - 3a. If Admitted to College, roll for Success; if unsuccessful, leave College one year older and then either roll for Admission to TAS Academy or Enlist in TAS. Characters may not attempt success at College again.
  - 3b. If Successful at College, roll to determine Education, and then roll to determine whether

character is an Honor's Graduate. Honor's Graduates may select their first Departmental Assignment if they successfully Enlist in TAS.

4. **TAS Academy** – roll for Admission, if unsuccessful, Enlist in TAS or wait (and age) one year and roll for admission to TAS Academy again.
  - 4a. If Admitted to TAS Academy (which also means characters have successfully enlisted in TAS), roll for Success. If unsuccessful, leave TAS Academy one year older and then roll to determine TAS Department Assignment, then resolve the shortened (1 year) Duty Assignment.
  - 4b. If Successful, roll to determine Education and then roll to determine whether character is an Honor's Graduate. Honor's Graduates may select their first Departmental Assignment. Note skills awarded for graduating from TAS Academy.
5. **Enlistment** – all characters may attempt to Enlist in TAS; if unsuccessful, character may wait (and age) one year and roll again for Enlistment.
6. **Term of Service** – Once Enlistment is successful, enlistees may apply for Admission to TAS Academy during their first, second or third terms in lieu of determining Departmental Assignment. If successful, follow rules for TAS Academy; if unsuccessful, roll for Departmental Assignment. If enlistee does not want to apply for TAS Academy, roll for Departmental Assignment. Note skills awarded through Initial Training.
  - 6a. Once Department Assignment is determined, roll to determine Duty Assignment (two assignments per term).
  - 6b. Assignment Resolution – determine whether the character Survived, what Skills they may have earned, and whether they earned either an Appointment to Management OR a Promotion during the Duty Assignment.

(Continued on page 5)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 4)

- 6c. If character fails Survival roll, then character must Muster-Out.
7. **Re-Enlistment** – characters must roll to re-enlist after 2nd Duty Assignment of each Term. If they fail re-enlistment, then character must Muster-Out. If character does not want to re-enlist, they still must roll to determine if they can Muster-Out. On a 2D6 roll of 12 the character is automatically re-enlisted for another term of service. Upon re-enlistment, repeat Duty Assignment and Assignment Resolution. No TAS character may serve more than 7 terms.
8. **Mustering-Out** – characters earn Muster-Out benefits based on management level achieved and the number of full (4 year) terms they served. Mustering-Out half-way through a service term means that term is not counted when determining the number of Muster-Out rolls a character has earned.
- 8a. Skills Cap – no character may possess a combination of skills and skill levels greater than the sum of their INT and EDU. The player may determine how to alter the character's skills (but not their INT & EDU) to fit within this limitation.
9. **Aging** – starting at age 34, characters age per the Aging rules of *Traveller*.

## Getting Started

TAS characters can originate anywhere within the Third Imperium wherever there is a Class A or B starport:

Players should choose a home-world hosting a class A or B starport, where the majority of TAS facilities are located, before beginning the expanded character generation system provided hereafter.

After that, they can roll roll 2D6 for each of the traditional personal characteristics: Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Endurance (END), Intelligence

(INT), Education (EDU) and Social Standing (SOC), identical to basic *Traveller* character generation.

The TAS character begins their career at age 18.

## College

A character may attempt to obtain a college education before enlisting in the TAS. College provides increased education and potentially better opportunities for assignment within the TAS.

Using the table below, the player should first roll to determine if the character has been accepted to college. If not, the character remains age 18 and can attempt to enlist in the TAS or apply to TAS Academy. If admitted to College, the player then rolls to determine if the character is successful during their FOUR years at college. If the roll fails, the character becomes age 19 and can attempt to enlist in the TAS.

If successful, roll to determine the increase to the character's EDU; any modified roll less than 1 becomes a 1. Finally, roll to determine if the character graduated with honors – a designated Honors Graduate receives an automatic EDU of A (10) or an EDU of +1, whichever is greater. Once graduated, the character is 22 years old, but has NOT completed their first term of service (for purposes of determining Mustering Out benefits).

College Term Resolution	
<b>Admission</b>	7+
DM +1 if	INT 9+ or SOC 9+
DM +2 if	EDU 9+
<b>Success</b>	7+
DM +1 if	EDU 9+ or SOC 9+
DM +2 if	INT 8+
<b>Education</b>	+1D-3, min 1
DM +1 if	INT 9+
<b>Honors</b>	10+
DM +1 if	EDU A+ (after applying Education)
<i>Note: DMs are cumulative</i>	

(Continued on page 6)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 5)

## Joining TAS

All characters initiate their TAS careers by enlisting, either in lieu of, or after, attending college. Any character – even college graduates – may attempt to join TAS by applying for admission to TAS Academy per the instructions in the following section. If admitted, follow the TAS Academy instructions.

If a character fails to be admitted to TAS Academy (or chooses not to apply) they may still attempt to enlist in TAS, details below.

## TAS Academy

Characters (event College graduates) may apply for admission to TAS Academy once during their first (1st), second (2nd) or third (3rd) term of service, but not thereafter. TAS Academy is not a “graduate school” but an educational opportunity for non-college graduates; however, even college graduates can benefit from attending TAS, as doing so provides increased education, an appointment to management, and potentially better opportunities for assignment within the TAS. Using the table below, the player should first roll to determine if the character has been accepted to TAS Academy. If not, the character remains whatever age they were at the start of the term, and then resolves the remainder of that term accordingly.

TAS Academy Resolution	
<b>Admission</b>	8+ (one attempt only, during terms 1-3)
DM +1 if	INT 9+ or SOC 9+, attempt is in term 3
DM +2 if	EDU A+
<b>Success</b>	8+
DM +1 if	EDU 9+
DM +2 if	INT 8+
<b>Education</b>	+1D-4, min 1
DM +1 if	INT 9+
<b>Honors</b>	9+
DM +1 if	EDU A+ (after applying Education) or INT 9+
Note: DMs are cumulative	

If admitted, the player then rolls to determine if the character is successful during their *two* years at Academy; if a character fails to be admitted to TAS Academy they can enlist per the rules below. Alternatively, a character may apply for TAS Academy again one year later, with a corresponding increase in age, if they don't wish to enlist.

If the Survival roll fails, the character's age increases by one year and they return to their Department Assignment for the second year of their two year duty assignment. If characters have not yet been assigned a department (due to entering TAS via the Academy), roll to determine the Department Assignment and then resolve the remainder of that Duty Assignment.

If the Survival roll is successful, then roll to determine the increase to the character's EDU; any modified roll less than 1 becomes a 1.

Finally, roll to determine if the character graduated with honors; a designated Honors Graduate receives an automatic EDU of A (10) or an EDU of +1, whichever results in the greater benefit.

TAS Academy graduates are appointed to management at Level M1, receive the skills Liaison-1 and Steward-1, may roll for a skill on the *TAS Life* or *Management* tables, and have aged two years.

Once graduated, the character has completed one-half term of service (e.g., two years of a four year term). The remaining two-year Duty Assignment must be resolved to complete the term of service: roll 1D6 for assignment to one of six departments (TAS Academy Honors Graduates may choose their department assignment) then resolve that duty assignment per the tables provided.

## Enlistment

TAS is organized into six departments, each with its own enlistment requirements, as shown on the

(Continued on page 7)



# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 6)

table below. If a player's enlistment roll is successful then the character has joined TAS and now rolls 1D6 to determine their initial branch assignment.

To enlist in TAS, roll 5+ on 2D6; DM +1 if character is a college graduate, DM +2 if they are an Honors Graduate. There is no draft, and a character can attempt to enlist once per year until successful (with corresponding increases in age).

College Honors Graduates may select their initial Departmental Assignment.

TAS Departmental Assignments		
ID	Department	Best Known for
1	Libraries and Archives	Issuing Amber/Red Zone determinations
2	Lodgings	Maintaining TAS Hostels at Class A and B Starports
3	Marketing and Promotion	Organizing TAS Lecture Circuit, and Junior Explorers' Club <sup>2</sup>
4	Membership and Benefits	Processing membership applications, distributing bimonthly High Passage vouchers
5	News and Information	Transmitting <i>Travellers' News Service</i> (TNS), publishing <i>Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society</i> (JTAS).
6	Tours and Expeditions	Organizing safari and archaeological site visits

Upon enlistment, characters are non-management TAS employees; generically, employees of the Traveller's Aid Society are called Aides (singular: Aide); e.g., "a TAS Aide" or "some TAS Aides." *TAS-man/TAS-men* is often heard in some quarters, but is totally wrong. Non-management titles are granted to Aides based on terms of service:

Travellers' Aid Society Non-Managerial Titles			
Term	Title	Term	Title
1	Aide	5	Chief Aide
2	Senior Aide	6	Senior Chief Aide
3	Aide First Class	7	Master Chief Aide
4	Lead Aide		

2—Junior Explorers is a TAS-sponsored, volunteer-led youth organization designed to foster STEM education and interest in STEM careers. Enjoys a friendly rivalry with the IN/IISS-sponsored Imperial Star Scouts. Often criticized for its perceived attempts to build a customer base and brand loyalty using

No TAS employee may re-enlist after their 7th term

All departments have unofficial nicknames for their personnel (and for those working in other departments) often based on local, cultural, or historic memes, off-color jokes, double-entendres, good-natured ribbing, mild (or spice) insults, or bad puns.

Initial training for TAS employees includes one skill based on Department assignment, and one skill rolled for on either the **Department Skills** or **TAS Life** table below. Initial training does not age the character and is considered part of their first two-year duty assignment. Players can then resolve the remainder of the first two-year duty assignment for their characters, but skip the skills roll.

Initial Training	
Department	Skill
Libraries and Archives	Computer-1
Lodgings	Steward-1
Marketing and Promotion	Recruiting-1
Membership and Benefits	Admin-1
News and Information	Journalism-1
Tours and Expeditions	Survival-1

## Duty Assignments

During each four year term players roll to resolve two (2), two-year duty assignments (but only one duty assignment if characters attend TAS Academy during that term). Based on the results of these rolls, characters may be forced to end (by failing survival rolls), but may not choose to quit, their career half-way through a four-year term; players should keep accurate track of their character's age as aging rolls begin at age 34.

the natural curiosity of children (e.g., Disney's The Mickey Mouse Club; Nickelodeon's Blue's Clues, etc.) – see "Jeramii Boden" by Rob Caswell, Mega-Traveller Journal #3, 1992.

(Continued on page 8)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 7)

Duty Assignments						
2D6	Libraries and Archives	Lodgings	News and Information	Marketing and Promotion	Membership and Benefits	Tours and Expeditions
2	On-Job Training	On-Job Training	On-Job Training	On-Job Training	On-Job Training	On-Job Training
3	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment
4	Routine	Routine	Special Assignment	Routine	Routine	Special Assignment
5	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine
6	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine
7	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine	Routine
8	Routine	Routine	Professional Development	Routine	Routine	Routine
9	Routine	Professional Development	Professional Development	Routine	Routine	Professional Development
10	Professional Development	Special	Special	Professional Development	Professional Development	Professional Development
11	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment	Special Assignment
12	Sabbatical	Sabbatical	Sabbatical	Sabbatical	Sabbatical	Sabbatical
13	Transfer	Transfer	Transfer	Transfer	Transfer	Transfer
DMs	+1 if EDU 8+	+1 if INT 8+	+1 if SOC 8+	+1 if INT 8+	+1 if SOC 8+	+1 if STR or END 8+
<i>Note: DMs are cumulative</i>						

**Sabbatical** can only be earned during third (3rd) term or greater; reroll if assigned prior to 3rd term.

**Routine:** Day-to-day job assignments. Characters have the opportunity to learn new skills and earn appointment or promotion.

**On-Job Training:** Similar to a routine assignment, but budget limitations and or time constraints prevent the character from learning new skills. Existing skills may be improved.

**Professional Development:** The character is being sent to a formal course of instruction (School) for skill or management training. Attending School can only occur once per term – roll again if necessary.

**Special Assignment:** something unusual to break the corporate monotony. While a Special Assignment might not take up the entire two-year Duty Assignment period, it is the most important activity the character experiences during that period. Roll 1D6 against the Special Assignment table indexed against the character's departmental assignment.

## Assignment Resolution

Players resolve their character's two-year duty assignments using the table below. A career with the TAS involves some risk, and different departments and their associated assignments enjoy varying degrees of risk. However, riskier assignments typically result in greater opportunities to learn skills, receive management appointments, and be promoted. All of these will benefit a character when they muster out, and will make them better Traveller's of subsequent adventures post-career.

Characters can self-advocate for Appointment / Promotion by electing to take a negative DM on their survival rolls in order to receive a positive DM of equal value on their Appointment to Management or Promotion rolls. Similarly, a character can take a positive DM against survival by taking a negative DM against appointment or promotion. In either scenario, this can be done only once per Duty Assignment period. Note, characters cannot achieve

(Continued on page 9)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 8)

Assignment Resolution						
	On-Job Training	Professional Development	Routine	Special Assignment	Sabbatical	TAS Academy Instructor (Note 1)
Survival	Auto	3+	4+	5+	6+	Auto
	DM+1if	INT 8+	INT 8+	INT 8+	INT 8+	
Recognition	11+	12+	9+	8+	None	10+
Appointment to Management	11+	9+	10+	7+	6+	None
	DM +1if SOC 9+	SOC 9+	SOC 9+	SOC 9+	SOC 9+	
Promotion	11+	9+	10+	7+	6+	None
	DM +1 if INT A+ or EDU A+	INT A+ or EDU A+	INT A+ or EDU A+	INT A+ or EDU A+	INT A+ or EDU A+	
Skills (Note 2)	+1 any skill already held only.	1 [TAS Life], 1 [Schools]	1	3	2	+1 SOC, 2

Note: DMs are cumulative. See above for optional DMs on Survival and Appointment or Promotion. Characters may not promote during the same assignment in which they are appointed to management.

Note 1: This assignment cannot be rolled. See **Skills and Expertise**, below, for more information.

Note 2: Unsigned number is number of rolls on skills table. Unsigned number followed by table name in brackets indicates number of rolls on bracketed table only. "Schools" table is as for Professional Development. Signed number followed by skill or attribute awards that.

appointment to management AND promotion during the same duty assignment period. Roll for Promotion only after achieving an Appointment to Management, and not during the same duty assignment period when the appointment to management was achieved; non-managers cannot be promoted.

Characters can also take a negative DM on their survival role in order to receive a positive DM on their Recognition roll. A player can divide the benefits of this positive DM between both Recognition and Appointment to Management or Promotion. If Recognition is earned, the character has done something to merit a Memorandum of Recognition (MoR) which will be placed in their personnel jacket. Each MoR earns the player a +1 DM on a single Muster-Out roll; MoR DMs are not cumulative but each MoR DM can be combined with other Muster-Out roll DMs, if applicable. For example, Eneri has two MoRs – when mustering out, he gets one +1 DM per Muster-Out roll; he cannot combine these MoR DMs for a +2 DM on a Muster-Out roll.

If a character fails a survival roll, it is at the GM's discretion whether the character has sustained a career-ending injury or whether that character has died. If the GM has determined the character is injured but alive, immediately Muster-Out the character without resolving for skills, appointment or promotion during that term. The character will have aged one year, but will not have completed either the two-year duty assignment or the term of service, which is important when calculating benefits.

Re-enlistment DM affects next re-enlistment roll if this Duty Assignment does not occur during 2nd half of service term.

## Sabbatical

TAS encourages its employees to travel, in part to help develop the employee and to also engender empathy for the needs of Travellers. In exchange for this paid learning experience-cum-vacation, TAS employees are expected to produce TNS dispatches, write JTAS articles about their travels, and do their best to recruit new members; as a result, Sabbatical-

(Continued on page 10)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 9)

Special Assignments		
1D	Event	Effects
<b>Libraries and Archives</b>		
1	Your new insights are published in JTAS	(DMs: +1 appointment or promotion; +1 re-enlistment)
2	Your research has been discredited	(DMs: -1 survival; -1 re-enlistment)
3	Accidentally damage an Ancient artifact	(DMs: -1 survival; -2 appointment or promotion; -1 re-enlistment)
4	Re-discover knowledge lost in the Archives	(DMs: +1 appointment or promotion)
5	Temporarily lose an Ancient artifact somewhere in the Archives	(DMs: -1 appointment or promotion)
6	Rescue priceless items from a TAS Library on a newly 'Red Zoned' world	(Skills: Survival +1; DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion; +1 re-enlistment)
<b>Lodgings</b>		
1	Serve as Acting General Manager of TAS hostel	(Skills: Leader +1; DMs: +1 appointment or promotion)
2	Food poisoning afflicts your staff and guests	(Skills: Medical +1; DM: -1 survival; -1 appointment or promotion)
3	Establish a new TAS hostel at a newly upgraded Class B starport	(Skills: Bribery +1; DMs: +1 appointment or promotion)
4	Defend against accusations of embezzlement	(DMs: -1 survival; -1 appointment or promotion; -1 re-enlistment)
5	Your hostel is the scene of a particularly violent crime	(Skills: Legal +1; DMs: -1 appointment or promotion)
6	Decommission a TAS hostel on newly 'Red Zoned' world	(Skills: Gun Cbt +1; DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion)
<b>News and Information</b>		
1	Publish a bylined article in JTAS	(DMs: +1 appointment or promotion)
2	Defend against accusations of plagiarism	(DMs: -1 survival; -1 appointment or promotion)
3	Embed with Belters for in-depth reporting of their struggles against interference from megacorporations	(Skills: Vacc Suit +1; DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion)
4	Investigate corrupt corporate practices	(DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion)
5	During field assignment, you are taken hostage by Ine Givar terrorists	(DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion; -1 for re-enlistment)
6	Embed with mercenary unit as war correspondent	(Skills: Survival +1; DMs: -2 survival; +2 appointment or promotion)

takers automatically get Journalism-1 and Recruiting-1 (or +1 if the character already has these skills).

Starting with their third (3rd) term, a character is allowed one and only one sabbatical assignment within a three term of service period (12 years or 6 duty assignment periods). Characters may choose to not take a sabbatical, and if they do so simply reroll for Duty Assignment, but with a -1 DM. Players should reroll Sabbatical assignments if they occur when the character is ineligible to take a sabbatical (e.g., not yet 3rd term, or less than 3 terms since previous sabbatical).

Sabbatical takes one duty assignment (2 years) and results in two (2) skills rolls which can be taken

against *any* department (except for Management unless the character has earned an Appointment to Management). Lastly, taking Sabbatical results in an automatic re-enlistment unless the character fails their survival throw.

Transfers		
1D	Transfer to	Skill
1	Libraries and Archives	Computer-1
2	Lodgings	Steward-1
3	News and Information	Recruiting-1
4	Marketing and Promotion	Admin-1
5	Membership and Benefits	Journalism-1
6	Tours and Expeditions	Survival-1

(Continued on page 11)



# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 10)

Special Assignments (cont'd)		
1D	Event	Effects
<b>Marketing and Promotions</b>		
1	Your new marketing campaign fails	(DMs: -1 appointment or promotion; -1 re-enlistment)
2	Your Junior Explorers team accidentally discovers a new Ancient site	(DMs: +2 appointment or promotion; +2 re-enlistment)
3	The lecturer you booked has been proven a fraud	(DM -1 for appointment or promotion)
4	Your Junior Explorers team wins the sector robotics competition championship	(Skills: Robotics +1, Robot Ops +1)
5	Defend yourself against charges of embezzlement	(DMs: -1 survival; -1 appointment or promotion)
6	Rescue a Junior Explorers team trapped on a newly 'Amber Zoned' world	(DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion)
<b>Membership and Benefits</b>		
1	Exceed new membership quota	(DMs: +1 appointment or promotion)
2	Accidentally make a financial accounting error	(DMs: -1 survival; -1 appointment or promotion; -1 re-enlistment)
3	Uncover fraud within your department	(DMs: -1 survival; +2 appointment or promotion; +1 re-enlistment)
4	Fail to achieve new membership quote	(DMs: -1 appointment or promotion)
5	Implement significant cost-savings across your department	(DMs: +1 appointment or promotion; +2 re-enlistment)
6	Accidentally corrupt benefits database	(DMs: -1 appointment or promotion)
<b>Tours and Expeditions</b>		
1	Rescue a Noble's safari party from disaster	(DMs: +2 appointment or promotion; Characteristics: SOC +1)
2	Accidentally damage an Ancient site	(DMs: -2 appointment or promotion; -1 re-enlistment)
3	Capture a new 'big game' species	(DMs: -1 survival; +1 appointment or promotion)
4	Lose a Patron's prized hunting Bloodvark	(DMs: -1 appointment or promotion)
5	Discover something new about an existing Ancient site	(DMs: +1 appointment or promotion; +1 re-enlistment)
6	Lose a Patron during safari	(DMs: -1 survival; -2 appointment or promotion; -1 reenlistment)

## Transfer

On an assignment of "Transfer", the player roll 1D for transfer to another department; reroll results of the character's current assignment. Receive the new department's Initial Training skill, then resolve the assignment per the rules for that department. Transfers may be declined; doing so is a mandatory DM -1 on the next re-enlistment roll.

## Skills and Expertise

During a character's TAS career they will perform assignments in different departments, allowing the character to obtain and potentially improve various skills. Should a player survive an assignment, the character will be awarded skills as indicated in the table. Where the character receives some number of skills not explicitly stated in the table, each such

skill is determined by rolling 1D on the Career Skills table. Character get an additional skill roll on Appointment to Management, and on each Promotion.

Any character may choose to roll for a TAS Life skill; otherwise characters should roll for skills that correspond to their Department. Only managers may roll for Management skills; only characters on Sabbatical may roll on the Sabbatical table.

If a character earns any skill greater than level -3 they earn Instruction-1 instead, and their next Duty Assignment is as a TAS Academy instructor: Survival is automatic, and their SOC increases +1, players get two rolls on the Skills Table, but Appointment or Promotion is not permitted. Roll for reenlistment at the end of that Duty Assignment.

(Continued on page 12)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 11)

## Schools

Each school has duration of two years, and results in the awarding of skills and other benefits. If a character already has the skill taught at the Special Training they attended, increase that skill by one (1) level. Upon completion, have the player roll to determine whether the character's Special Training has also resulted in an appointment to management (if not already awarded, or granted as a benefit of attending some schools). If a character fails a survival roll during a Special Training assignment, award the character the corresponding skills at one level below that which a successful student would receive (e.g., Legal-1, Hunting-0, etc.) to reflect that they absorbed some learning during their truncated assignment period. A character cannot attend the same school more than once, unless they failed their survival roll during their first attendance at that school, but they can attend as many schools as TAS will

send them to. Following the two-year School assignment, resolve the service term's other two-year Duty Assignment period; if the term is over, re-enlistment is automatic and characters proceed into their next term automatically.

### Professional Development

1D	School	Benefits
1	Hospitality	Steward-1, Liaison-1
2	Journalism	Investigation-1, Carousing-1
3	Wilderness	Hunting-1, Survival-1
4	Paralegal	Legal-2, Appointment/Promotion
5	Emergency Medicine	Medical-2, Appointment/Promotion
6+	TAS Academy	<i>1st time:</i> Liaison-1, Steward-1, Appointment/Promotion <i>Subsequent:</i> Assigned as instructor, resolve as <i>TAS Instructor</i> assignment above.

*DM +1 if INT, EDU or SOC 9+; DMs are not mandatory but player's choice to use. DMs are cumulative.*

*"Appointment/Promotion": The character is appointed to management. If the character has previously been appointed to management, receive a promotion instead.*

### Departmental Skills

1D	TAS Life	Libraries and Archives	Lodgings	Marketing and Promotion	Membership and Benefits	News and Information	Tours and Expeditions	Management	Sabbatical
1	Streetwise	Computer	Customs	Instruction	Computer	Computer	Hunting	Liaison	Streetwise
2	Carousing	Admin	Mechanical	Admin	Recruiting	Streetwise	Customs	Jack-of-all-Trades	Vacc Suit
3	Brawling	Survey	Steward	Carousing	Admin	Journalism	Survival	Leader	Zero-G
4	Admin	Customs	Computer	Liaison	Legal	Carousing	Mechanical	Legal	Jack-of-all-Trades
5	Gambling	Robot Operation	Medical	Recruiting	Leader	Robot Operation	<i>Gun</i>	Trader	<i>Gun</i>
6	<i>Blade</i>	Forgery	Legal	Customs	Forgery	Bribery	Equestrian	Broker	Ship's Boat

**Customs** is knowledge of various cultures, languages, histories and traditions which give a character a DM +1 per skill level when rolling for reactions from NPCs

**Forgery** can involve both the creation and detection of false documents or other artifacts

**Journalism** is the ability to make marketable (sellable) news materials (print, video, imagery)<sup>3</sup>

**Robot Operation** can include controlling drones used to capture imagery for broadcast

All other skills are as per the basic *Traveller* rules; skills in *italics* are cascade skills, and a particular specialization of the skill must be declared upon receipt of the skill.

<sup>3</sup>— See "Journalism and the Stars," Anders Blixt, *Challenge magazine*, pg. 45, 1988.

(Continued on page 13)

# Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 12)

## Management Position Levels and Titles

TAS Management Titles			
Level	Libraries and Archives	Lodgings	Marketing and Promotion
M1	Cataloguer	Chief Porter	Publicist
M2	Curator	Night Manager	Promoter
M3	Appraiser	Concierge	Advertiser
M4	Librarian	Manager	Marketeer
M5	Head Librarian	General Manager	Spokesophont
M6	Archivist	Regional Manager	Brand Ambassador
	Membership and Benefits	News and Information	Tours and Expeditions
M1	Lead Generator	Reporter	Attendant
M2	Recruiter	Correspondent	Purser
M3	Sales representative	Journalist	Chief Purser
M4	Membership Administrator	Columnist	Guide
M5	Benefits Manager	Assignment Editor	Explorer
M6	Superintendent	Managing Editor	Pioneer

Non-management personnel are called Aides and earn titles based on their years of service. When a character earns an appointment to management they are given a title reflective of their departmental position and level. When a character transfers between departments, they retain their management level and assume a title reflective of their new departmental position. The table shows the levels and titles for each Department.

**Libraries and Archives** and **News and Information** characters of all management levels receive a DM of +1 when trying to determine the veracity of rumors or detecting when someone is lying

**Archivists** should be provided by the referee with full awareness of any pertinent Red/Amber zone UWPs, and the factors affecting the system's zone determination

**General Managers** run individual TAS hostels and can grant TAS membership for providing outstanding service to the TAS<sup>4</sup>

**Regional Managers** oversee General Managers<sup>4</sup> – their exact span of control (e.g., number of hostels across how large an area) is at the discretion of the game referee

### Re-enlistment

At the end of each term of service a character successfully survives, they may re-enlist if the player throws the 4+ on 2D; re-enlistment is mandatory on a throw of 12+. No re-enlistment is allowed after 7th term unless roll results in 12+.

### Mustering Out

Mustering-Out Benefits		
ID	Material Benefits	Cash Benefits (no more than 3 rolls on this table)
1	Blade or Gun	2500 cr
2	Vacc Suit	5000 cr
3	Annuity (10cr x SOC x # of terms) per month	10,000 cr
4	SOC +1	15,000 cr
5	Annuity (25cr x SOC x # of terms) per month	20,000 cr
6	StarPass (see below)	25,000 cr
7	TAS Membership	50,000 cr
DMs	+1 if 5+ terms of service	+1 if level M5+, Gambling-1+, or SOC 9+

A new muster-out benefits table specific for TAS Aides is provided. Benefits are similar but not identical to those provided in the basic *Traveller* rules. TAS Aides do not earn pensions, but instead have the opportunity to earn a separate retirement income plan called Annuity. Characters receive one mustering-out benefit for each full term of service (4 years) they have successfully completed. Levels M1 and M2 receive one extra benefit; levels M3 and M4 receive two extra benefits, and levels M5 and M6 receive three extra benefits.

4— See "Anton Cagliari" by Greg Videll, Challenge #66, 1992.

(Continued on page 14)

## Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 13)

Upon first receipt of a gun or blade benefit, a specific weapon must be selected; second and subsequent weapons benefits may be taken as a skill in the specific weapon selected. Similarly with Vacc Suit, first receipt is the suit itself; subsequent benefits increase the character's Vacc Suit skill.

For each Memorandum of Recognition (MoR) a character has earned the player can take another +1 DM on a single Muster-Out roll. This DM is cumulative with other DMs, except for other MoRs. For example, a character with two MoRs can take a +1 DM on each of two Muster-Out rolls but cannot take a +2 DM on a single Muster-Out roll

Vacc Suit: on first roll character gets a personalized high TL vacc suit and vacc suit skill-0; subsequent rolls of vacc suit increase the character's skill level.

Annuities are cumulative – awarded each time a player earns them with a benefits roll.

**StarPass** is a travel voucher that allows the bearer to take one Low Passage trip per month, or one Middle Passage trip every two months. Unused Pas-

sages can be sold for up to 90% of their value. This benefit can only be earned once; ignore and reroll if awarded more than once.

**TAS membership** can only be awarded once; ignore and reroll if awarded more than once.

Skill Limitations: no character may have skills (or combined total levels of skills) greater than the sum of their INT and EDU. Any skill awarded that would do so becomes an automatic level -0; there is no limit to level -0 skills a character may possess.

Aging: is conducted in accordance with *Traveller* rules.

### Resume Writing

After a character has left or retired from the TAS, a basic resume of the character's career should be prepared and noted using TAS Form 2 listing final UPPs, age, terms served, assignments held, management positions and levels achieved, skills acquired, and possessions and credits available.

The character is now ready to begin Travelling.

Enjoy and good luck! 🎲

## The Prep Room

### Jottings #2: Inheritance

by Jeff Zeitlin

While they don't necessarily have to be, naming patterns (see Jottings #1, *Freelance Traveller*, November/December 2017) can be influenced by inheritance patterns and patterns of exercise of power (where the latter two can but need not be linked). This is a summary of some inheritance/power patterns that have been described as existing in the real world or in published fiction:

**Cognatic Primogeniture:** Descent in the senior male line only. If the line becomes extinct, go back to the most recent generation where the heir had a brother, and follow the brother's line—through

males only—to the present day. This was a relatively common pattern among European royalty. (An obvious variation on this could be *female* 'cognatic' primogeniture, which appears to be the canonical [or at least semi-canonical] mode for inheritance in the Matriarchy (and thus for the Duchy) of Mora.)

**Agnatic Primogeniture:** Descent may be through female lines, but preference is given to male over female, even if the female is the elder. In **Absolute Agnatic Primogeniture**, no preference for males is recognized; the eldest is the heir, regardless of sex. Until comparatively recently, some Commonwealth countries specified Cognatic Primogeniture; others specified Agnatic Primogeniture or Absolute Agnatic Primogeniture, and the result was that in the event

(Continued on page 15)



## The Prep Room

(Continued from page 14)

of siblings, an elder sister and a younger brother, being potential heirs, or if the only direct issue of the Monarch was female, but there was a male cousin, it was possible for each to be considered the monarch of some Commonwealth countries, but not others. The Perth Agreement (See Wikipedia), negotiated in 2011 and declared to be in effect in 2015, specified that all Commonwealth countries were to pass local legislation affirming absolute agnatic primogeniture for the respective crowns, and all such legislation was to take effect simultaneously.

Discussion in several Traveller forums, and possibly attested in canonical material, suggests that traditional Vilani (including, or perhaps especially, Luriani *Mmarislusant* [See *Minor Alien Module 1: Luriani*, and “Funny Fish”, *Freelance Traveller*]) use **absolute agnatic tercerogeniture**—that is, the *third* child inherits (per the referenced material, presumably the first becomes a *shugilii*, the second goes into the military).

One possibility that leaves inheritance an open question as long as possible is **ultimogeniture**—the *last* child (subject to e.g., cognatic restrictions) is the one that inherits.

**Matrilineal descent** can complicate matters, especially if power vests in the male. In **matrilineal cognatic primogeniture**, your son isn't your heir; rather, it's your eldest sister's eldest son that's your heir—and your son may be the heir of your wife's eldest brother. If it's not *primogeniture*, it can get even more complex. This is claimed to be fairly common in parts of Micronesia and can lead to interesting family politics, because while your sister doesn't own the family fortune (you do), she is the one raising your heir and he will be managing day-to-day running of the estate when you are too old to work. Be nice to your (eldest) sister, or she might raise your nephew to hate you and give you an unpleasant old age! (This also was the inheritance/power pattern of the Chosen in *Farnham's Freehold* by Rob-

ert A. Heinlein, and in the story, Ponse, the central Chosen character, had to be on guard against various assassination plots by his nephew.)

The way the Warrant of Restoration is written, there's no method specified of determining the heir (trust me on this; I wrote the thing), and the Moot pretty much is expected to confirm except in cases of obvious incompetence. That implicitly leaves it up to the dynast to decide, and the “current” Alkhalikoi dynasty appears to use absolute agnatic primogeniture. There's nothing to say, though, that the heir can't be determined simply by the Emperor **nominating** some individual he deems appropriately deserving, or **adopting** such a person. (Canonically, Cleon II essentially nominated his Chancellor, Artemsus (Lentuli) as his heir, then abdicated.) The adoption route wasn't unknown among the Romans, either; Octavianus (Caesar Augustus) was adopted by Julius and named as his heir. (See Wikipedia)

In the world of Randall Garrett's *Lord Darcy*, the Plantagenets still rule the Angevin Empire, and reign over the Germanies and the Italian States. Imperium for the latter was declared at some time in the past to vest in the current Angevin king-emperor of the House of Plantagenet, and while cognatic primogeniture was expected, technically, the Angevin parliament could *choose* one of the other Plantagenet princes to become King-Emperor instead.

While it was in reality no doubt a bit messier than this description makes it sound, the old Soviet system essentially named a premier for life, and on his death—which might not have been natural—the Supreme Soviet **elected** his replacement. Arguably, modern republics—and most constitutional monarchies—use a more benign form of this. (Yes, election is a legitimate method of determining inheritance. For non-power inheritance, there's no reason that a family couldn't do something similar, and a will naming heir(s) is, essentially, a statement of election of heir(s) by an electorate of one.) ❁

### Hub Federation Ground Forces

Reviewed by "kafka"

Hub Federation Ground Forces. .

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

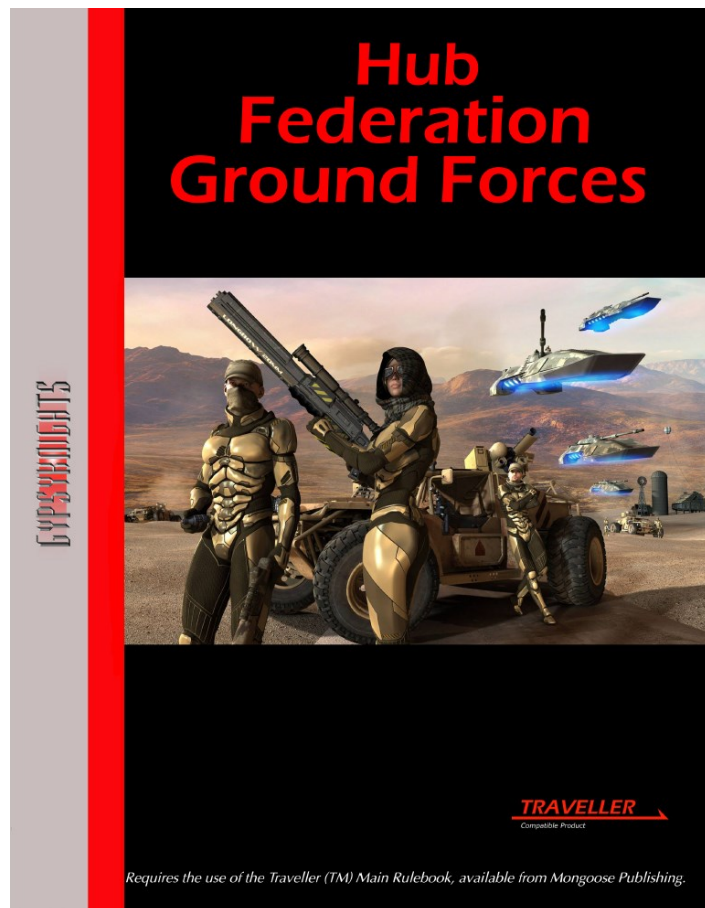
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*Traveller* Career books are often very hard to review because of the inevitable blowback of "I don't want to play an XYZ" or "what does it matter because I am retired anyhow". Classic *Traveller* solved this problem quite elegantly with *Mercenary* – postulating that the future would be run by small bands of semi-professionalized soldiers to fight in small wars and leaving the big wars to a vague notion of planetary and Imperial armies bisecting with the omnipresent Imperial Marines. Perhaps, it is the effect that *Warhammer* had on *Traveller* or just the fact that many servicemen (women) do play *Traveller* they wanted to see their experiences and stories told. There was finally a half-hearted attempt with *GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces* and a smidgen gets mentioned in the various discussions of the Imperial Navy. Thus, it is into this murky water that the ATU of the Clement Sector now treads – how to do justice a future military and honour those who serve now.

Haldeman and Heinlein were early pioneers, but since then there has a venerable explosion of Military SF – notably with David Weber which, basically is the Napoleonic wars in Space. And, given that *Traveller* is often touted as the Second Age of Sail, it might be natural for authors to follow Weber's lead. I am very happy to report that was not a path taken by GKG. Here is an honest-to-goodness account of modern warfare told from the perspective of those who have "boots on the ground". GKG has the right measure of enhancements from the *Traveller* rulebook with the default *Traveller* background (generic SF) and a future-present feel of the book and done in the economy of a small press imprint. Nice transitions with purple prose make a great alteration be-



tween just dry tables and charts or dreary rules. Great art and well thought out rules and supplementary materials make this a worthy addition to any *Traveller* campaign. Although firmly grounded in the ATU of the Clement Sector (with which it works best), it could be expanded perhaps to include a 2300AD milieu.

That said, it is very much an economy product, in spite of weighing in at 104 pages, there are few frills, but on the more positive side there is little wasted space. Not only do we get a history of the regiments (including the continuance of the Black Watch – though screeching German accented men in kilts bobbing over the cratered moonscape of an unknown world has undoubtedly been played out in countless *Traveller* campaigns) but also enough of the history of the Hub Federation that any first-time buyer would feel well acquainted with the milieu. We are treated, naturally, to the Expanded character generation, along with hooks to bring players together as a party. Wonderful vehicles are lovingly

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

described from a gravtank to a glorified troop carrier. The art of the vehicles is really top notch, but, in keeping with the overall economy and signature look of GKG – Poser art is used for the characters. Clearly they are improving their portrayal of characters all the time, as the art is showing more and more a slicker and professional look – it being computer generated still does not have the gritty realism of some digital art that is overlaid by a painter but it's getting there. And, given how difficult future character art is (because it straddles past, present and future) GKG is doing a remarkably good job.

Where the product does fall short is in giving the reader a really an in-depth feel of the change of battlespace that has occurred with the ubiquity of portable mass communications and satellites entering into the arena of war. That would require a more exhaustive look at NATO, Russian, and Chinese training manuals and clearly that was not really done here. It rather has a modern feel – right up to Vietnam – but even smaller armies (e.g., Slovenia, Argentina, or Mexico) would provide a useful counterweight. Even the contemporary German or British Army Training manuals might offer some of these insights. Even though these smaller armies do have readily the ability to launch satellites – they still must operate in a battlespace that does have an orbital component to it and merely the orbital drop capacity – but what militaries call the full spectrum dominance.

Furthermore, a great opportunity was lost when it did not detail rules and situations for mutiny, as each of these historical armies have a grandstanding tradition of revolt. Either as an Officer Revolt or swelling from below. There have been many historical precedents whereby the revolt has a dynamic of its own, including Science Fiction riffs, such as Clarke's *Songs of a Distant Earth*. Mutinies also are sometimes instrumental in setting up new regimes.

Classic *Traveller* hints at this through the concept of a mercenary ticket. However, sometimes, the point of a mutiny is correcting an alleged wrong by one's superiors or to change an existing order with soldiers acting as the catalyst. Perhaps, GKG will address this in a book of adventures dealing with soldier's tales.

Also, missing were comprehensive "Wet Navy" or "Air Forces" rules, for *Traveller* at higher tech levels with the wider use gravitics does postulate a merging of vehicles, scarce mention of how that would affect military tactics is absent. For some it heralds the return of the uber-warrior where battle dress is a man-sized mecha à la *Warhammer 40K* or more *Battlelords* with sleek vehicles that reconfigure for different world conditions. The whole idea of a standing army also means what to do during peace times and this is scarcely addressed; and on the converse side – is the Hub Federation engaged in all-out war with a foe larger than pirates? For the Third Imperium was founded upon many successful anti-piracy raids combining with new technology. Is the Hub Federation moving toward the Third Imperium model? That would mean that war is around the corner. Or is it moving toward the TNE model, many small polities waging war against each other as much as they war among themselves? Time will tell.

That aside, this is a very good and comprehensive book from GKG and a welcome addition to any Clement Sector campaign. However, in porting these rules into other settings, it has to be remembered that the Hub Federation is very small – smaller than the nascent Third Imperium of Milieu 0 which is another reason that it might fit well with more *2300AD*. Although, the *2300AD* is much harder and would be better served with a separate ground forces supplement. So this is a nice introduction to Ground Forces, notable for what it includes than what is excluded from a small press for a small milieu. 🌟

## Adventure Seeds for Travellers' Aid Society Characters

by Greg Alan Caires

Here are some adventure seeds based around TAS functions that could involve either PCs who are former TAS employees or NPCs who are current or former TAS employees; you can select from the seeds below or roll 1D6 to determine scenario and then roll 1D6 to determine its plot twist.

### I. Land Rush (Library & Archives)

Rumor has it TAS intends to lower a nearby system's zone status from Red to Amber, thereby allowing trade with that system to begin, but no one is sure which system. The party will have to use their TAS connections to ferret out the truth before it is made public, and then plan to arrive with trade goods ahead of all competitors. Doing so could lead to huge profits by introducing off-world and higher tech goods to previously interdicted peoples.

#### Possible Direction to Take This Scenario

1. **Surprise!** – While in PCs are in jumpspace, the Interdiction revocation designation was either rescinded or never sent; the PCs exit jumpspace into a system still guarded by the Imperial Navy and unhappy with those who attempt to breach the Red Zone. Fight or Flight, anyone?
2. **Betrayal** – the party's TAS contact is caught by the authorities and turns against the party before they can even leave system with their ship full of trade goods. Might be a good time for a running gun battle – in space! – to the 100 diameter limit.
3. **Bad info** – the party arrives in-system but the natives are far more sophisticated and technologically advanced than expected; have fun unloading those antiques, spaceman!
4. **Mongo loves you** – the natives are barbarians who practice something akin to a cargo cult (thanks, Scouts!), and the PCs are now their new gods. Good luck with "first contact."
5. **Race to the Finish** – the party's ship isn't the only—or even the first—to exit jumpspace, and 1D6-3 other free traders or the like fly and fight to be the first to land on the planet, make contact and sell their goods to the natives.
6. **That was easy!** – the party's ship is "first-in" and is able to sell their good for obscene profits way ahead of all competitors.

### II. Evacuate! (Lodgings)

The PCs and their ship are hired to rescue the staff from a TAS hostel – and any TAS members who might be present and in need of transport – on a nearby world that has descended into chaos due to a global pandemic.

#### Possible Direction to Take This Scenario

1. **Access Denied** – the SPA denied the PC permission to land because the situation is too dangerous. They must now find another way to make contact with the TAS staff and get them off-world alive ASAP.
2. **Nobody's Home** – upon arrival, the looted, burnt-out wreck of the hostel is empty of everyone, living or dead. Somehow the PCs must find the TAS staff amid a terrible and terrifying urban landscape or risk forfeiting 90% of their fees; but if they stay too long, the PCs risk forfeiting their lives!
3. **To the Last** – the devoted TAS staff refuses to evacuate, choosing instead to defend their hostel against rampaging marauders. The PCs must make a difficult choice – stand and fight, or somehow compel their would-be rescues to bug out before their luck runs out.
4. **No So Fast** – the TAS staff agrees to evacuate, but just as the PCs are ready to depart the starport is overrun by legions of terrified refugees

(Continued on page 19)



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 18)

similarly seeking safe passage off-world. Now the party must flee headlong to the safety of their ship *and* somehow liftoff without either leaving anyone behind or taking onboard more people than the ship can safely transport – if they are allowed to crew the ship at all!

5. **I Feel Fine** – after safely getting off-planet and once in jumpspace, one of the TAS Aides rapidly begins to show signs of being infected with the pandemic. What should the PCs do to protect themselves, the ship and their passengers?
6. **What Pandemic?** – The PCs arrive to find reports of a global pandemic have been vastly exaggerated – or have they?

### III. Adventures in Babysitting (Marketing & Promotion)

The PCs and their ship have been hired as charter for a Junior Explorers outing with their TAS chaperone to a nearby world to observe some sort of exotic (an only mildly dangerous) animal species in its natural habitat.

#### Possible Direction to Take This Scenario

1. **Jump sickness!** – Almost all the darlings become violently during their exposure to Jumpspace. Does the crew have the skills, time, technology and temperament to save their lives and avoid the worst field trip ever?
2. **Curiosity Kills** – a few of the more precocious Junior Explorers have found their way into the engineering spaces and have passed the time pressing buttons, throwing switches, etc. and have someone done something very bad to the ship. The crew needs to reverse these negative effects before the situation becomes critically terminal!
3. **Lost** – at their destination, a few of the less accomplished Junior Explorers have gotten separated from the group and is now lost in the wil-

derness. The PCs will need to find them before the only mildly dangerous exotic species they came to observe does.

4. **Captured** – the entire party or perhaps just dependent minors have been captured by someone (natives, for breakfast? Kidnappers, for ransom? etc.) and now it is up to the PCs to find a way out of this mess.
5. **Hunted** – the only mildly dangerous animal has either evolved or was grossly understood, and now the PCs are the last stand between the Junior Explorers and a fierce and capable eating-machine.
6. **Best Job Ever** – the PCs and their charges have a great time until the trip home, when the (fill in the blank) attack the ship in space and board it. Snapshot meets slapstick as the Junior Explorers help the PCs defend the ship with nothing but improvised non-lethal weapons and moxie!

### IV. Worst. Deal. Ever. (Membership & Benefits)

The PCs are hired by the local TAS Regional Manager to investigate a recent spate of highly-sophisticated counterfeit High Passages that are being sold on the secondary market to unsuspecting dupes at deep discounts, so deep even the most circumspect can't help but buy them. Unfortunately, these fake High Passages are branded as TAS-issued, and everyone – including the local authorities – are looking to TAS to clean up this problem. Meanwhile, no one is honoring anything TAS-related, clogging the starport with disgruntled and increasingly desperate passengers seeking transport off-world. The PCs must find the counterfeiter(s) and bring them to justice, but even more importantly they must find the counterfeiting equipment to ensure no else can put them to nefarious use.

(Continued on page 20)

## Active Measures

*(Continued from page 19)*

### Possible Direction to Take This Scenario

1. **Escape!** – the PCs get a lead on the counterfeiter, who has fled out-system, leaving a trail of bad High Passages in his wake. The PCs will need to figure how to arrive at his next destination, but only after he has departed for it.
2. **Collared** – the PCs find the counterfeiter, but he only sells and does not make the fakes. The true counterfeiter is a few systems away, and with enough coercion the seller can lead them there.
3. **Sorry** – the PCs find the counterfeiter selling High Passages on the street, and he then leads them on wild chase through an urban landscape only to be struck and killed by an ice-cream truck. The PCs must then determine from items on his possession where the counterfeiting equipment is located – before anyone else can steal it away from them.
4. **Small Timer** – the PCs track the counterfeiter, who is a small time but incredibly gifted counterfeiting artist. Perhaps someone possessing such creative license would put their talents to better use working with the PCs rather than sitting inside a jail cell?
5. **Greater Aspirations** – the counterfeit High Passages are just the start, as the PCs are to find out. Tracking the counterfeiter to his hideout, the PCs learn that counterfeiting Imperial currency is the next step up for this operation. Unfortunately this discovery comes just seconds before the PCs are confronted by a significant number of bad guys, all armed and ready to ensure their crimes go unpunished.
6. **Inside Job** – the High Passages aren't counterfeit but real High Passages that suffered a printing error. TAS ordered them destroyed, but someone intercepted the recall order, collected as many of the misprinted Passages as possible,

and then and began selling them instead. The TAS Regional Manager genuinely believes them to be fakes because he is unaware of the misprinting. The PCs must look within the local TAS operation to determine who has the means, motive and opportunity to turn a minor mistake into a major felony.

### V. Breaking (In) News (News & Information)

The PCs are contacted by an old friend – a moderately well-known but very well respected TNS reporter who needs their help cracking open his investigation into megacorporate corruption resulting in something nasty happening to large numbers of innocent sophonts. The patron needs their help breaking into the megacorp's HQ office tower to retrieve evidence of their malfeasance.

### Possible Direction to Take This Scenario

1. **Goose Chase** – the patron is barking up the wrong tree, his allegations of wrongdoing by the megacorporation are wholly unfounded and no evidence can be found because none exists. But of course, this is only determined after the PCs are deep inside the office tower, playing cat and mouse with the soon-to-be-alerted security force.
2. **Planted** – the break-in is a cover for the patron to allegedly retrieve fake evidence he has manufactured. Once published/broadcast, the fake evidence will be considered by many as real news, thereby hurting the people who run and the profits of the megacorp.
3. **Don't Rock the (X-)Boat** – after successfully retrieving truly damning evidence, the TNS is reluctant to publish/broadcast the story. What can the PCs and patron do to make the truth inescapable?
4. **The MegaCorp Strikes Back** – the TNS runs the damaging story, but the megacorp isn't taking it

*(Continued on page 21)*

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 20)

lying down; they kidnap the patron and intend to coerce a retraction and apology from him, ideally before he expires. The PCs must rescue the patron before he recants his story.

5. **Worth 1000 Words** – TNS publishes the story, but no one cares. The patron then employs the PCs to visit a nearby system to document and broadcast how the megacorp's runaway greed and exploitative practices are severely hurting the natives. But they aren't the only tourists – a megacorp hit squad intends to silence the patron and his assistants forever.
6. **Stowaway** – returning from the planet the mega-corporation has irreparably damaged with toxic waste, the PCs ship is carrying one more lifeform than expected. How will this stowaway interact with its unknowing hosts, and can the PCs purge the unwanted intruder before their new-found truth can be told?

### VI. Here Be Dragons (Tours & Expeditions)

The PCs and their ship have been hired as charter for a small and budget-conscious group of mid-market TAS members and their Guide who are on safari to a nearby world to capture some sort of exotic (a slightly more dangerous) animal species.

#### Possible Direction to Take This Scenario

1. **Its Adorable!** – the quarry is so obscenely cute the hunters can't bring themselves to shoot it. Perhaps they can just cuddle up close to it for a few images? Once within striking distance, however, the animal will drop its psionic defenses and reveal its fearful symmetry, red in tooth and claw.
2. **Need a bigger ship's boat** – the quarry is far more clever and dangerous than anticipated, precipitating the need for the PCs to fight for their lives and the lives of their big game hunters.
3. **Orphaned** – the hunters have mistakenly (and illegally) killed a female of the species, and a mother to boot. Now to tiny examples of the species are orphaned – and hungry. The PCs need to help make this right, and that will likely involve some convoluted plan to keep the babies alive and transport them to someone who can take care of them.
4. **More dangerous prey** – the quarry is the meal of choice of another even more deadly species. Just as the hunters are about to bag their game it becomes a meal for another predator. Unfortunately, that predator catches wind of the hunting party, and decides it wants to expand its palate.
5. **The Most Dangerous Game** – the hunting party crosses paths with a non-TAS organized safari, and that party decides that hunting people would be more fun than hunting game. The PCs and hunters are captured, disarmed, stripped of their dignity and told to run to a distant mountaintop. After a 30 minute head start they will be hunted and shot to death, but anyone who makes it to the summit alive will be released (sure they will...)
6. **Success** – the safari goes as planned, and instead of killing their game the hunters bring a live specimen back with them for donation to their local zoo. And then, while in jumpspace, it manages to escape its cage and rampage throughout the PC's ship. 🌀

### Mental Visualizations

*Drawings by Ori B. L. Stone. Introductory text and captions by Jeff Zeitlin*

In the September/October 2017 issue of *Freelance Traveller*, Timothy Collinson described four animals that could be found in a Plains/Savannah ecology. Mr Stone has taken those descriptions, and created drawings of them, which Mr Collinson has approved. We thus share them with you here.

*Darfs appears huge and ungainly, but are far more dexterous than they look.*







*Even in adolescence, the drarf looks a bit clumsy.*

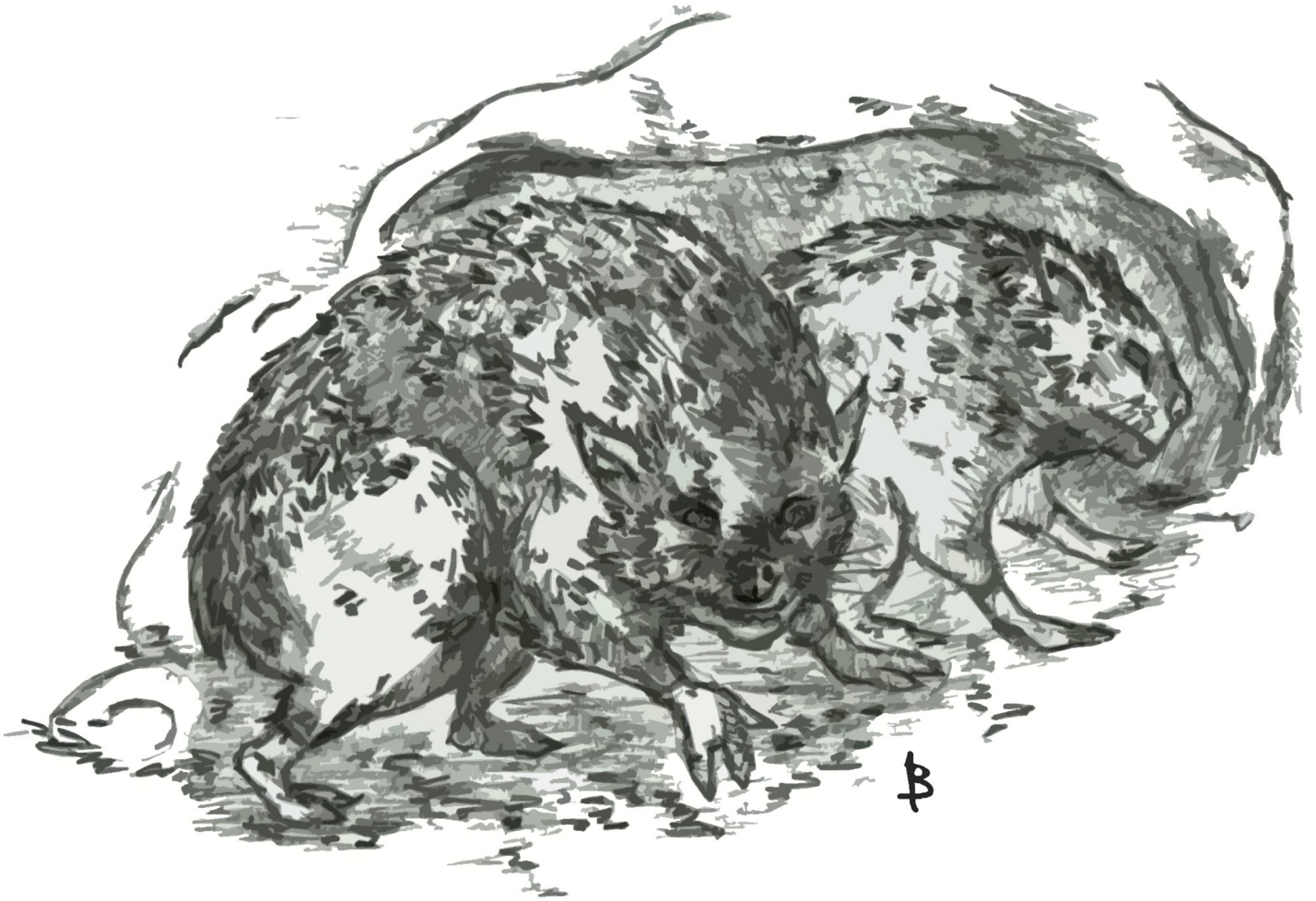


*The chitta-tweep bears a resemblance to the terrestrial owl, albeit more colorful.*

## Multimedia Gallery

One could write "Here Be Dragons" on the lamanda's habitat on a map, and not be totally wrong.





*Humans find chippers to be unexciting pets. Vargr find chippers on menus in upscale eateries.*



## Interdiction

by Michael Hughes

### Synopsis

The PCs have been hired to transport a load of arms to an interdicted asteroid settlement. But they discover much, much more. Instead, they are transporting a bomb with which to destroy the port of the settlement. Behind the plot is a corporation denying the settlement's ore and ships to a local refinery in order to drive it out of business.

### Game Mechanics

This adventure uses Mikey *Traveller* Task Resolution – essentially a reformatted MT.

### Mikey *Traveller* Task Resolution

Each Task is assigned a numeric Task Factor from 1 to 10. To resolve a task, roll 2D6 for over or equal to twice the Task Factor on 2D6. DMs depend on whether it is a skill or characteristic based task. For PCs without ability in a skill (i.e., don't even have level 0), DM -4 (unless GM states otherwise)

Skill DMs: + 1 for every two points applicable stat is 7+, -1 for every two points applicable stat is 7-, + skill level.

Characteristic DMs; + 1 per point applicable stat is 7+, minus one for every point stat is 7-.

TASK FACTOR	DESCRIPTION	2D6 TARGET
1	Simple	2
2	Easy	4
3	Routine	6
4	Fairly Difficult	8
5	Difficult	10
6	Very Difficult	12
7	Extremely Difficult	14
8*	Formidable	16
9*	Staggering	18
10*	Impossible	20

\* These task attempts will probably require a determination roll prior to making the skill attempt unless GM agrees otherwise.

The success or failure of a task is a slightly expanded version of that in Megatraveller. The meaning behind what this means is up to the GM to decide, however should be easy to extrapolate. All other guidelines for MT Task Resolution apply, such as modifiers for hasty or cautious tasks, duration etc.

Margin of Success/Failure	Quality Rating
Success by 6+	Critical Success or Quality Rating 1
Success by 4-5	Exceptional Success or Quality Rating 2
Success by 2-3	Good Success or Quality Rating 3
Success by 0-1	Minimal Success or Quality Rating 4
Failure	Failure or Quality Rating 5
Failure by 6+	Exceptional failure or Quality Rating 6

### Nugget 1: The Hire

The PC with the highest streetwise skill has heard of a smuggling job on offer by an interdicted asteroid in a nearby Govt 7 Asteroid system. The job is to transport 12 D-tons of small arms and associated ammunition, spares, and maintenance kits, as well as two overseers. The job is rumoured to pay 1 MCr. Apparently the vessel that had been arranged was destroyed when it mis-docked two standard days ago.

Through a mutual contact, a meet has been set up in a somewhat shabby cafe in the starport (the cargo can be assumed to be within the starport confines). The name of the contact is Zapasta Cobb. He will be wearing SPA coveralls and has a ponytail.

Zapasta is about 50 with a salt and pepper beard and long scraggly ponytail (*à la* Sean Connery). His coveralls are worn/used, stained with grav unit coolant. He is seated at a far booth at the back with a bay window (through which can be seen a thoroughfare) to the right. There is one other occupied table near the front. The place is an automat (i.e., choose from a menu on table and food is delivered by two contoured serving droids.

(Continued on page 28)



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 27)

Task	<i>To check for weapons or hidden equipment</i>
TF & Skill	TF5 Perception or Recon task. -1 TF if Streetwise-2 or Gun (Handguns)-2+
QR1	Has a slim body pistol concealed behind ripaway patch under left armpit and a screwdriver like tool on his belt. He is wearing flesh coloured nose plugs (which protect against gas). The automaton serving drinks is not standard and it has hidden gas emission nozzles concealed along a maintenance hatch
QR2	As above save for the automaton.
QR3	There is a bulge under left arm pit and a and a screwdriver like tool on his belt
QR4	There is a screwdriver like tool on his belt
QR5-6	Nothing

Task	<i>To attempt to record or check for recording devices</i>
TF & Skill	TF5 Electronics or Communications
QR1-2	There is obvious interference coming from a white noise generator located in his booth. If recording, then it will be patchy and unclear
QR3-4	There is interference that will result in any recording being unplayable and there are no recording devices in operation.
QR5	There are no recording devices and nothing that will prevent recording
QR6	Whatever equipment is being used malfunctions. It requires a TF3 task (minor repair) to fix it.

He is drinking Zapasta (gene-engineered coffee with sugar cane, for which Zapasta is clearly named after) and glances up when the PCs walk in. He introduces himself and beckons for them to sit. If there are more than 2 people he asks quietly that the rest sit elsewhere. If they refuse, he apologises that he can't do business with them and goes to leave.

After some minor small talk he gets to business. The rumour is true, 12 D-tons of weapons for 1 MCr and two travellers, of which he will be one. The other guest will join the flight ten minutes before take off. If queried why he simply says that this person has a 'bit of heat' and if they are followed then it cuts down to a minimum the information on which vessel they are on and thus unable to warn the authorities.

Zapasta Cobb's opening gambit is 1MCr paid upon completion. [He is willing to offer up to 250k in advance, see below]

Task	<i>To gain concessions</i>
TF & Skill	TF5 Persuasion (Fast Talk) or TF7 Carousing; +1 to -1 TF for role-playing.
QR1	250k Cr in advance, balance on delivery (explains that's all he can offer as that is all they have).
QR2	As above but 200k
QR3	50k Cr in advance, balance on delivery
QR4	As above but 25k
QR5	No concessions made
QR6	Zapasta gets up and goes to leave claiming that the PCs obviously don't want the job. A successful TF4 Carousing or TF 3 Persuasion roll will mollify him to accept the original deal.

If a deal is struck, he asks where the PCs' ship is berthed. He says he will check the SPA logs to see if the PCs' claims stack up and if so will meet them in 48 hours with the cargo on a series of SPA grav sleds and he wishes to leave as soon as able once the cargo is stacked. If cash has been agreed to up front, he says that the money will be handed offer just below take off. The nav coordinates will also be given then. Fuel is required for Jump-2.

### Possible Actions or Questions

*Is this an Imperial blockade?*

*Yes, it's under the auspices of quarantine. There is no danger. There was a disease released in the settlement by a rival settlement, but the effects have passed. They have taken this opportunity to enter our designated exploitation territory and jump-claim the good rocks. As soon as the quarantine is lifted we're going to drive them out.*

*Why did the other settlement attack?*

*They are jealous of our resources and constantly violate our designated exploitation territory.*

*How do you propose to get past the blockade?*

*I've purchased up-to-date authorisation to pass the blockade with the cargo being listed as medical supplies.*

(Continued on page 29)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 28)

There shouldn't be any problems. The only danger is the random boarding inspection. Also, you won't be able to carry any other passengers.

What if we get boarded?

We let them. We've bribed the Marine sergeant to look the other way.

1 MCr is not enough

That's your problem.

How can you guarantee that we won't rip you off or space you etc.

I have insurance against that. [If PCs are making repayments he implies that their bank will find out what they are up to]. He won't elaborate on this.

PCs attack

Assuming he has time, Zapasta tugs at the rip-away (like a Velcro patch but generally unnoticeable) and pulls out a body pistol. The automaton currently serving releases a combined flash/smoke/tranq grenade, which fills the cafe. Under cover of the smoke he fires a shot to shatter the window then crashes through it. Naturally the adventure as written ends, but a clever GM could salvage it.

Task	Resist each effect of grenade	
TF & Skill	TF6 Endurance Roll -1 to 3 TFs depending on each PC's actions	
QR1-2	FLASH	No effect
	TRANQ	No effect
	SMOKE	No effect
QR3-4	FLASH	Blind & Deaf for 1 round
	TRANQ	Woozy (-2 DM to all tasks)
	SMOKE	Choking (-1 DM to all tasks)
QR5	FLASH	Blind & Deaf for D6+1 rounds
	TRANQ	-2 DM to all tasks and faint in D6 rounds
	SMOKE	Choking (-3 DM to all tasks)
QR6	FLASH	Blind & Deaf for 2D6+2 rounds
	TRANQ	Faint
	SMOKE	Choking, incapacitated 2D6 rounds

As the meet closes two burly men enter the cafe. They are dressed in ill fitting suits with muscles bulging in all the wrong places. They scan the bar

and see the PCs and Zapasta. They begin walking towards them.

Task	To check for weapons or hidden equipment
TF & Skill	TF5 Perception or Recon task, -1TF if Streetwise-2 or Melee Weapons-2+
QR1-2	Each has a telescoping baton resting in the right hand. The one on the left has a bulge under their left armpit.
QR3	Each has a telescoping baton resting in the right hand.
QR4	The one on the right has a telescoping baton resting in the right hand.
QR5	No weapons
QR6	Nah, they just want a table

Zapasta leans forward and says 'close your eyes, hold your breath and cover your ears'. One second later he triggers the device and scenario runs as above. PCs who follow his advice get a -2TF to the Endurance roll. Both goons will, if able, attempt to follow Zapasta through the window. If the PCs intervene, they will be set upon. The smoke detector triggers and the cafe will be doused with fire retardant (roll vs. smoke effects as above to find effect). Emergency sirens will sound 1 round later with emergency response arriving in five minutes.

**Goons** UPP A66666-7 Armour: Cloth-5 (Tech 5)  
Brawling-2, Gun (Handguns)-0, Intimidation-1, Melee Combat-2

	Auto Pistol 7mm	Baton		Auto Pistol 7mm	Baton
Melee/Ranged	R	M	Autofire Targets	-	-
Ammo Type	Std	-	Danger Space	-	-
Capacity	15	-	Signature	M	-
Penetration	1	2	Recoil	M	-
Attenuation	2	-	Rapid Fire	Y	-
Damage	3	2	Applicable Skill	Handgun	Melee Cbt
Range/Block	M	1			

Nugget 2: Being Scoped Out

If the PCs decide to cruise for a shop before the 48 hour period ends, they will be followed by goons.

(Continued on page 30)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 29)

If the players scan the goons for weapons:

<b>Task</b>	<i>NPC task roll for each goon to follow PCs without being noticed</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 4 Stealth, +1TF if players have stated they are keeping a look out. See below. The QR of the roll determines the TF for the Travellers to notice the surveillance
<b>QR</b>	Travellers make a TF (7 minus QR of Stealth Roll) Perception or Recon task

<b>Task</b>	<i>To notice being followed.</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	See above
<b>QR1-2</b>	Two goons following, one at a time with one trailing for about for ten minutes, the next will arriving from a different location with the previous tail then heading off.
<b>QR3</b>	PCs notice one goon following.
<b>QR4</b>	PCs notice one goon acting suspiciously
<b>QR5</b>	PCs notice nothing
<b>QR6</b>	TF3 Dex task, failure resulting in the loss of one small personal item – QR6 a valuable one

<b>Task</b>	<i>To check for weapons or hidden equipment</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF5 Perception or Recon, TF6 Cudgel or Melee Weapons (Int based task) for baton, Hand guns for hand guns. -1TF if Streetwise-2+
<b>QR1-2</b>	Goons have telescoping batons strapped inside their wrists and bulges under their left armpits which have a 6 shot snub revolver.
<b>QR2</b>	Goons have telescoping batons strapped inside their wrists and bulges under their left armpits.
<b>QR3</b>	Goons have bulges under left arm pits
<b>QR4</b>	Goons have telescoping batons strapped inside their wrists
<b>QR5-6</b>	No Weapons

<b>Task</b>	<i>To Interrogate the goons</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF5 Interrogation or TF7 Persuasion. -1 to +1 TF for role-playing. -1 TF if goons are 'roughed up'
<b>QR1-2</b>	The employer is unknown. They have been hired for usual daily fee plus expenses. Contacted via net through screen site. An e-mail is to be sent every hour on the PCs movements and immediate notification sent if they head for the star-port.
<b>QR3-4</b>	The employer is unknown. They have been hired for usual daily fee plus expenses. Employer has asked that an e-mail be sent every hour on the PCs' movements.
<b>QR5</b>	Refuse to divulge
<b>QR6</b>	They laugh

The goons do not approach the PCs, merely follow. If attacked they will endeavour to escape but will fight if cornered. If interrogated after capture, make a task roll. If confronted they will mumble that they thought the PCs were someone else and leave. If their path is barred they will shoulder their way past.

The Goons stats are the same as the previous nugget, save that they have Stealth-1.

### Nugget 3: The Arrival

Five minutes before the deadline, Zapasta arrives with three 4 ton cargo grav sleds carrying standard shipping containers. He is still wearing SPA coveralls but has two units of personal luggage with him. The cargo containers are marked with bio-hazard symbols.

Zapasta personally loads the cargo into the bay and secures it ready for flight. He is an obviously competent load-master. He then attaches anti-tamper alarms. If the PCs query this he simply states that the cargo is worth a lot of money and given the unsavoury nature of what they are doing, he is sure they won't be offended.

Once loaded, he picks out and passes a computer chit to the navigator listing the course coordinates for the asteroid settlement. He says that the other passenger will be here 10 minutes before take off and to let him know when left off is planned. The coordinates are for a secondary belt (i.e., not the main-world of a system), in a system 2 Jumps away. A settlement named Du-Phant.

### Possible Actions or Questions

*Can we see inside a container?*

*I'm afraid not. It has been sealed and the ciphers have been sent in advance.*

*What sort of weapons are they?*

*Ship missiles, some accelerator rifles and a few infantry support weapons, plus maintenance kit and spares.*

(Continued on page 31)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 30)

Who is the other passenger?

*You'll meet him shortly.*

What is your story?/back ground?/ where are you from?/ various probing questions

*That's none of your business.*

As for the containers, below are various tasks depending on what the PCs' actions are.

<b>Task</b>	<i>PCs scan the cargo containers.</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF6 Sensor task. -1 to +1 TF depending on Travellers' actions and equipment used.
<b>QR1-2</b>	PCs get a partial densitometer scan of standard imperial ship missile cases in the first container, small arms cases and ammunition cases in the second and associated tools/equipment in the third. In the ammunition case is a dense 0.10 m cube shaped object that is not an ammunition case. There is no biological material within. Back-ground radiation is slightly higher (less than 5% more than normal), but that can be attributed to the material of the cases.
<b>QR3-4</b>	PCs get a partial densitometer scan of standard imperial weapon cases in the first container, ammunition cases in the second and associated tools/equipment in the third. There is no biological material within. Background radiation is slightly higher (less than 5%), but that can be attributed to the material of the cases.
<b>QR5</b>	Cannot penetrate cargo cases. There is no biological material within. Background radiation is slightly higher (less than 5%), but that can be attributed to the material of the cases.
<b>QR6</b>	Sensor equipment malfunctions. Requires a TF3 electronics task to repair it (minor repair)

<b>Task</b>	<i>PCs examine the locks on each container.</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF4 Intrusion or TF5 Electronics task. -1 to +1 TF depending on Travellers' actions and equipment used.
<b>QR1-2</b>	Tech 15 Cipher Code Key lock. Requires exact pass-key sequence entered or lock freezes for 24 hours. There are three pin-hole tranq gas dispensers around each lock. It will take a minimum of 8 hours to crack the lock and require an electronics tool kit, tech 12+ intrusion kit and a hand computer.
<b>QR3-4</b>	Tech 15 Cipher Code Key lock. Requires exact pass-key sequence entered or lock freezes for 24 hours. It will take a minimum of 8 hours to crack the lock and require an electronics tool kit, tech 12+ intrusion kit and a hand computer.
<b>QR5</b>	Some sort of electronic cipher key lock. No idea how to crack it.
<b>QR6</b>	No idea what sort of lock it is.

<b>Task</b>	<i>PCs examine the anti-tampering devices on each container.</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF4 Intrusion or TF5 Electronics task. -1 to +1 TF depending on PCs' actions and equipment used.
<b>QR1-2</b>	A constant signal is sent from the anti tamper device so as to prevent jamming. The anti tamper device also contains a drop-let camera mounted above the lock with constant transmission and vibration and temperature increase devices if the container is attacked / penetrated. The tranq gas dispenser above the lock can be activated from a hand held unit.
<b>QR3-4</b>	As above save for the tranq gas.
<b>QR5</b>	No idea what it does.
<b>QR6</b>	Nahhh, it's a fake.

Unless the PCs do anything else, ten minutes before take off the other passenger arrives.

Zapasta calls on his comm and 10 minutes later the airlock intercom buzzes. A man in his mid thirties steps through. He has dark black hair and has the bearing and clobber typical of a junior corporate executive. He introduces himself as Zordacci Mann and has three pieces of luggage with him.

Make a secret task roll for Medical minded PCs:

<b>Task</b>	<i>To eyeball Zordaci Mann</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF3 Medical or TF4 Biology. -1 TF if Streetwise-2+
<b>QR1-2</b>	Is currently on Anagathics and has recently, in the last three months, had plastic surgery to alter his appearance
<b>QR3-4</b>	Has recently, in the last three months, had plastic surgery to alter his appearance
<b>QR5</b>	Notice nothing
<b>QR6</b>	Probably younger than he looks

If the Travellers managed to get a up front payment...

Zordaci Mann stows his gear and returns with a small attache case, the kind used for currency transfers. He opens it and passes over the sum agreed to by Zapasta. It is crisp and clean currency but with non-consecutive serial numbers, the highest denomination being 20 Cr.

(Continued on page 32)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 31)

Make various task rolls to get the ship underway at (average TF 3) and proceed to jump. For whoever is on comms/sensors, make a secret task roll when nav coordinates have been logged into the computer.

<b>Task</b>	<i>To determine that vessel is being 'bugged'</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 5 Communications or Sensor Ops
<b>QR1-2</b>	A splurt (i.e., microsecond) signal was piggy-backed on the ship's transponder unit and transmitted via a backup comms antenna beneath the nose pod of the ship.
<b>QR3-4</b>	A tight-beam signal was sent from somewhere beneath the ship.
<b>QR5-6</b>	Notice nothing.

If the PCs investigate, make a series of Vacc and EK(Zero G) TF3 rolls to make it toward the comms antenna. A miniaturised comms unit has been connected to the interface SPA crew use to patch the vessel into the SPA and world nets. The comms unit has no memory. However the ship's main computer can 'replay' the signal sent.

<b>Task</b>	<i>To replay the signal</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF5 Computer task
<b>QR1-2</b>	The vessel's exact navigation coordinates have been broadcast
<b>QR3-4</b>	The system to which the vessel is jumping to has been broadcast
<b>QR5</b>	The transmission is unreadable
<b>QR6</b>	The transmission has been accidentally wiped

### Nugget 3A: Bad Bad BAD Travellers

If the PCs are determined to try and bust into the containers then consult the task sheets below.

<b>Task</b>	<i>PCs try to disarm the anti-tamper devices on each container.</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	Combined TF7 Intrusion, Electronics and Communications task. -1 to +1 TF depending on PCs actions and equipment used.
<b>QR1-2</b>	Disarmed without alarm raised and lock automatically opens.
<b>QR3-4</b>	As above save the lock doesn't open.
<b>QR5</b>	Anti tamper devices go off (see below)
<b>QR6</b>	As above and alarm surprises intruder to the extent they must Roll vs Dex or fall over

<b>Task</b>	<i>PCs attempt to crack the lock</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	Combined TF7 Intrusion, Electronics and Computer task. -1 to +1 TF depending on Travellers' actions and equipment used.
<b>QR1-2</b>	PCs open lock without triggering the anti-tamper devices (if not disarmed as above)
<b>QR3-4</b>	PCs open lock but trigger anti tampering devices if not previously disarmed. Tranq gas sprays into the faces of those at the lock. See below for effects of gas.
<b>QR5</b>	PCs fail to open lock and are sprayed with the gas as above.
<b>QR6</b>	As above and roll vs Dex for a piece of equipment or it is broken requiring a TF4 task to fix (minor repair)

<b>Task</b>	<i>Resist effects of gas (assumes no gas mask /other protection)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF6 Endurance task (ie Roll vs End-4).
<b>QR1-2</b>	No Effect
<b>QR3-4</b>	-2 DM for 2D6 rounds (woozy)
<b>QR5</b>	-2 DM and faint for D6 hours in D6 rounds
<b>QR6</b>	Faint for D6 hours

Zapasta and Zordaci will immediately race towards the cargo bay with hand-guns drawn upon the alarm sounding. They ask what the hell the PCs think they are doing. They tell them that their bonus has just been halved. If the PCs threaten them Zapasta will pull out his comm and wave it at the containers. He says that his and Zordaci's vital signs are transmitted to the anti-tamper devices every hour and should they be dead or otherwise incapacitated, it will arm a bomb with an eight hour counter which only Zapasta *and* Zordacci can disarm.

He also points out that attempting to bust into the container do likewise, and he keys a sequence into the comm to reset the armer. With that Zapasta shoots a PC in a non-vital area to show they mean business.

### Nugget 4: In Jump

Zapasta and Zordaci pretty much keep to themselves during the jump (they share a stateroom). If the PCs check the entry points to the stateroom they

(Continued on page 33)



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 32)

note that there are small alarms which have been affixed by the two on the various entry points.

Mention to the players that there is a lot that can be done in a week, such as training or using VR programs to hone or learn skills. (See *Training*).

PCs may activate Library data (TF 2 Computer Task with failure meaning no information) about their destination and associated links. See the Library Data in the appendix.

### Possible Actions or Questions

*Why doesn't your settlement simply manufacture the weapons?*

*We sustained a terrorist attack on our manufacturing centre one month ago which destroyed the applicable equipment. It will take three months to repair. And we don't have the capacity to manufacture munitions.*

*Won't the Imperium intervene when you attempt to clear your DET of cultees?*

*The Impies will come in late, meanwhile we can take 'em out with these missiles.*

Every day a series of Events will occur.

**Day 1:** That evening, Zapasta and Zordaci drink in the crew lounge. Zapasta drinks an incredible amount but does not seem that intoxicated. Zordaci however drinks half the amount and gets paralytic. He then launches into a tirade of racial abuse directed at Aslan calling them 'Pussies', 'Kitty-crap' and 'Overgrown Pussies' and male Aslan as being 'Pussy Whipped'. He gets up and begins to scream 'Pussy, Pussy, Pussy' when Zapasta, barely not moving, whacks him across the face with blinding speed, knocking Zordaci to the ground.

Zordaci staggers to his feet, yanking a snub pistol from the small of his back and points it at Zapasta. Zapasta simply sips his drink. After a moment Zordaci lurches down the corridor to his stateroom. Zapasta apologises for his companion's actions tell-

ing them that 'the lad canna handle his drink' and that 'jump space freaks him out'.

**Day 2:** Zordaci approaches the ship's medic (or closest thing) and asks for something for a killer hang-over. If questioned about what he said the night before he draws a blank. If his hatred of Aslan is bought up he says that he has no opinion one way or another and that he hasn't even seen one in a year. Let the medic make another secret task roll (see Nugget 3) to scan for recent changes. However, due to the T-shirt Zordaci is wearing, the medic may also spot a re-gened patch from a removed tattoo.

Task	<i>To eyeball Zordaci Mann</i>
TF & Skill	TF3 Medical or TF4 Biology. -1 TF if Streetwise-2+
QR1-2	Is currently on Anagathics and has recently, in the last three months, had plastic surgery to alter his appearance. There is a patch of re-gened skin on his upper right arm, probably from a removed tattoo.
QR3-4	Has recently, in the last three months, had plastic surgery to alter his appearance. There is a patch of re-gened skin on his upper right arm.
QR5	Notice nothing
QR6	Probably younger than he looks

Zapasta enters the cargo bay with his comm unit and plugs it into the computer port near the lock. He takes a series of readings then leaves. He blocks the readout from any camera equipment in the bay. An enterprising PC may attempt to get a 'ghosting' of the computer read-out. He does this every few hours each day in Jump.

Task	<i>Get a 'ghosting' image of Zapasta's comm/read out.</i>
TF & Skill	TF7 combined Computer and Communications task. -1 to +1 TF depending on Traveller's actions.
QR1-2	The comm is security shielded against emissions, however the Traveller pulls of the last reading - it simply has a time counter going from 15.09 to 480.00
QR3-4	The comm is security shielded against emissions
QR5	Failed to get an emission
QR6	Equipment malfunctions, requires a TF3 minor repair task to work again

(Continued on page 34)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 33)

**Day 3:** Zapasta works out in the cargo bay, bringing out a high tech gym mat to work out on (comes with a sensor which measures pulse, sweat levels etc). He then does a series of intricate martial art manoeuvres in slow motion, then rapidly runs through them all at normal speed several times. This takes about an hour.

Zordaci comes in during this practice and shakes his head in amusement. He says 'fuck that, just shoot 'em'.

<b>Task</b>	<i>To identify martial arts style</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 4 Brawling (use Educ as app stat). -2 TF if had Army or Marine training, -1 TF if had special forces training
<b>QR1-2</b>	A conglomerate of many different styles such as meditative martial arts combined with standard Imperial military unarmed techniques, including several zero g combat manoeuvres.
<b>QR3-4</b>	A conglomerate of many different styles such as meditative martial arts combined with standard Imperial military unarmed techniques.
<b>QR5</b>	No idea what styles.
<b>QR6</b>	Nah, he's faking it.

**Day 4:** PCs chancing past their stateroom will notice the door is partially open while Zapasta is in the cargo bay taking another reading. Zordaci is sitting cross-legged on his bed cleaning a hand-gun. A TF2 Hand-guns result will note that it is a snub-pistol with a 20 round mag (a fail means don't know) with a snug laser-paint attachment (designed not to impede a speed draw and to be used with head-up contacts). A TF4 Perception result will note that there is an activated standard environment sensor on the bed side table, currently on 'atmosphere read' function.

Zordaci looks up and activates the door close function watching the PC with a stony face.

In the evening, Zapasta approaches a PC and asks if the crew lounge entertainment unit has a karaoke function. If reply in the affirmative (it does), his eyes light up and he suggests a pissy pants Karaoke

night that night. If the PC agrees, that night Zapasta plugs in a computer chit with several thousand Karaoke numbers and belts them out. He's not bad, but he's no professional. Zordaci gets a bit pissy (but nowhere near the first night) and tries it on with the most attractive female (human) crewmember. Everyone can make TF3 Carousing tasks, a success meaning a good time was had, a fail a bad one.

A PC may use this opportunity to attempt to bust into Z&Z's stateroom. A rather obvious addition to the door is a combo lock/alarm on the door touch plate. A successful TF 3 Intrusion result will note that to open the lock is quite hard even without the fact that the alarm will trigger if it is opened. The alarm signal is audible and stopping the broadcasting of a constant coded signal (failure means no idea how hard it is until an attempt is made or that the alarm is both audio and signal) will result in an alarm on Zapasta's comm.

A PC may attempt to replicate the signal so if it sounds then only the audio component goes off.

<b>Task</b>	<i>To send a signal (Uncertain - player roll 1D6, GM the other)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF5 combined Communication and Computer signal. -1 to +1 TF based on PC's equipment and actions
<b>QR1-2</b>	Signal code worked out and able to replicate it
<b>QR3-4</b>	As above but only a portion of the signal, approximately one minute
<b>QR5</b>	Failed to work
<b>QR6</b>	PC thinks it has worked but it hasn't

<b>Task</b>	<i>To crack the lock</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF6 Intrusion task. -1 to +1 TF based on PC's equipment and actions
<b>QR1-2</b>	Crack the lock without activating the alarm
<b>QR3-4</b>	Crack the lock but if opened the alarm will activate
<b>QR5</b>	Fail to crack the lock but don't activate the alarm
<b>QR6</b>	Fail to crack the lock and the alarm sounds

- If Z&Z hear the alarm they will rush to the room. If no one is there, the door locked and the alarm/

(Continued on page 35)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 34)

lock intact they look around and in the room. Zapasta will return to the lounge and announce, somewhat abruptly, they are turning in.

- If the door or alarm/lock is open and no one is there, they will demand to know what has happened. They tell the PCs that another stunt like this will result in the forfeit of half their fee.
- If as above and a PC is present, Zapasta will attempt to restrain and search them as Zordaci thrusts a gun in their face. They will run as above and if the PCs attack will mention a bomb.

If a PC makes it into the room then they will presumably search it. Below assumes a leisurely search. If a hasty search then increase the QR by two places (i.e., bad). If the PCs are under the impression they have a lot of time but Z&Z get an alarm, then unless forewarned they will be caught in the act as above.

Task	<i>Leisurely Search (UNCERTAIN)</i>
TF & Skill	TF3 Perception task. -1 to +1 TF depending on PC's actions
QR1-2	In addition to all the other findings below, behind a wall access panel is a small currency attaché case containing (Cr300k less the PCs' advance) and a body pistol. Beneath a grav plate are three ship atmosphere scrubber pads. A TF2 Mechanical or TF4 Perception task with a DM of +2 TF if no previous space background will note they have been tainted with some kind of chemical. A TF3 Medical or TF2 Chemistry task will note that this is Tranq gas in an inert liquid state.
QR3-4	In addition to all the findings below, behind the access panel in the corner is a Gauss Pistol loaded with armour piercing tranq needles. There are also several different Imperial IDs for each Z (a TF 3 Forgery check will note they are of exceptional quality).
QR5	In addition to the findings below, a duffel bag contains a maintenance parts case which has been modified into a weapon's case with for three automatic snub pistols, (one present), with x6 Tranq and x6 HE mags.
QR6	Clothing and assorted knick-knacks, belt sized Mechanical, Electrical and Gravitic tool kits.

**Day 5:** Assuming no-one has been caught sneaking through their stuff, the two Zs make various appearances during the day in the crew lounge etc. A computer (TF 3) check will note that they have been accessing old movies, mostly spy thrillers in the past

few days, from the ship's library. Zapasta will again work out in the cargo bay and continuous to access the cargo containers.

If any PC wishes to 'spar' with Zapasta he will accept. It is assumed that punches are pulled etc. See Zapasta's stats.

**Day 6:** PCs will most likely be performing re-entry procedures, maintenance checks, etc., and be occupied. Z & Z keep to their room for the most part, but occasionally wander in and out.

**Day 7:** It is assumed the PCs will be at 'action stations' for the most part as re-entry to N-space can occur with very short notice. Z&Z stay in their room, apart from Zapasta checking the containers during the day. Zordaci looks very nervous when seen for the first time that day and very relaxed the next.

Make various (TF 3) ship tasks for exiting jump. The PCs are 6 to 24 hours out from Du-Phant (necessary to avoid the possibility of rocks ending up being less than 100 diameters out. The exact number of hours is (6 x QR of last nugget's Nav roll).

### Nugget 5a: Tampering

If the PCs have declared they are keeping a look out for any tampering of their systems, make a hidden task roll against each system. (See red-bordered tasks on next page.)

### Nugget 5: Boarded...

Ask the PCs if they have their transponder activated. There are a number of transponders active, including two Imperial Naval patrol cruisers and at some distance scattered through the belt, various Seeker belter spacecraft. The settlement is broadcasting that it is under quarantine.

It is assumed the PCs will make a sensor scan upon exiting jump space. (Task next page.)

Make various (TF 3) ship tasks to approach the settlement. 11 hours out, the quiet Patrol hails the PCs to state that a quarantine is in progress and that vessels may not proceed. If the PCs announce their

(Continued on page 36)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 35)

<b>Task</b>	<i>Determine if the Computer has been tampered with</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 5 Computer task.
<b>QR1-2</b>	Early during Day 6, the Anti-Hijack program had a backdoor inserted, allowing it to be turned off yet, when activated, would indicate normal function. The PC can insert a command to negate this backdoor but leave it appearing to still function.
<b>QR3-4</b>	As above but negating the backdoor will wipe it all together
<b>QR5-6</b>	Nothing has been tampered with

<b>Task</b>	<i>Determine if the Gravitics have been tampered with</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 5 Gravatics task.
<b>QR1-4</b>	In the primary control system for the G plates, a remote switch has been installed to turn them off when it's triggered.
<b>QR5-6</b>	No tampering evident.

authorisation and that they are carrying medical supplies, the patrol vessel announces that they intend to board. Make a (TF 3) pilot task to link up, a failure resulting in heavier than intended locking (damaged pride for the pilot).

<b>Task</b>	<i>To scan for ships and the like (UNCERTAIN)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 4 Sensor task. -2 if active scanners are used, -1 per range band within sensor range
<b>QR1-2</b>	Three 440 ton reserve navy patrol cruisers, two matching the transponder signals above. The third sits quietly about 12 hours at 2G from the settlement. A weak power signal at extreme range also comes from near the settlement.
<b>QR3-4</b>	Two 400 to 500 ton reserve navy patrol cruisers, matching the transponder signals above. A weak power signal comes from a vessel about 12 hours out from the settlement.
<b>QR5-6</b>	Sensors fail to pick up any power emissions, though the radio signals of the two patrol vessels show their location

The airlock cycles and an Imperial marine Sgt in combat armour, leading three other marines enter. They have accelerator rifles at the ready. The Sgt's face-plate opens to reveal a grizzled looking woman with an urgent need of some facial grooming.

They check the PCs' authorisation and have a cursory poke around before heading to the cargo bay. If PCs have naughty, naughty stuff then let 'em sweat it out. If former marines announce their pres-

<b>Task</b>	<i>Determine if the Life-support has been tampered with</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 5 Mechanical task. -2 TF if scrubbers are specifically examined.
<b>QR1-4</b>	Late in Day 6, three scrubber pads tainted with currently inert liquid tranq have been replaced the back-up scrubber pads. A remote switch has been installed in the primary scrubber unit to allow the secondary to replace it on-line.
<b>QR5-6</b>	No tampering evident.

<b>Task</b>	<i>Determine if the Communications have been tampered with</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 5 Communications task.
<b>QR1-4</b>	In early in Day 7 a remote switch has been installed in the primary and secondary antennas which means they can be turned off remotely.
<b>QR5-6</b>	No tampering evident.

ence then they, but not the sergeant, will asks about the PC's units and the like. Z&Z are both wearing IISS Medivac uniforms and have I.D (which the Sgt checks). Make a TF3 roll to note they are also wearing magna-strips on their boots (enables them to cling to a hull if the g plates go).

A marine has a complex sensor device (a multi-scanner and densitometer) and goes to scan the containers. Zapasta and Zordaci, both present, look a little worried. Make a TF2 Perception task for any PCs actively watching Z&Z and the Sgt. Success means they see a sly wink.

The marine reports that they are medical supplies and the Sgt radios the patrol cruiser. However, instead of moving off, they hear the following:

*[Note: the PCs may elect to have tried to access the mil-coms on a combined TF7 Communications and Computer task—success means they can hear both sides of the exchange, i.e., the text in brackets.]*

- *All clear, Commander*
- *3 SECOND PAUSE [When were the containers last sealed?]*
- *They've been sealed in port, according to the log, sir.*
- *3 SECOND PAUSE [Does the vessel have access to them?]*

(Continued on page 37)



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 36)

- *No sir, I don't think they do.*

She turns to Z&Z and asks if they can access the containers. Z&Z say they cannot and that the cipher key was passed by X-boat the day before the Jump. The SGT relays that information to the Commander.

- *5 SECOND PAUSE [Assuming they meet SPA certification, use the over-ride to open them]*
- *Is that a good idea, sir? They are medical supplies.*
- *8 SECOND PAUSE [SGT, they'll be in bio-rated sealed containers if they're IISS units; crack the damned crate. Get Johansen to send a visual]*
- *Okay, sir.*

The SGT motions for the sensor squaddy to crack the container, who activates his helm cam. Z&Z are quite worried but the marines look bored. Zapasta surreptitiously activates a button on his comm.

The marine connects the sensor to the second containers computer note, keys a sequence of keys and steps back. A split appears in the container door (memory plastic) and the marine opens each door. Inside, densely packed, are ammo and small weapon crates.

The SGT's comm bleeps softly.

- *Sir?*
- *7 SECOND PAUSE [Okay, SGT, it's clearly IISS medical kit. Close it up and let's go]*

The SGT makes a motion and the squadee closes up, re-locking the seals (the split disappears). He deactivates his helm comp.

Make a secret perception task to see if a PC notices that the crypto has not been re-engaged.

<b>Task</b>	<i>Notice Crypto has not been re-engaged (SECRET)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF5 Perception task. -1 to +1 TF depending on PCs' actions
<b>QR1-2</b>	Crypto lock has not been re-activated however if opened the anti-tamper devices will alarm
<b>QR3-4</b>	Crypto lock has not been re-activated
<b>QR5-6</b>	Notice nothing

The SGT says 'good vis-patch, Johansen'. The marines grin good naturedly at each other, the PCs and the two Zs. The SGT holds out her hand. 'I believe that's two thou for me and a thou for each of them'. Zordaci hands out ten 100 Cr bills to each trooper and double that to the SGT.

On the way out, Johansen says 'Jeez, Sarge, there was a fuck load in there', the SGT replying 'Hansen, there's something you learn in this job—let indies bring in the weapons if they're going to pop each other and not us. It's much less work that way'.

The vessels break and the patrol vessel returns to silent running. The Captain's parting comment being that the PCs will not be allowed out until the IISS Medevac team gives the all clear.

If the PCs attempt combat the Marines will shoot to kill knowing that there's twenty years in the pen if they don't. The marines will immediately close face-plates of their combat armour and start shooting. Z&Z will kill the G plates and start pumping Tranq through the ship (unless the PCs have succeeded in Nugget 5a). Those rushing for masks etc. must make an Endurance task to make it to equipment in time. If not going for equipment and don't have protection then they will automatically pass out in five rounds no matter the result of below.

<b>Task</b>	<i>Resist effects of gas (assuming no gas mask or other protection)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF6 Endurance task (ie Roll Vs End-4).
<b>QR1-2</b>	No Effect
<b>QR3-4</b>	-2 DM for 2D6 rounds (woozy)
<b>QR5</b>	-2 DM and faint for D6 hours in D6 rounds
<b>QR6</b>	Faint for D6 hours

The SGT will transmit an alert to the Commander, who will then order the vessel to surrender. If no response in thirty seconds, it will fire a laser into the manoeuvre drives to prevent escape. If informed of

(Continued on page 38)



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 37)

what is afoot the Commander won't act until he can confirm what is happening. Any move to break lock will however result in lasering of manoeuvre drives. A TF 3 Sensor scan will reveal the other patrol cruisers moving in.

**Marines** UPP 788776-7

Armour: Combat Armour-18 (Tech 14)

EK(Zero G)-0, Rifleman-1, Vacc-1

**Sergeant** UPP 699886-7

Armour: Combat Armour-18 (Tech 14)

EK(Zero G)-0 (total DM of +1), Leader-2, Handguns-2 (total DM of +3), Rifleman-2 (total DM of +3), Tactics (Small Unit)-1, Vacc-2 (total DM of +3).

WEAPON	Accelerator Rifle	Snub Auto Pistol	(Cudgel)
Melee or Ranged	R	R	M
Ammo Type	STRD	HEAP	-
Capacity	15	15	-
Penetration	3	6	2
Attenuation	-	-	-
Damage	3	4	2
Range/Block	Md	M	1
Auto-Fire Targets	2	-	-
Danger Space	-	1.5	-
Signature	M	M	-
Recoil	L	L	-
Rapid Fire	Y	Y	-
Applicable Skill	Rifle	Handgun	Melee Cbt

### Nugget 6: The Hand-Off

The PCs' vessel docks without incident (Make a TF 3 Pilot task, with failure indicating rougher than usual locking requiring a minor repair task to a buckled hull plate), and access-ways are matched to the PCs' vessel's locks. The installation is a decommissioned 20k tanker hull connected to the settlement by a beanstalk some 400 metres distant

for safety purposes. According to transponder broadcasts, there are currently four seeker vessels and two IISS medivac vessels (100 ton scouts with medical equipment) berthed.

Z&Z look immensely pleased and relieved. They slap the PCs on the back, jump up and down etc. As soon as the access-way clamps to the airlock, Z&Z, suited up, will make to leave with their gear. Zapasta says they will return in a couple of hours with grav sleds for the cargo and the balance of the fee.

If the PCs refuse to let them past, etc., they will activate the tranq, null the G plates and the anti-hijack program (see previous nugget), then do their best to bail. If the PC want assurances that they will return, Zordaci simply states that 'hey, the stuff in the hold is worth more than our fee' but adds a rider of 'but as you can't go anywhere 'cause of the quarantine, we can also trust you'. With that they leave.

As soon as they cycle through, the PC hear the airlock control panel bleep with alarm indicating an error (outside, Z&Z activate the above traps and slag the camera). If any of the PCs are not incapacitated then the following may occur depending on PC actions. Note that Zero G checks (TF3 Zero G) will have to be made as the plates have gone off.

### Restart the G-plates

The ship's computer indicates that the error has occurred in the primary control unit. Zero G swimming to the primary control takes several minutes (TF3 zero g task, QR indicating time taken—a QR6 make a Dex task or suffer a slight injury). See 5a for results of a Gravitic task to determine the error.

### Chase after Z&Z.

The airlock controls have been slagged and will require a forced iris valve opener (TF4 Mechanical with QR the number of minutes it takes and a QR 6 indicating a malfunction). It takes thirty seconds for

(Continued on page 39)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 38)

the airlock to cycle open. Just inside the port access-way are the bodies of an Aslan female and male. The male is dressed in combat armour, a massive pole-arm fallen beside him and an accelerator rifle slung over his back. The female is dressed in a vacc suit and is carrying scanning/sensor equipment. Both their faceplates are open with bullet holes in their heads. The female's comm is bleeping constantly. Within two minutes the PCs will be confronted by three vacc suited individuals armed with shabby/worn accelerator rifles. Let the fun commence ('who the hell are you?', 'what the hell is happening?' etc.).

### Go out another lock.

Make a series of multiple TF4 Zero G tasks and one TF3 Vacc suit task (QR resulting in time taken, a QR 6 result meaning a save task (i.e., another T4 Zero G check or lose grip) to 'swim' to the access way and hand over hand to the port proper. There is an emergency lock, which can be cycled through, with a sign indicating the comms band a suit radio should broadcast on. The port control are screaming and demanding to know what the hell is happening. Within two minutes the lock will cycle open and the PC confronted by three vacc-suited individuals armed with shabby/worn accelerator rifles. Let the fun commence.

### PCs on Bridge

Ten minutes after Z&Z leave (and the fun begins), whoever is on sensors sees a faint emission of a ship's boat departing the settlement. If they alert the navy patrol vessels as to what is happening, make a TF6 Persuasion roll to convince them their story is true. The boat does not answer hailing comms and disappears.

### Check the containers.

The containers appear normal however a cursory inspection will reveal the ammo/small arms container cipher lock is in the open position (the marine forgot to re-seal it). If the PCs pull the crates out

they will note that only the first layer has stuff in them (three one metre long, half metre high & wide crates with 4 accelerator rifles in each plus six 0.5 metre cubed ammo crates, the rest are empty. Within the middle of the container is a standard Imperial nuke warhead case, with the relevant warnings etc. A readout has a counter showing four hours minus whatever time has progressed since Z&Z left. There is a movement sensor crudely affixed to this readout and the warhead case has been affixed to the container floor with sticky pads (i.e., to prevent shifting but not being detached).

<b>Task</b>	<i>Examine movement sensor (UNCERTAIN)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF 4 Sensor Ops or TF5 Electronics
<b>QR1-2</b>	The movement sensor will alarm if the nuke warhead crate is moved in relation to its current surroundings (ie the container). The sensor also has a small comm device attached.
<b>QR3-4</b>	The movement sensor will alarm if the nuke warhead crate is moved. The sensor also has a small comm device attached.
<b>QR5</b>	Some sort of movement sensor, no idea what triggers it
<b>QR6</b>	Nah, it's a fake.

If the warhead container is removed from the sticky pads, the read out will speed up at ten seconds per second (which gives the PCs 40 minutes—minus time lapsed between Z&Z leaving and the PCs' opening the crate times ten). Let the PCs decide how they are going to move it.

If disarming is attempted, see below.

<b>Task</b>	<i>Disarm Nuke (30 minute task)</i>
<b>TF &amp; Skill</b>	TF7 Demolitions task. -1TF if make a TF4 Intrusion success roll at QR3-4, -2 if QR1-2. +2 TF if gravity is off or PC is not grounded in some way.
<b>QR1-2</b>	Nuke has been reverted to the inert state in 15 minutes
<b>QR3-4</b>	Nuke has been disarmed in 30 minutes
<b>QR5</b>	Fail to disarm nuke in 30 minutes
<b>QR6</b>	Nuke will explode in ten minutes (anti tamper triggered).

Assuming the Nuke is somehow disposed of, the settlement authorities and Impies will want to talk to them. The settlement was aware of the weapons

(Continued on page 40)

# Active Measures

(Continued from page 39)

incoming, arrangements having been made to secure them in the last system. As they talk to the PCs, they receive a message that the weapons were hi-jacked 8 standard days ago. When shown pictures of Z&Z, the settlement leaders claim they had never seen them before. The Aslan were to check the weapons.

The Impies wish to investigate but the settlement leaders hustle the PCs away with a full load of fuel. The first container had maybe 12 missiles in total, the rest of the crates being empty and the third had rusty low tech farming equipment. The settlement will take this from the PCs in return for 50k.

## Appendix

### Rogues Gallery

#### Zapasta Cobb (Human Male)

About fifty (62), muscular build, short beard, scraggly salt and pepper hair pulled into a pony tail.

	STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC	CHA	PSI
ORIGINAL	9	D	A	9	8	7	8	?
CURRENT	9	D	A	9	8	7	8	?
STAT DM	1	3	1	1	-	-	-	-

**NOTES;** Has been in the employ of GMI for the past 15 years after their assistance in getting him out of an Imperial prison. Given Anagathics, both as a reward and to ensure continued service.

SKILL	LEVEL	APP	STATs	TASK	DM	WEAPON	Auto	Snub	Gauss Pistol	Cudgel
Admin	1	(I+Ed)/2	&C	1						
Athletic Ability	0	Variable		Var		Melee or Ranged		Ranged	Ranged	Melee
Brawling	3	(St+D)/2		4		Ammo Type	HEAP	GAS	TRNQ	-
Carousing	1	&C		1		Capacity	15	10	15	-
Comm.	1	(I+Ed)/2		2		Penetration	6	-	2	2
Demolition	1	(D+I)/2		3		Attenuation	-	-	-	-
Disguise	0	(D+I)/2		0		Damage	4	1	1	2
EK (Zero G)	2	D		5		Range/Block	M	M	L	1
Electronics	2	(D+I)/2		4		Auto-Fire Targets	-	-	-	-
Forgery	1	(I+Ed)/2 or (I+D)/2		+2/+3		Danger Space	1.5	1.5	-	-
Gravatics	2	(I+Ed)/2		3		Signature	M	M	L	-
Grav Craft	1	D		4		Recoil	L	L	L	-
Gun (Hand)	2	D		5		Rapid Fire	Y	Y	Y	-
Mechanical	2	(D+I)/2		4		Applicable Skill	Handgun	Handgun	Handgun	Melee C
Melee Cbt	2	(St+D)/2		3						
Music (Sing)	0	-		-						
Robotics	1	(I+Ed)/2		1						
Streetwise	3	I & C		1						
Vacc	0	(D+I)/2		2						

(Continued on page 41)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 40)

### Zordaci Mann (Human Male)

Early to mid thirties (46), generally wears junior executive corporate clothing, Jet black and shiny hair

	STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC	CHA	PSI
ORIGINAL	7	9	8	A	B	9	A	?
CURRENT	7	9	8	A	B	9	A	?
STAT DM	-	+1	-	+1	+2	(+1)	+1	-

SKILL	LEVEL	APP	STATs	TASK	DM
Admin	1	(I+Ed)/2	& C	+2	/+3
Armoury	1	(D+I)/2		+2	
Athletic Ability	0	Variable		Var.	
Brawling	1	(St+D)/2		+1	
Bribery	1	I & C		+2/3	
Computer	4	(I+Ed)/2		+5	
Demolition	3	(D+I)/2		+4	
Disguise	0	(D+I)/2		+1	
EK(Zero G)	0	D		-	
Forgery	1	(I+Ed)/2	or (I+D)/2	+2	
Grav Craft	0	D		-	
Gun (Hand)	2	D		+3	
Gun (Rifle)	1	D		+2	
Intrusion	1	(D+I)/2		+2	
Streetwise	2	I & C		+3/4	
Vacc	0	D		0	
Writing	0	(I+Ed)/2		+1	

**NOTES;** Ex Marine special forces where he was a Computer and Demolition's expert. Recruited by GMI some fourteen years back who supplied him with Anagathics. Recently had his SF tattoo removed and face altered after an operation went wrong.

WEAPON	Auto	Snub
Melee or Ranged		Ranged
Ammo Type	HEAP	GAS
Capacity	15	10
Penetration	6	-
Attenuation	-	-
Damage	4	1
Range/Block	M	M
Auto-Fire Targets	-	-
Danger Space	1.5	1.5
Signature	M	M
Recoil	L	L
Rapid Fire	Y	Y
Applicable Skill		Handgun

### Library Data

#### Barren's Belt

Settled in 920 by several competing mining corporations, as well as a multitude of independents upon the release of exploitation rights by the Ministry of Resources. The major deposits were quickly discovered and exploited by the corporations, forcing the independents to move to the belt's extremes.

It was in these extremes that a series of hitherto undiscovered incredibly rich finds were made and the independents allied into factions to exploit these discoveries. By 980, six settled asteroids petitioned the Imperium for world recognition rights, four independents and two corporate entities.

Relationships between these settlements have never been cordial, due mainly to the fact that all are competing for steadily depleting resources. Disputes over certain rocks have led to the occasional armed conflict breaking out, but the Imperium has decreed it a local matter and not intervened (it does not affect trade in the system as the main-world is some distance away).

The settlements are **Alphonso** (named after a vessel belonging to a band of independents), **Casiter** (named after a notorious belter bar in Glisten), **Du-Phant** (named after the cat belonging to the leader of a group of

(Continued on page 42)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 41)

*independents*), **Germain Mining Industries Refinery #12** (an asteroid refinery belonging to the named corporation), **Hu'uin Hapstader Co-op** (a system-based corporation whose primary concern is the refining of the ore from independents), and **Liishuiilg** (named for a Vilani societal sect).

[Location details reveal that the two corporate settlements are some distance from the Independents and each other and that the independents are relatively close to one another]

The entire population of the belt is approximately seventy thousand and is divided roughly equally amongst the settlements.

*Alphonso*

**Starport:** F

(Good quality, refined fuel available, minor repairs possible)

**Population:** 4

(14,200—almost entirely human, of mainly Solomani extraction)

**Language:** Galanglic, Sol (French)

**Government:** 3 (Oligarchy)

Only ship captains can vote (a ship being a vessel of 100 tons in size or greater) and all major legislative and judicial decisions are voted on. A council of three former captains who have the confidence of the electorate carries out day to day administration.

**Law:** 7

(No firearms are allowed, though melee weapons may be worn and carried; Movement is restricted only into life-support and other sensitive technology areas; There is free speech though custom allows someone slighted to challenge them to a contest of some kind)

**Resources:**

Raw ore, Water (its domain is smack bang in the middle of highest density of ice asteroids).

**History/Culture:**

Settled by a group of independents who shared Solomani French heritage, though the current population has a wide mix of human types. Non-human races are subject to some harassment, especially Vargr. Most of the population is bilingual. They regard the Liishuiilg with much distrust and Alphonse Belltrees have had the occasional run in with their ships in disputed territory.

*Casiter*

**Starport:** F

(Good quality, refined fuel available, minor repairs possible)

**Population:** 4

(18,900—Mostly human but with many different types of non human races present)

**Language:** Galanglic

**Government:** 2 (Demos)

All citizens (aged 16+, resident in settlement or registered Casiter vessel for a year or more) can vote on laws and general policy. Day to day government and judges are elected for a period of 12 months with all those in the previous government unable stand for election for a period of one year.

**Law:** 5

(All firearms save for rifles and shotguns banned—however they cannot be taken outside the home or ship; Free speech guaranteed; No movement restrictions save to areas designated as 'operational' No laws against vices provided they do not harm others)

**Resources:**

Raw ores, Tourism and Entertainment (the moral clime of Casiter is less than most worlds—i.e., no laws on drugs, gambling, prostitution etc.), limited manufacturing (porn holo-vids)

(Continued on page 43)



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 42)

### History/Culture:

Settled by a trader providing services to a loose coalition of independents from the old school of Belterdom—hard men who worked hard and played hard and enjoyed hard pornography, drugs, sex and games of high chance. Eventually the settlement expanded but instead of tunneling into the asteroid, de-commissioned star-ship hulls were anchored to the rock with various access ways connecting them. Casiter is the home of the *Rock Hard* series of famed hard core holoporn (featuring the talents of Rock Hard, Numann-Teak Drill, Dee Penetration and Boom Boom McQueen).

*Du-Phant*

### Starport: F

(Good quality, refined fuel available, minor repairs possible)

### Population: 3

(9,800, mostly human with a sizeable Aslan population in their own quarter)

**Language:** Galanglic

**Government:** 4 (Representative democracy)

Citizens vote once every two years for each branch of government. Each candidate must meet certain qualifications to stand for office (e.g., Law degree for standing for Judiciary)

**Law:** 8

(all weapons save small dual equipment/weapons banned; access cards required for access to certain areas; speech is regulated; exile for serious crime is the primary punishment)

**Resources:**

Raw ores, manufactured Goods (heavy machinery, some electronics)

**History/Culture:**

Du-Phant is a Spartan-minded settlement, though due to circumstance more than any inclination. It has been 'under arms' for the better

part of five years after numerous incidences with Liishuulg, though these conflicts have been confined to ship-to-ship encounters. The conflict has been ongoing for over a hundred years due to the sloppy work of a Ministry of Resources official, who, eager to return home, gave a somewhat hazy definition of 'borders' between the two settlements, the zone in dispute holding the richest claims. The belter vessels of Du-Phant are better armed and armoured than most. The Aslan population provides males as marines and gunners in these vessels, having been 'invited' by the population for that purpose during the last almost-war twenty years past.

*Germain Mining Industries Refinery #12*

### Starport: F

(Good quality, refined fuel available, minor repairs possible)

**Population:** 4 (10,200)

**Language:** Galanglic

**Government:** 1 (Corporate)

The settlement is run according to rules and regs of Germain Mining Industries with a Managing Director running the executive and Chief Marshal the Judiciary

**Law:** A

(all weapons banned; access to areas depending on position within company; most vices not banned but heavily regulated (for example there are corporate comfort men/women))

**Resources:**

Raw Ore, Refined Ore, Limited Manufacturing

**History/Culture:**

One of the survivors of the many corporate undertakings in the belt. While it is located in the poorer area of the belt, it has the most 'territory' but suffers from the fact that the best deposits are on the borders with the Indie settlements and more than one Indie has poached a logged find.

(Continued on page 44)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 43)

The Refinery is one of 26 owned by the corporation as a whole.

The Hu'uin Hapstader Co-op is a constant drain on profits as the Indie settlements as a whole sell their ore to them (despite GMI's offer of better rates thus negating the main weapon of 'muscling out the little guy' of a corporate armoury)

### *Hu'uin Hapstader Co-Op*

**Starport:** F

(Good quality, refined fuel available, minor repairs possible)

**Population:** 3

(6,200, mostly human with a sizeable Vargr segment)

**Language:** Galanglic

**Government:** 1/4 (Corporate with elements of representative government)

The Co-op is run along corporate lines but all employees are the shareholders—hence a co-operative. By gathering proxies, unpopular board members can be removed. The amount of shares owned is generally tied to the position held within the company.

**Law:** 8

(all firearms are banned; movement is monitored; free speech is allowed but derogatory or unsubstantiated claims result in a fine levied against a person's dividend).

**Resources:** Refined ore, Manufacturing (Limited)

**History/Culture:**

During the first thirty years of the belt being opened, the corporations had a monopoly on ore refinery in the system, forcing the Indies to sell their better grade ores at low prices. But as the Independents formed permanent settlements, they needed a cheaper refinery to remain viable. Enter Hu'uin Hapstader. Hapstader had an obsolete thousand-ton refinery/factory ship, which

required an infusion of funds to upgrade so as to match the corporate output. So a co-op was formed and employees recruited from each of the Indie settlements and groups, along with the necessary capital. In ten years, most of the corporations had their profits stripped right back and left the system. HH Co-op is much larger than its original size, a conglomerate of mined asteroids and de-commissioned hulls.

HH Co-op also serves as a 'meeting ground' for disputes amongst the Indie groups. Hapstader's original crew was Vargr attracted by his immense charisma and charm and as a result they make up a significant chunk of the population.

### *Liishuiilg ("As One")*

**Starport:** F

(Good quality, refined fuel available, minor repairs possible)

**Population:** 4 (10,500, almost all Vilani (human))

**Language:** Vilani and Galangic

**Government:** 3 (Oligarchy)

Middle and higher-ranking leaders of the sect control the government, with the high leaders governing with the consent of the lower orders.

**Law:** A

(There are no weapons unless a person is in the militia; speech and hedonistic pursuits are self regulated and whilst not banned it does result in 're-education')

**Resources:** Raw ores, rare ores.

**History/Culture:**

Settled by a Vilani societal sect (ie a sect following sociologically beliefs as opposed to religious ones) who wished to practice in private but needed the funds and privacy to do it. The central tenant of the sect is cooperation—all performing to the best of their ability for the good of the collective (a form of communism). Every quarter each member of the collective is assessed

(Continued on page 45)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 44)

by a panel of higher orders to determine their status for the following quarter based on their efforts for the collective. Their rank determines their access to non-essential resources (i.e., entertainment, library data and the like). As there is no money, a person's station within the cult determines how 'rich' they are. Members are allowed, however, to acquire personal possessions (but cannot buy quarters and the like). Despite how they seem, appearing before a panel is not an inquisition, they are conducted humanly and with compassion, despite the propaganda from Du-Phat (for history of this conflict, see *Du-Phant* entry). Sect members are free to leave at any time, as can their children under the age of 12, but those older must make their own decision. Self-administered euthanasia is a common practice when a sect member becomes a burden to themselves or others.

The sect ended up in the belt because of persecution on their home world. As a result they over-react to any hostility directed toward them. Hence the recent conflict with the Du-Phant settlement has escalated due to over reaction by the sect to perceived incursions into their designated area. The sect has armed their ships and all fit and able sect members belong to the militia.

Members of the sect constantly debate their direction and beliefs, with each habitat quarter (with about 20 or so families) participating in weekly debates in their commons.

A liaison officer, who will explain the tenets of the sect (without being asked) with all the enthusiasm of an Amway member, escorts any off-worlders.

### *Germain Mining Industries*

Formed as the result of several mergers amongst mining-focussed corporations some fifty years earlier. The scope of its activities are spread throughout

the sector, specialising in purchasing exploitation rights to secondary asteroid belts (i.e., belts which do not have the system's main settlement). They currently have 26 belt exploitation/refinery operations in total, as well as other associated endeavours.

The corporation has been accused by the Belters' Guild of ruthless tactics and deliberately offering at loss rates to drive other refineries to the wall, then jacking up the prices. The guild has recommended that their members not sell ore to GMI as a result.

**Stock Ownership:** Various Pension funds 32%, Gran-Malouf Family 29%, Other corporations 18%, Other 18%, Imperial Family 3%

### *Gran-Malouf*

An extremely wealthy family renowned for its commercial good sense and 'gloves off' approach to business. It is a relative newcomer to nobility, having only acquired peerage some three generations back. Consequently while it is 'swimming' in money, both its own and via managing a series of planetary pension funds, it has been consistently snubbed by established nobility who perceive the Gran Malouf as 'money grubbing level jumpers'.

Indeed, the family's rise to fortune has much to blame. Artemus Malouf, then a Petty Officer in the supply branch of the Imperial Navy, somehow managed to acquire a Zhodani fifty-thousand-ton cruiser, surrendering it to the empire in return for a sizeable seizure claim. Legend has it that he and a small picked crew went AWOL behind enemy lines to seize the skeleton-staffed vessel from a backwater system deep within the Consulate. In order to return quickly, they performed a deliberate misjump back into Imperial territory. A very ill Artemus Malouf was the only survivor, the rest having perished due to jump sickness.

Artemus received a (barely) honourable discharge from the navy and invested it in a series of post-war reconstructions that netted his family vast

(Continued on page 46)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 45)

returns. His marriage to his Naval Intelligence Interrogator, causing much gossip. Towards the end of his elongated life, Artemus received a barony for 'services to the economic health of the Spinward Marches', though rumour has it he simply bought it thanks to a large sum of money spent bailing out a recently impoverished noble family.

The family as a whole has personal investments in most of the megacorporations and sector corporations in the Spinward Marches. However, its role as executive managers of several main world pension funds gives it vast power and wealth. The biggest family-only investment is in Germain Mining Industries, the family having consolidated most of their

assets into GMI when a major terra-forming project went bankrupt.

Most all the movers and shakers of the family spend some time in the Naval service, usually just a term, though sometimes until majority (thirty), with most of them having gone through the academy. The current family head is Fulsom Gran-Malouf, aged 112, whose anagathic-related facial cysts have acquired some fame and the attention of several comedians. Fulsom is currently serving as the Imperial legate of a world and attends every function in a grav-chair, having lost the ability to walk under his own power some thirty years back, the anagathics hindering the re-cloning of his spinal column. ☼

## Critics' Corner

### Pirates of Drinax: The Torpol Cluster

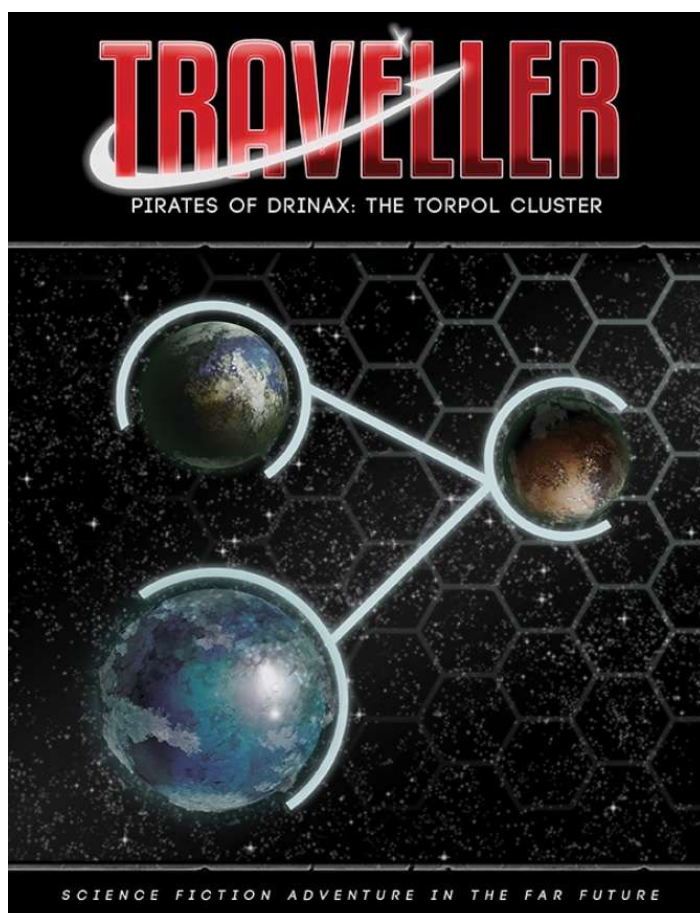
Reviewed by Megan Robertson

*Pirates of Drinax: The Torpol Cluster.* Martin J. Dougherty.  
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>  
17pp., PDF  
US\$5.99/UK£4.55

*This review originally appeared on [rpg-resource.org.uk](http://rpg-resource.org.uk) in December 2016*

Three worlds... yet of strategic importance to both the Aslan Hierate and the old Sindalian Empire, a nodal point in trade routes through the Tlaiowaha subsector linking the Wildeman Cluster and the Sindalian Main. This small cluster of worlds Jump-1 apart receives many visitors, from the Imperium and other places.

The Introduction provides background information on the cluster and its history. There's a note that these three worlds may be located somewhere else in your universe, but it seems better to leave them as intended, as they are well-embedded into their surroundings. There is a partial map of the Sindal and Tlaiowaha subsectors showing the cluster's location within the Trojan Reach sector and in



relation to other nearby worlds, followed by detailed notes on each of the three worlds: Torpol, Clarke and Blue.

(Continued on page 47)



## Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 46)

Torpol is possibly the pivotal world, as both Marduk (and thence the Sindalian Main), Asim and Drinax (linking to the Aslan Hierate) are but Jump-2 away from the Torpol system. A map shows the main trade routes linking through the cluster. Torpol is the only habitable world, with free water, in the system, but there are nine other rocky planets, a couple of asteroid belts and four gas giants in orbit around the sun. Both asteroid belts are home to miners and one of the rocky worlds—although cold and airless—is also inhabited. This planet, Traefar, has a fairly basic starport but an extensive settlement popular with spacers and it's reckoned to be a good place to find crew—or indeed, to find a berth if you are a spacer looking for work... although it is the sort of place that the Imperium raids every so often looking for criminals. Torpol itself is a waterworld but with a sophisticated (and expensive) highport, when no nonsense is tolerated. Down on the planetary surface there are plenty of places where a tourist and his money can be parted in reasonable safety.

The next system to be discussed is Clarke. It's a rather gloomy place, home to a strange religion. The

system has two asteroid belts, seven rocky planets and a remote companion star that generally gets ignored. The Clarke Highport is as well-equipped as Torpol's, but has a more functional air. The religion is concerned with death and the guidance of dead souls, their bodies being encased in carbon blocks which are used as building materials.

Finally, the Blue system has twelve rocky planets and two gas giants—and a bunch of Imperium ships hanging around, nobody's quite sure why... it may have something to do with Aslan settlements on a few of the planets or the Bulhai Freeport, in orbit around one of the gas giants (also called Bulhai). This Freeport is run as a legitimate place of business, not a pirate haven, but it's certainly possible to get things you cannot get elsewhere. The people of Blue itself are interested in art and religion, topics they will debate endlessly.

This work presents three interesting systems to visit in your travels, with atmospheric descriptions that help to paint the picture of what the party will find there. ✪

## Confessions of a Newbie Referee

A Column by Timothy Collinson

### #32: Regular if not Frequent

by Timothy Collinson

I mentioned last time that we lost two of our number from the once-every-other-month session in the pub where we're playing through *The Traveller Adventure*. As all but one of the players also attends a once-a-month book group that we hold on the intervening months, I didn't think much about the pace of play. Only one of the players has any experience of *Traveller* or even role playing, the rest are work colleagues whom I've inveigled into playing just by going on about *Traveller* for so long. I think they just wanted to satisfy curiosity as to what I was on about and then found it wasn't so bad after all!

Or at least, "it keeps us happy so we can put up with it" and "it's quite social around a drink or two and a meal". I'll take anything.

It wasn't until surprise was expressed on the *Traveller* Mailing List about being able to hold a group together over such an occasional, if regular, game. It has been eighteen months or more now – nine sessions – and you could probably just about say we're half way through the published text. Although as I wrote in my last Confession I was keen to at least put some 'wandering', as directed, after the 'First Call at Zila' chapter. However, I knew this couldn't be too endless or we'd never get to the climax of the adventure.

(Continued on page 48)



## Confessions of a Newbie Referee

(Continued from page 47)

Our long-time *Traveller* fan would like to play a bit more regularly and I could probably live with once a month, but the others are very happy to keep it casual and relaxed. I'd rather they played occasionally than found it too demanding and gave it up. Book group used to be once a month for about seven years until some of our number found the pace a bit demanding. (I can proudly say I'm the only one to have finished reading every book we've tackled across a decade. Even if I've hated some.)

Anyway, for various reasons, the evenings we can actually run *Traveller* are fairly limited. It pretty much has to be a Thursday for a start. It needs to be at least a couple of weeks away from the book group night. A new university term was about to start when all but one of our number would be frantically

busy. So it was with some reluctance that the only night we could get together meant that our star archaeologist couldn't make it. Postponing would mean a couple of months wait and that just felt too long. Then the week before, our glorious Captain had to duck out and I thought again about postponing.

I hate letting them down and them missing out. And yes, there's probably a tiny bit of ego in there as well. But in the end the remaining four and myself had a good evening and I still think it was better to keep the structure of our regular sessions and perhaps give a hunger for next time! ❄️

## The Shipyard

### Designs for Marc Miller's Traveller (T4)

### Grazzagr-class Cruiser

designed by Ewan Quibell

Tons: 1000 Std (Wedge SL)	Volume: 14000 m <sup>3</sup>	Cost: 1029.213 MCr
Crew: 31	High/Mid Pass: 0/0	Low: 0
Cargo: 17 tons Std	Controls: Medium Military/Bridge	TL: 12
9 Size	2 Jump (2 Std/Pc Fuel)	
	4 G Thrusters (1008 Mw)	
PA Bay (+4) 2/9-7-6-5	9 Power Plant (4600 Mw)	
2x L Battery (+4) 1/7-6-4-3	249.3 Fuel (Scoops, Refine 20)	
L Battery (+4) 1/2-2-0-0	3 Sandcasters (90 Cans)	
5x Missile Barrette (20)	A16 P5 J16	
	20 Armour, 23 Structure	
Launch Facility (Launch)		
Minimal Hanger (Launch)		
Crew:	7 Engineers, 1 Electronic, 2 Manoeuvre, 13 Gunners, 2	
AuxCraft, 4 Command 1 Stewards, 1 Medic		
Notes: 1 two person Sick Bay		
Ships Vehicles: 20 Ton Launch		

The *Grazzagr* was designed to be a replacement for the Ruganz Empire's ageing fleet of TL11 Cruisers in 2640 UC. 8 ships were eventually built before the class was sidelined when Dzorg joined the Federation three years later.

The *Grazzagr* was designed to both show the flag around the Kranag cluster while packing enough punch to take on any other ships in its class.

The 8 ships built were sent into the Naval reserve fleet. The ships have hardly ever been out of moth-

(Continued on page 49)

## The Shipyard

(Continued from page 48)

balls, being sent on exercise once in the last 50 years. With only 8 ships in the class even the Naval reserve found no use for them and paid them off in 2706. The Star Legion instantly saw their potential as anti-corsair vessels and sent them to be overhauled.

One ship has been assigned to each Star Legion Base to be used as a force multiplier in any future strikes against corsair bases. Currently, training missions are being undertaken to determine the most effective formations for using the *Grazzagrs*.

The last ship has been reserved to provide a force multiplier to special missions such as survey missions. It is currently stationed with Second Squadron at Filly Base Braden.

In operation the Star Legion use double occupancy of the 5 large staterooms and dispense with the steward position. The crew roster for a Star Legion ship is 7 Engineers, 1 Electronic, 2 Manoeuvre, 13 Gunners, 2 Aux Craft, 4 Command, 1 Medic, 6 Ships Troops. Ships Troops on a Star Legion vessel is misleading, as there are no dedicated ships troops as such in the Legion, all personnel are expected to perform ground combat. As such the ships troops as listed are extra crewmembers picked with a skill range appropriate to the mission. Mainly they are used to increase crew rotation, enable instant crew replacement in combat situations and provide a squad of ground troops when necessary. ✪

## Active Measures

### In Loco Parentis

by Timothy Collinson

A short adventure for *Cepheus Engine* for 3 or 4 characters.

Referees may wish to refer to the article "Plain Mental" in *Freelance Traveller*, September/October 2017, for the relevant animal descriptions and statistics of drarfs, chitta-tweeps, lamanda and chippers. <https://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/animals/plairmental.html>

The PCs are travelling across some plains on a journey that will take two or three days. They may be students touring and sightseeing, they might be scouts exploring, scientists doing research, barbarians for whom this is home, or they could be merchants picking up or dropping off a cargo. Suitable characters can be generated at [http://members.ozemail.com.au/~jonoreita/Supplement0ne/Cepheus\\_Engine\\_1001\\_characters.html](http://members.ozemail.com.au/~jonoreita/Supplement0ne/Cepheus_Engine_1001_characters.html) and either select from random lists or use the Chosen Career sliders to create scouts or merchants or others as appropriate.

Quick and easy maps that might be used for inspiration or as regional overviews can be found on the @unchartedatlas Twitter feed. Otherwise, any standard Traveller world map with suitable terrain types could be used to place the adventure.

### Scene 1: Evening

Setting the scene begins with the PCs making camp for the night. This could be literal camping under canvas, or perhaps they're travelling in a vehicle that has bunk room – a recreational vehicle or a large ATV for example. Barbarians or student types are more likely to be in back-to-basics conditions but the Referee and players can make as much or as little of this as desired. Water and firewood may need to be fetched, a meal cooked, and prime sleeping spots haggled over. Conversation could revolve around the beautiful country they're passing through, the flora and fauna they've seen, or the insects that are occasional pests. Amongst the many types birds they'll have seen, chitta-tweeps may have been noted on an Average Recon task. As the sun sets, very small flying pouncers ("hastybugs") appear and buzz round the camp. They hover in one spot and then zip a metre or two to another spot where they hover again. As they move, they pulse with bioluminescent light used to attract even smaller prey which they stun by flying into them at speed. Harmless to humans, their sound and light displays can be mesmerising.

(Continued on page 50)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 49)

Cepheus Engine				
ANIMAL	UPP	# APP	MASS	SPEED
Hastybug	181063	1d6	0.02kg	1m
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore (Pouncer), Plains flyer			
SKILLS	Athletics 0, Recon 0			
WEAPONS	Teeth (1D-3)			
ARMOUR	Chitin (0)			

If the PCs are very quiet, they may spot chippers cautiously emerging from dens just at the edge of any light cast by fires or lanterns.

### Scene 2: Morning

Come first light, the PCs are likely to be woken by some odd noises. Gathered around their campfire or their vehicle are several juvenile drarfs. There are no signs of the parents. It is a Routine Animals task to know they're hungry or an Average Education characteristic check. It is a Difficult Education check to know that they eat chitta-tweeps. Attempts to feed them plants or grasses will be met with a slightly bemused indifference. Anyone who's been on the world for more than a few days would know that they're not overly common creatures. If the PCs simply ignore them and move off, the drarfs will follow. Although they look rather ungainly, once they're moving they can keep up quite a speed for long periods – although the young will tire sooner than adults would. They begin to emit a rather plaintive keening as the day draws on. This reduces if the PCs allow them to stay close to them.

### Scene 3: The Water-Sourcerer

A few miles further down the road the PCs will encounter:

**Bharat Brown** (Male Human) 45A9C8 Age 50

Scientist (5 terms), Rogue (2 terms)

Physical Sciences-2, Social Sciences-2, Admin-1, Comms-1, Computer-1, Heavy Weapons-1, Jack o' Trades-1, Life Sciences-1, Medicine-1, Advocate-0, Bribery-0, Electronics-0, Engineering-0, Space Sciences-1

Brown is a local and a grizzled 'water-sourcerer', as he describes himself, looking for potable liquids for a group of hunters – or a hunter and his entourage – who are camped out a short distance away. He has a tame lamanda sitting on his shoulder. He will flag down the PCs and assuming they stop, the drarfs will catch up with them and once again cluster around their vehicle. Brown has stopped them to pass the time of day and to find out what they know in terms of local water supplies and the like. However, he'll be particularly intrigued by the drarfs attached to the PCs.

"Fine looking herd of critters, you've got there." Brown will offer. He'll engage the PCs in conversation about the animals and ask where the parents are. Drarf juveniles would never travel without their adults. He'll be of the opinion, particularly if the PCs have done anything along the lines of providing food or water for the animals, that they've 'adopted' the PCs as surrogate parents.

If the PCs quiz him, he'll tell them he's a local guide and looking for water sources for the group he's with. A Difficult Social Standing check will alert the PCs to the fact that he's something of a rogue and although he does know the local area and wildlife he's also playing up his abilities to the hunters and is only a little better at finding water than anyone else. But he's being paid well and milking the visitors to the area for all he can manage.

A thought comes to him. "Would you sell them? I reckon my employer," nodding back down the trail he was walking, "would pay good money for them."

This might be a good moment for the 'employer' to turn up and it will be obvious that they're big game hunters looking for a kill. They probably would pay the PCs for the drarfs so that they can use them as food or as bait for other creatures. Alternatively, they may already be drawing their weapons and about to shoot the beasts. But they'll be complaining

(Continued on page 51)

## Active Measures

*(Continued from page 50)*

that they're too small and not what Brown promised them as hard to shoot.

The PCs may or may not choose to go along with this as they see fit. Scientists may value the animals more for research, merchants might know they can get more for the creatures from a city zoo if they can get them there, scouts may value the animals lives more than the money, students or tourists might be more or less interested in the money depending on how hard up they are or how environmentally friendly they are.

If the PCs choose to press on with their journey, go to Scene 4a. If they choose to sell the drarfs, go to Scene 4b. If the PCs choose to start hunting for the parental drarfs, go to Scene 4c.

### Scene 4a

Continuing on their way, with the juveniles still in tow, the PCs will eventually come across the drarf parents. At first, the PCs will be in some danger as the parents see them as a threat. However, by not acting aggressively and allowing the juveniles free reign to rejoin the herd, they should be able to avoid any actual attacks. There will, of course, be a touching reunion of herd and family before they move off across the plains.

### Scene 4b

If the PCs have sold the juveniles to the water-sourcerer and hunters, they can continue on their way. In a few miles they will meet the drarf parents. They are clearly distressed and looking for their young. In the distance their herd appears to be moving towards them. There are a dozen or more of them. The parents will be able to smell the presence of the juveniles on the PCs or their vehicle and this will get their interest. Some signal to the rest of the herd will have them blocking the road (more by numbers than design) and they'll start getting uncomfortably close to the PCs and smelling them curiously. If the PCs respond aggressively the drarfs will

attack – using their Psionic Assault and their horn-like protrusions. The Assault will be perceived by the PCs a numbing sensation in their heads, followed by a throbbing pain until the moment they fall unconscious. If the PCs respond submissively to the drarfs or try to back track down the road from the direction in which they came, the drarfs will follow them.

If they return as far as the hunting group, subsequent events will depend on what the hunters have done with the juveniles and how they respond to the arrival of the adults. If the young are still simply tied up for example, then it should be possible to return them to the parents without too much difficulty. If the hunters attack, however, or if there's evidence that the young have been killed, the drarfs will attack the hunters in a frenzy – double their normal damage.

### Scene 4c

The PCs can pick up the trail of a herd of drarfs crossing the road a few miles further on. Their vehicle may or may not be able to handle the cross-country terrain and they may have to follow on foot. Depending on the skill sets of the PCs and the interests of the players, this can be made as much of or as little of as desired. But it should be possible for all but the most inept to eventually track down the main herd. If, depending on their previous encounter, the water-sourcerer happens to have joined them, this will be made a degree easier. Assuming the drarfs are eventually found, see Scene 4a for an edgy reunion of parents and juveniles.

## Appendix

There are many opportunities for characters of all types to be used in this adventure. As indicated in the introductory paragraphs, characters can be quickly generated using the 1000001 Characters website given; alternatively, a selection of pre-generated characters follows.

*(Continued on page 52)*

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 51)

### Possible Scout characters

#### Scout Chintan Shimada

(Male Human) 9689A8 Age 30  
Drifter(1), Drifter(1), Scout(1) Cr-5000  
Jack o' Trades-2, Bribery-1, Liaison-1, Piloting-1,  
Recon-1, Tactics-1, Admin-0, Bludgeoning Weapons  
-0, Life Sciences-0, Linguistics-0, Mechanics-0, Slug  
Pistol-0, Streetwise-0, Tracked Vehicle-0  
Low Passage(x 2), Shotgun

#### Scout Ratanni Chun

(Female Human) 949779 Age 48  
Drifter(1), Scientist(1), Mercenary(1), Scout(2)  
Cr12500  
Gambling-2, Jack o' Trades-2, Bribery-1, Engineering  
-1, Piloting-1, Shotgun-1, Social Sciences-1, Advocate  
-0, Carousing-0, Energy Rifle-0, Mechanics-0, Mole-  
0, Recon-0, Slashing Weapons-0, Space Sciences-0,  
Streetwise-0

#### Captain Kagutu Sanders

(Male Human) B6A865 Age 34  
Scout(3), Mercenary(1) Cr5000  
Demolitions-2, Engineering-1, Piloting-1, Recon-1,  
Screens-1, Slug Pistol-1, Turret Weapons-1, Zero-G-  
1, Archery-0, Bay Weapons-0, Comms-0, Electronics-  
0, Mechanics-0, Physical Sciences-0  
Assault Rifle

### Possible Scientist characters

#### Instructor Manoj Ehae

(Male Human) C87569 Age 22  
Scientist(1) Cr10000  
Physical Sciences-1 Admin-0 Bribery-0 Computer-0  
Electronics-0 Linguistics-0 Mechanics-0 Medicine-0

#### Associate Professor Udso Dsamo

(Male Human) 5567A3 Age 48  
Scientist(6) Cr0  
Admin-2 Computer-1 Medicine-1 Navigation-1  
Physical Sciences-1 Riding-1 Slug Pistol-1 Jack-o-  
Trades-1 Space Sciences-1 Bribery-0 Electronics-0  
Energy Pistol-0 Life Sciences-0 Social Sciences-0

#### Research Professor Catherine Patel

(Female Human) 9985E7 Age 34  
Scientist(4) Cr5000  
Life Sciences-1 Linguistics-1 Rotor Aircraft-1 Space  
Sciences-1 Veterinary Medicine-1 Admin-0 Archery-  
0 Bribery-0 Computer-0 Electronics-0 Mechanics-0  
Medicine-0 Physical Sciences-0  
High Passage, Low Passage

### Possible Merchant characters

#### Third Officer Radhika Faison

(Female Human) 85DA85 Age 46  
Merchant(7) Cr72500  
Broker-2 Carousing-2 Medicine-1 Piloting-1 Screens-  
1 Steward-1 Zero-G-1 Bludgeoning Weapons-0  
Comms-0 Energy Rifle-0 Engineering-0 Farming-0  
Riding-0 Social Sciences-0 Wheeled Vehicle-0  
Ship Shares, High Passage, Annual Pension  
(Merchants): Cr14000

#### Pankaj Ramirez

(Male Human) AB6365 Age 30  
Merchant(1), Maritime Defense(1), Drifter(1)  
Cr50000  
Engineering-1 Jack-o-Trades-1 Mechanics-1 Recon-1  
Rotor Aircraft-1 Sailing Ships-1 Steward-1 Survival-  
1 Archery-0 Broker-0 Carousing-0 Comms-0 Com-  
puter-0 Piercing Weapons-0 Submarine-0  
Dagger, Mid Passage

#### Crewman Baron Hemal Nagda

(Male Human) 64544C Age 20  
Merchant(0) Cr-10000  
Steward-1 Advocate-0 Broker-0 Comms-0 Energy  
Pistol-0 Engineering-0 Piercing Weapons-0 Riding-0  
Wheeled Vehicle-0





### Book 1: Mercenary Second Edition

Reviewed by "kafka"

Book 1: *Mercenary*. Matthew Sprange.

Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

132pp., PDF

US\$14.99/UK£11.39

This review originally appeared on [rpg.net](http://rpg.net) in March 2015

This product is a second edition of the *Mercenary* sourcebook for the first edition of *Mongoose Traveller*.

As *Mercenary* 1st Edition appeared in the early days of *Mongoose Traveller*, with much written possibly before the playtest was complete – there was a profound disconnect between what the 1st edition was and what emerged from the playtest. For a great many rules and tweaks appeared in the playtest sought to make *Traveller* a thoroughly modern role-playing game. However, 1st edition *Mercenary* did not really keep pace with the spirit and intent of the playtest. Now, to Mongoose's great credit – they have released a second edition which, corrects some of those drawbacks and highlights some of the weaknesses of *Traveller* as a whole.

*Traveller* was conceived by a bunch of Wargaming enthusiasts – like many early Old School Games – whereas as many a game died or returned to a melee-based game (yes, I am looking at you, D&D) – *Traveller* was different because they recognized that there was a social science and a historical dimension to play. Nowhere was this more evident than in one of the first supplements which outlined a vast interstellar empire – and the supplement's name was *Mercenary*. That first supplement was a sort of add-on that allowed players a highly detailed simulation from chargen to more futuristic weapons than lasers powered by backpacks (fusion weapons powered by backpacks). Of course, *Star Wars* changed the weapons and it also changed somewhat the mercenary. *Traveller* was grounded in part in the Roman Empire sensibility – a small standing Imperial Army and prolific use of mercenary units to fight in small wars or brush wars under very strict rules. However, as

SCIENCE-FICTION  
ADVENTURE IN  
THE FAR FUTURE

**TRAVELLER**  
BOOK 1: MERCENARY

SECOND EDITION

*Traveller* evolved, it did begin to resemble *Star Wars* somewhat more, with many conventions and norms influencing play. Thus, the mercenary became either akin to heroic rebels or was merely an option for a campaign or simply background colour.

Mongoose had to assemble all this together and combine with a modern sensibility in the era of Independent Military Contractors (mercenaries by any other name) and their extensive use in bush wars in Central America, Africa and parts of Asia. A difficult task, but one that Spica Publishing had done extraordinarily well. So, it was a wonder that Mongoose did not approach Daniel W. Hammersley and the good folks at Spica to provide some filler from real experiences of a career soldier who served with distinction in Iraq.

#### The Good

As I said, the 1st edition contained many rule modifications that were deleted in the playtest and that left the rules inconsistent with play. There are

(Continued on page 54)

(Continued from page 53)

also a good range of options and life paths that are more capturing the age-old *Traveller* vibe rather than just generic space opera. There are useful rules for the building of fortifications and new rules that govern the military contract or 'ticket'. The rules are solid and well-written with nice art, along with a nice set of mass combat rules along with more equipment and vehicles for Mercs to use in the field of battle.

### The Bad

Well, where do I begin?... as I said in the introduction, *Traveller* was started by a bunch of war game enthusiasts who designed wonderful battle simulations of different battles past and possible future. This was something that was that *Traveller* steadily moved away from to focus more on role playing. These rules sort of hearken back to days of miniatures and mass combat scenes and that war gaming heritage, more than role playing. I do appreciate there is an audience for people who still play war games with minis, but the bulk of *Traveller's* audience are role players; as a result this book is more in line with Mongoose's overall business plan to diversify more into miniature gaming. Also, as a generic book – nowhere do we see Marines, let alone, Imperial Marines profiled. While, as I said, there is an improvement in the quality of the art, the printing process in which it was rendered needs improvement as everything is done in grey scale, which (unfortunately) fades in parts in the printing process, giving an overall bad "photocopied look". And, what is missing in many Mongoose *Traveller* books with the exception of the Third Imperium setting or Campaign books is real colour. And, not color in terms of artwork, but a compelling narrative. There are countless books that are emerging that are just charts and more charts. Excellent for the gearhead solo player, but their practicality in a role playing session diminishes more and more.

### The Ugly

Quite frankly, the layout. This book is laid out as a collection of notes, not a cohesive look at mercenaries and their use in the myriad of *Traveller* settings. So, one gets the impression that the author was asked to write just a collection of unlinked essays dominated by the aforementioned charts.

*Traveller* is often said to be a license to print money, as *Traveller* players are an extremely loyal and dedicated group who buy and collect practically everything. While *Mercenary* Second Edition is a substantial improvement over the first iteration of this book, it still lacks the glue that binds *Traveller* together: the social science and narrativist background. We are no longer in 1978; we should be striving to make *Traveller* relevant to a new group of players and building a solid set of rules accompanied with a nicely illustrated product fleshed out with lots of description is the way to move forward. As it stands now, *Traveller* is touted to be a space adventure akin to the Age of Sail; right now, it is in the doldrums and has been for some time. So, this book is certainly worth getting but it is no way worthy of a great review because it did little to improve my game other than a few extra pieces of equipment and tightening up of rules contained within the main *Traveller* rulebook. 🌀

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### The Adventures of Gerry Fynne

by Sam Swindell

#### Chapter 7: Upward, miscreants, from Lirshe's bosom

They rose to a 30 minute warning, kaff and a pee before leaving the pavilion. The light breakfast and tour of the rest of Lirshe's barren zones, including a walk-through tour of an abandoned gem mine, was over by midmorning. They settled into an open porch on a castle-like inn, perched almost at the bottom of Lirshe's north polar rift for a warm brew of local prominence. They wore fleece pants of little loft but incredible warmth, and greatcoats of the long-haired hides of the local meat animals. They breathed the local air, but through compressor masks. The masks admitted the long drinking straws of organic origin that bore the warm, sticky, quite unidentifiable beverage.

They were given their itinerary for their tour of all 1,600 km of this valley, fully 76 kilometers deep at its bottom, and a description of the wonder of its natural attributes, with some of the changes that modern technology had added. The atmosphere was extremely thin, but it existed. The bottoms had been deepened, by only a couple of thousand meters, and only in a few areas. Most human habitation was subterranean, with openings on the cultivatable parts of the rift faces. Natural fungi had been geneered to be a source of foodstuffs for the locals, though not enough to support them. The rift froze and thawed, according to both predictable seasons and violent swings in weather. Huge reflectors on the rift walls concentrated sunlight for more specialized agriculture, including a very few meat animals.

For those who wanted, a tethered "wet zip" through the Lirshebahn, the torrential mountain river at the rift's bottom provided a way across to a sumptuous lunch of steaming local produce. For those nine members of the tour who opted out, watching and filming the others bobbing across was entertainment enough. Gerry was scared, but with

being suited and tethered there was no real danger, so he had to try. He learned nothing new about Lirshe in the process, but he did feel he had barely missed testing the suit's solid waste system.

Later, inside, looking at the mottled, multicolored walls of the rift towering up to 20 kilometers across from them, he was almost speechless. The planet was small and this was a very small part of the planet, but everything looked huge; it looked huge, because in human terms it was. Once again, the math of the universe, accurate and precise, failed to convey the glory of the creator's handiwork, or even the scale of man's modifications. That he was eating fungus with names and varieties he could neither pronounce nor remember, and some kind of long haired beast with aspects of mountain goat, tree sloth, and giant bear, did not fully register. That he was eating like he may have only eaten once before sunk into his soul, however.

He was feasting, having relished the prospect of sinning, and he was a bit on his ear about it. Something about David writing the twenty-third Psalm and killing his loyal lieutenant to steal his wife passed through his mind. He just dropped the thought completely and looked out at the vista again, and the feelings drifted away. The rest of the day brought hours of flying, walking, and even sailing in small, covered powerboats, over, beside and on the Lirshebahn. Tea in the sunlight of a glassed-in porch with a view of the rift stretching down for about 42 kilometers, to the far shore 29 clicks down. He did a shaggy Pythagorean SWAG, and figured the downward vista at about 50 kilometers. They would watch a local variant of grav ball, travel to the Lirshe Rift Haus, and there dine. They watched a local play, and bedded down in low-g splendor.

Breakfast at the Haus was sunlit, but only because of the mylar sails positioned 43 kilometers away that made it so. They went out to watch a local version of net hockey in vacc suits, played on snow,

*(Continued on page 56)*

## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 55)

before having a final cocktail in a small pavilion, and boosting for the ship. Gerry noted it had certainly been a trip he would remember, and well worth the price... particularly in someone else's money.

The Yungs were taciturn through the last morning of the voyage, and would not answer Gerry's questions in any substantive way. The radical change meant, he guessed, some sort of incident the night before. While the tour had been "double occupancy," the brothers had shared a room, and Gerry was in with a businessman from Ohasset who apparently thought it was beneath his dignity to speak with a fifteen-year old, let alone share a room with one. It was apparently above his budget, however, to buy a single room. Gerry had had plenty to think about, however, and eventually drifted off to sleep.

They moved in to dock with Lirshe highport where the *Maid* herself was docked. This was a much smaller affair than Nundis highport, to be sure. It was easy to see a number of liners, quite a few in Ley Lightning's livery, as they made their approach in the boat. The highport air smelled familiar when the airlock door opened, and Gerry realized it was from a dish they had been served in the Lirshe Haus. While at any given time the highport served only a couple of hundred small ships -like the *Maid* or free traders, there was also a robust traffic supporting the huge Nundis bulk haulers. While these behemoths scooped their own fuel at the neighboring gas giant, J'Taii, in a very controlled traffic pattern, they depended on tenders from the highport for any emergency personnel transfers, spare parts, and the like. Nundis Lines, the massive bureaucracy that ran these bulk haulers, had a terminal that took up almost a third of the highport dedicated to such support, which Gerry could see in what appeared to be the "bottom" of the highport schematic.

They were still in the "planetary" side of customs, so needed to pass in through same type of

customs that Gerry had gone through coming onto the highport of Griik Maeii. There were no hitches, though there were four Marines checking IDs like the one had back home. Lirshe was, after all, about a six times the size of his home planet in population, even if most of them lived in caves under the arctic. As they moved through there arose only a vague feeling of unease for Gerry; his papers were good, and the questions were old hat by now, but there was always the chance that something had changed. Maybe someone had found out about Eve's forgery? But standing in line proved the hardest part, and they were back aboard the *Maid* in half an hour, and due to leave in another nine. Gerry was a little taken aback by the brothers' funk, and turned into his stateroom for a Stayfresh sandwich and a nap.

He awoke a couple of hours later, and shambled up to the lounge. It was empty except for two men, who looked to be in their late forties to early fifties, who were playing cards. He noticed the video was all girls, and it somehow grated, so he checked the news. Nothing of importance had been beamed in the updated news feeds in the past couple of days. He searched the crime and justice pages of Ley Networks, and lingered on the details of a hijacking attempt on a free trader about a month earlier on the Ohasset Main. "Although three of the crew were wounded in the attempt, the four hijackers were subdued by the crew of the *Green Hill\$ of Urth*, who killed two in the process. Captain Hilary Queet stated, 'Antihijack software makes it an uphill battle for any passengers to take a ship these days. These guys had a chance to endanger my crew, but not a chance to take the vessel.' The two surviving hijackers have been tried and executed at Baakh Highport by the Imperial Justice F'riid." Gerry did have some appreciation that combinations of software and the thousands of ship functions which were completely controlled by such software could make a ship a very inhospitable place for the hijacker. The crew would be intimately familiar with the ship's spaces, and

(Continued on page 57)



## Raconteurs' Rest

*(Continued from page 56)*

also have a good opportunity to observe any would-be hijacker passenger. Desperation and ignorance, however, were in no short supply, nor were trivids where the highjackers got away with it.

Gerry wondered about the next legs of his journey, on some free trader or other. The mystique of the Free Traders was strong in the holovids, and while Gerry knew this was an exaggeration, it was still based in the truth of independence and danger that the free traders lived by and among. Between the well-patrolled, heavily trafficked space lanes lay the backwaters. These were less often visited by authorities, and were therefore places where a ship might be on its own. Some relied on convoys for mutual protection, involving loose cooperation between private ships, some armed and some not, to create safety in numbers. The disadvantages, though, were delays and expenses, that shoestring operations like free traders could sometimes ill-afford. A single armed Free Trader was easy for most pirates to knock off; they had played a similar scenario time and again on the ORbox. What it meant, though, was potential damage to the pirate ships that could make the exchange unprofitable at best, or crippling at worst. Winning a space battle was like winning a knife fight; the winner was almost never unscathed.

Larger merchant lines used actuaries, cooperative action, and multiple layers of private security to render the dark spaces on the star maps either profitable or written off. The Free Traders used luck, self-help, and grit to make their own niches in such places. Sometimes they could be profitable on milk runs, though seldom competitive with the larger haulers; this was the stuff of numerous commercial simulations played by tens of thousands of youth with one eye on the stars. Though the actual numbers were incredibly complex, the basic dynamic could be explained by any 7 year old with a pulse on any planet with interstellar communications.

Knowing these things, though, and shipping on a Free Trader, Gerry mused were likely as different as seeing Lirshe on scores of documentaries and even trivid dramas, and almost crapping oneself while submerged like an overwound pjaelik spinner in the near-freezing waters of the Lirshebahn; as different as hearing the facts of life described by Sister Mary Arthur in the antiseptic detail of biology class and seeing the Brigadier's raunchy group lumbering off for some imagined foursome. Some poking indicated that on the Ohasset main there were weekly convoys guarded by a joint effort of the subsector navies of Outreaumer and Diamond-Prince supplemented by the Ley sector navy, from Garda through Kishimaa.

The Imperial Navy typically looked outward for strategic threats, while the subsector navies were the province of the sector and subsector dukes' charge to keep their domains safe from internal threats to commerce and from interior system to system oppression. It was easy for a more sophisticated world to use its technology to oppress a neighbor, for instance, siphoning off resources in wasteful counteractions that added to the havoc wreaked on trade. That there was a subsector navy to play neighborhood cop thus made the neighborhood safer and more profitable. While planetary navies of individual systems like Nundis looked out more particularly to their own interests, most anti-piracy patrols were performed by subsector forces, with occasional forays by sector forces when the subsector was unable to cope or when interests outside the subsector required particular attention.

"You wouldn't be Mr. Fynne, would you, sir?"

Gerry looked up with a start from the annotated holographic star map above his handcomp. One of the two older men playing at cards was leaning toward him as the other swept a rather large pile of one and five crud disks towards his own pile. "Hello, sir. Do I know you?"

*(Continued on page 58)*



*(Continued from page 57)*

"Well you were traveling through Lirshe, part of my commercial empire, young man. The extent of your ignorance is not the specific province of my knowledge. How could I tell you what you know of me? I am, however, Sir Geoffrey Gek-gauche von-Regina, peer of the realm of the Spinward Marches, and heir to the agribusiness speculative experimental genetics of SuSAG Lirshe-Nundis. You are, if I am not mistaken, Gerald Fynne?"

Not just the content of this somewhat bizarre figure's soliloquy, but also its combination of melodrama and rapid cadence was enough to completely cow Gerry. Local titles might be easily-enough checked, but the Spinward Marches were clear on the far side of the Imperium, years away by Xboat message. Gerry could have checked the claim of this somewhat scrawny bantam in the slightly worn, but extravagant social suit, had he been able to fully comprehend it, but the data would be old at best. This was all, therefore, exotic, bizarre, and a bit suspicious.

"Yes, sir, I am Gerry Fynne" he admitted as he rose and slipped his handcomp into a hide shoulder bag he had picked up in the highport for 2 Credits.

"Then we are in your debt. You are just the young man we had hoped to see. Are you aware of the nature of your father's holdings?"

Gerry's pulse continued to rise, and he began to approach full panic. "I am aware of them."

"And to what detail?"

"Well, I... um, you see my father has asked me to come to him. I've been living elsewhere. Sir." Gerry choked out. It seemed like this peculiar creature, Sir Geoffrey, had him panicked. He forced himself to breathe and blink slowly, as the small, wrinkled man sat down, leaning over the table.

"You don't really know, do you? Don't know what you're dealing with on Khii 43?" the sharp, bloodshot eyes bored into Gerry's frightened face.

"No, sir. It seems you have me... um... at an advantage. Please tell me what you mean."

"Riches! Riches, my boy, but beyond your father's ability to extract on his own," he leaned in, then, to speak uncomfortably close to Gerry's face in conspiratorial tones, "We must help before the authorities get hold of the business, and shut it down."

The other man, who had long since arranged his mound of currency disks into neat piles, then chimed in, "That's where we can help, Gerry boy!"

"I can talk to Dad, pass on your names."

The figure in the ever-so-slightly worn fawn velvet, "That won't be necessary, Gerry. No trouble. We'll travel with you and see him ourselves."

Gerry's fear was palpable now. To the man's continued oily assurances Gerry croaked out a few noncommittal replies, so devoid of meaning that he could not have repeated any a minute later as he strode out to his cabin.

He sent a message to Alice the purser: "I have some urgent questions. My cabin, please." She was there in a few minutes.

"Hello, Mr. Fynne. I trust your tour was fun. You said you had questions?"

"Well, it's about those men, in the lounge."

Gerry did not notice that she seemed to know exactly who he was talking about, as he started to wander into his story. She asked a couple of questions about what he had told them, and what they had known, then held up a hand to stop him. She was so comforting when she did that. "Wait, please. Would it be alright, Gerry, if I asked another crew member to sit in? We take the security of our passengers very seriously, and this is more along his line of expertise. I could stay or leave you as you prefer."

Gerry was already nodding his assent, and she tapped the barely noticeable comm in her left ear, and fairly purred, "Jack, at your leisure, we have a

*(Continued on page 59)*

(Continued from page 58)

question. Thanks." Gerry, who remained on the bed, had gathered his wits enough to recognize the security posture of her message. "We ... question." If it was "I," then she was isolated or at odds with those present, in potential danger; because it was "we," they were on the same side, there was no threat. "A question," also meant no threat. She would have used a more ambiguous term, like "situation," if it was a potentially threatening, and "problem" meant that an immediate intervention was called for. Her words calmed him, and the hulking Fourth Officer was there after a delay that corresponded quite well to Gerry's brief seconds' musing on these matters, learned from his security communications class in the Guides.

The door slid back and he leaned in, "Ma'am?" He hadn't knocked, had known where they were, and the doors were set to open automatically. Had it been, *I have a problem*, Gerry guessed the gentle bear of a man would have bounded in, needler ready.

"Thanks, Jack. Mr. Fynne was approached by some other passengers in an exchange that was possibly innocuous, but may have some serious security implications. May we sit?" Gerry nodded, she motioned the Fourth Officer Jack to the desk chair, and perched herself on the edge of the bunk, sliding over to make room to turn toward them. "To cut to the chase, Gerry did you tell anyone currently on board or on Lirshe of the location of or even existence of your father's mineral claims?"

He actually paused to think, panicking briefly. She had touched on this issue just before, but he had not thought hard about it. As far as he had known, Clyde was the only one he had talked to about it at all, and he couldn't remember what he'd exactly told Clyde. He knew they'd spoken about him going to help his father mine a moon, but whether he had told Clyde what moon, he could not remember.

"Only Clyde, or drive hand... um... "

The Fourth Officer's smile broadened as he cut off Gerry's fumbling, "No. No, he's fine. First, he's trusted, and next, he jumped in the opposite direction. Word could not have reached these two. No other passengers or people planetside; something you may have said when a bit impaired, possibly?"

"No, sir. When I did have a something to drink, I remember quite clearly what we were talking about. No, and I remember the other parts of the trip like they happened yesterday." Gerry paused to notice the absurdity of his last statement, but not for long (they *had* happened yesterday!) "And I really didn't talk about my dad with the brothers. I didn't want to. Only came up with Clyde talking about my suit, and need for it."

"We'll look into the matter, but it sounds like the most likely explanation is some sort of data theft. It could be from a number of sources. The *Maid's* crew will investigate. It is possible that these men are truthful, but the likelihood seems very slim. The most likely is that they used stolen data to try to run some sort of confidence scam, which makes them con men. That they offered to follow you would make them potentially dangerous con men. This is all conjecture, but until we tell you otherwise, I would avoid their presence. Within a few minutes, I will instruct the computer to alert our security staff anytime these men are in your presence. You may summon assistance by simply uttering the word computer followed immediately by the word security. I will also set up an override to allow you to check if they are in the Middle Passenger's common areas, to help you keep clear of them. Depending on the results of our investigation, I may even urge them to stay out of these areas."

The purser leaned in slightly, "We will arrange for your meals to be served in your quarters if you'd like, as some small compensation for the inconvenience. We are Ley Lightning." Gerry realized that

(Continued on page 60)

## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 59)

she was wearing neither jacket nor apron, and could not help a glance.

"That would be nice."

She patted him on the shoulder as she rose, "I'll send the first meal from the galley, and from then just send the pack you want next up with the server. Was there anything else?" The twinkle and Gerry knew he was being toyed with.

"No, ma'am. Thanks."

They left in a blizzard of teeth and few brief, impressive jiggles.

Gerry was a bit shocked. His feeling of being isolated in his fears were less, and he thought of the crew as his ally. He lay back down on his bunk and opened a book in the *Scout Flynn* series he had already read twice. He had already napped that morning, so did not drift off. After a couple hours, he stiffly pulled a cold ration pack from the locker in his stateroom, and barely enjoyed the cold seafood salad. The origin of the seafood was the ocean of his homeworld of Griik Maeii, and so under different circumstances he would have had a certain nostalgia, but this was eclipsed completely by the shadow of the shabby pair.

After eating, he realized that he still had another three hours until dinner, and another 90 minutes until they cast off. He worked through donning both his suit and the EVA kit, his first time with the latter, first by reviewing the manual, and then physically putting it all on. The kit weighed an additional 24 kilos, and even in the shipboard .5g environment, he felt awkward. He had worked up a real sweat after multiple dons and doffs of the whole ensemble. He dared not remove the safeties and manipulate the maneuver controls, even though they were, he thought, unhooked. Making a mistake in his cabin could be destructive, expensive, or possibly deadly.

He showered and tossed his Guides longsuit in the fresher. What would normally feel like a cozy

cocooning in his now very-familiar cabin seemed like incarceration. He did not want to give that pair any more chances at whatever it was they were trying to get from him, however. He checked on his stateroom's terminal, easily finding the application that the crew had set up for him to monitor the common areas for the two "passengers of interest," as they were labeled. They were not showing in the common areas, but for some reason Gerry's anxiety did not lessen.

He watched a holovid as the time dragged, and saw the cue as they cast off from the highport. About an hour before dinner he got a message from Purser Alice asking if he would be ready for dinner about 45 minutes early. He typed a hurried agreement, finished the tri-vid, and checked the ship's status. They had only about 44 hours of maneuver before they jumped. There was a small craft docking in just over half an hour: a ship's boat. These were as fast as anything else in in-system maneuvering. While playing a somewhat mindless but addictive game on the console, Gerry noticed the two men show up on the tracking application. They spent almost no time in the lounge, however, shortly moving to the starboard airlock. In fact they waited for just a minute, where the boat was docking, and disappeared from his screen. They were, it appeared, off the ship! Gerry stared for a full minute to see if they reappeared in an adjacent area on the display, then sat back and wondered what this meant. He was nonplussed, and sat on his bunk to read his pulp, but in a minute caught himself not really registering what he read.

There was a knock on his cabin door, and he bounded up, "Come in!"

"Dinner, sir." the purser came in with a decent-sized grav tray with quite a few dishes. "The others are busy," she moved in without his having time to react, "so I thought I would deliver this myself." Placing it on his desk with her right hand, while

(Continued on page 61)

(Continued from page 60)

folding the monitor down flush with the other, "Along with our news."

"Yes, ma'am. What news?"

Dish covers came off. The twinkle. "Security's investigation established to the captain's satisfaction that those two passengers had hacked into information systems, violating Ley Lightning's policies and many applicable laws. He had them put off the ship." The apron top was, he noted, folded down, and he'd taken her invitation to sit to be served.

"Thank you... for everything," he caught his eyes darting to her chest, mere centimeters away, through the gaudy lattice.

"You're welcome, of course! We are Ley Lightning. Service is what we do."

She was gone, just like that. He was too surprised for a parting glance, and fell upon the meal. China, cutlery with heft, cloth napkins, and a perfect spread for an anxious teenager who found solace in food. He ate. And ate. Three full plates, plus rolls, a soup, and salad. Two desserts. A small pot of kaff. He left the kaff, but ate every other scrap. He felt both profoundly full and quite content. He slept well, and sent a message to Burg about breakfast. He got no response, but ate in the lounge anyway. After about half an hour, the younger boy showed up, and they settled in for a few games without saying much of anything.

### Chapter 8: A Baakh-ward blur

The jump came and passed, not much different from the one before. Heimrich joined them tentatively after a few days, and by the time the jump was done things were almost as they had been. There were no new passengers that really stood out to them, and the boys kept to themselves. There were a couple of Imperial Army officers, a Captain and a First Lieutenant, who had gotten on at Lirshe, and from time to time they drank and played cards in the lounge. Gerry was reminded of the Brigadier

and the two seedy men, alternately. They were subdued, however, and were seldom there for more than a couple of hours at a time.

He asked the purser about instruction for his vacc suit's EVA setup. The Fourth Officer, Jack, had been sent. He politely declined to agree to or recommend another crew member for regular lessons, but he looked on carefully as he had Gerry put on his suit in a hurry. It went well, and he was suited and locked in under thirty seconds. The hulking security man gave a nod, "That's as much as you'll ever need here aboard the *Maid*. There are EVA training facilities at the Baakh Highport, with rather some advanced simulators. Spend a quarter of an hour in one of those, and that will keep you from being a danger to yourself. After that, plenty of practice. What else can I help you with?"

Gerry felt a bit like a young child whose naïve question had been summarily dismissed by an annoyed parent. At the same time, he felt some comfort that he had gotten the officer's approval for his basic ability with the suit. "That's it, sir. I am just looking for all the help I can get with the suit. I'm going to be on a mining claim in a few weeks."

The big man sighed deeply and paused. Coming to an apparent decision, he fixed the youth with a more serious look, "EVA is reading the book, then walking the walk. You can't walk the walk except in zero-G, like in those simulators. You'll need that before you go live on those jets, but until Baakh, it's just bookwork and what you've already done. There are some assets in our library. I'll send you something." He paused for some response, Gerry nodded, and the man turned to leave, "Alright. Keep practicing and good luck."

The links to the library material arrived within 15 minutes, and he spent a couple of hours digging around. They seemed to restate the facts that his reviews of his manual and materials from Clyde had already covered, and his head started to nod a bit.

(Continued on page 62)



## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 61)

He realized, after going through all the assets that one, which he had kept skipping, was a work of fiction he'd never heard of, *Belter's Charm*. He did not immediately see the connection, other than it had "belter" in the title, and they sure used vacc suits. He resolved to read it after dinner. His in-cabin meals had been suspended as soon as the two miscreants had been removed from the *Maid*, and he heated his own up in the lounge. Even the mix from Chandler's 99 seemed repetitive, but it was good chow for coming from a Middle Passage tray.

After dinner he did dig into the book, which incrementally was more interesting than staring at the bulkhead. The style seemed just a bit odd, but it was an interesting read. There seemed to be a lot of obvious lessons in it on best practices in vacuum, zero gravity, and working in EVA rigs. These were somewhat obvious and Gerry felt as if the book had been written for those a couple of years younger than himself. Gerry was a careful but slow reader, but still finished the little 230-page book that evening.

He went to sleep thinking about the two men, he had remembered the term "confidence men" that had escaped him, and his reaction. He understood they were crooked, and looking to take advantage of him, but he had not fully understood when they had talked to him. He had a sense of unease, but not a full realization. He lay there, feeling stupid and ashamed, and could not fall asleep. He started reading Psalms, which didn't work either... until it did.

A couple of days later they were ready for their projected jump exit, predicted to happen over the course of ship's daylight time. Gerry set himself up again at his desk, with an LSPill at his elbow. He went back over *Belter's Charm*. He had picked up the line, "Any of you are platform divers or springboard divers, you'll get this!" from the book. That led him to look up videos on diving techniques, and then try to visualize some of the moves. He was particularly interested in twisting and somersaulting without

touching anything or using power. This ate up about 5 hours until jump exit. Again, the LSPill stopped the retching almost magically, when he already sensed he was beyond the point of no return. In a few minutes, we had settled down enough to have the lunch he had deferred... just in case. He checked, and they had 71 hours of maneuver before docking at Baakh highport. At this point, he had a thought that panicked him a bit.

He went up to the lounge, and watched the news Trivids scrolling in for a couple of hours, just to get his mind off it, then went to look on his hand-comp into arrivals from Lirshe. There were dozens of small liners like the *Maid* arriving every hour. He sent a message to the purser, Alice as he now thought of her, to meet in his cabin for a question.

A couple of minutes later, he was sitting on his bunk, and heard her knock, "Come in."

She strode in as the computer commanded the door open, based on her identity and his voice. "Yes, sir?" She said the sir with just a subtle smirk.

"I was wondering about those men. What happened to them after they were put off the ship? Could they get on another?"

She made a little frown by pressing her lips together. "Well, Security wanted them off quickly without delaying us, so he had the captain order the Captain's Prerogative, which kicks a criminal off a ship in normal space without the crew stopping to prove their guilt. They were put on a ship's boat back to the starport, but once they left the *Maid*, the captain had no more control over them. We have registered a criminal complaint, which will go on their records, but will have no binding effect until the crew is back there to give a sector magistrate enough to have them picked up and tried. We put them off an hour before jumping out, and so would not know if they got on another ship."

"So they could buy new tickets, and follow me?"

(Continued on page 63)



(Continued from page 62)

The frown deepened just a touch, "The Captain's Prerogative does not cancel their fare, but they can not travel on another Ley Lightning ship."

Gerry's voice got higher in pitch, "But on any other line?"

She nodded.

"Anything else you can do? I'm kinda scared." Gerry admitted, looking down.

"I'll have the line put you on the fastest boat into the highport, and they might even make a mistake in the passenger manifest." A hint of the twinkle, with a bit of sadness. "And I do have another idea. Don't worry." A hint of a smile and she was off.

He spent a little time rereading a book, and was eating his dinner when he got a message, "You ship out in 20 minutes. Pack quickly. 3rd Officer Alice dre'Laak, Purser." Gerry stood up so fast he pushed his chair over. He jumped to get his suit zipped up in its Bigsoft first. He was emptying his rations locker when an odd-sounding knock came at the door.

His voice wavered a bit, "Come in?"

A droid came rolling in at a brisk clip, "Allow me to assist, sir."

Gerry was so startled that he dropped an armload of Everfresh sandwiches, and stood up and away from that bag. The droid rolled right up to the lot, picking up sandwiches in an ambidextrous whirl. In half a minute the rations were rearranged and packed away in the second Bigsoft. The droid opened the dresser drawer, "Sir please indicate what bag these clothes should be packed in."

Gerry was just opening the last Bigsoft when another knock came to the door, and he thought he heard, "Captain Crunch," through it.

"Come in." There was a delay as the manual pad opened the door, and one of the two army officers leaned in.

"You're Gerry, aren't you?"

He just nodded and waved the man in.

"The purser asked us to do her a favor, and put you on your next ship. Are you alright with that?"

"Yessir!" He turned back to the droid, that had just finished packing all his clothes into the last Bigsoft, cleaned out the fresher, pulled the linens from his bunk, stuffed them into the fresher's washer unit, wiped down the cabin's horizontal surfaces, and misted the room with disinfectant all while the short human interchange had been occurring. "It looks like I'm almost packed."

The officer smiled, and offered his hand. "I'm Sam Runch, active in the Imperial Army. I'm headed to my next assignment at Baakh, with a week's leave enroute, starting when the *Maid* docks at the highport. The ship's boat gets me in about 30 hours early. If I take 6 to get you embarked, I get an extra 24 on the highport. Not to mention, I was happy to help the lady out," he finished with a wink.

Within 5 minutes, they were waiting in the lounge as Gerry finished his dinner, and the good Captain Runch had a drink and gnawed on an Everfresh sandwich that he had pulled from his own bag. Gerry was now peppering him with questions about his jobs in the armored cavalry, which Runch was solicitously happy to answer. He was proud of his service, but no braggart, so tried to answer accurately. Gerry, innately sensing this, was all the more interested.

The boat docked, and Runch begged to finish his drink before they embarked, "They'll take 5 minutes to boost; give me two to finish a good little *Querro*?" Gerry nodded a bit too enthusiastically, and continued to pick his mind about grav belts. Within three minutes they were seated at the front of the ship's boat, and Gerry did not notice the First Lieutenant seated in the back, in a hooded workout shirt. ❁

## 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](mailto: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 Releases

November/December 2017

- **Michael Brown** has released *Nightfall*, *Revels of the Damned*, *The Treasure of Doña Piedra*, *The Janus Influenza*, *LOCALE: Personal Enhancement Center*, *Minor Loot (or, What's In This Guy's Pockets?)*, *Under Western Skies: Twilight Trails*, *The Lakota Terror: The 2D6 Version*, *Invasive Species*, *The Timber Beast: The 2D6 Version*, *The Green*, *Harvest Index*, *Omega 99*, *Kennon's Pass*, *Filch*, *The Wing Wherewith We Fly*, *Benediction*, *Balance Due*.
- **March Harrier Publishing** has released *Two Days on Carston*, *See How They Run*, *Eve of Rebellion*.
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released *Foreven Worlds: Ships of the order Worlds*.
- **Fat Goblin Games** has released *Publisher's Choice—Science Fiction: Space Rodent (race)*, *Publisher's Choice—Science Fiction: Brain Eater*, *Publisher's Choice—Science Fiction: 4-armed (race)*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Wendy's Guide to the Fleets of Sequoyah Subsector*.
- **Pyromancer Publishing** has released *Research Ship Saenger*, *Frotier Trader Boa*, *Coloial Freighter Lermer*, *Passenger Ship Autumn*, *Passenger Liner Nightoller*.
- **DM Philosophy** has released *9 Worlds Bundle (Google Earth Compatible) (Bundle)*.
- **Okumarts Games** has released *Extrastellar Set Three: Galactic Citizens*.
- **Zozer Games** has released *Hostile*.
- **Stellagama Publishing** has released *Variant Psionics for the Cepheus Engine*, *TSAO: Character sheet for These Stars Are Ours!*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *The Great Rift*.
- **BITS (British Isles Traveller Support)** has released *The Traveller Bibliography*.
- **BadBadTiger** has released *BBT: Alien Artwork #1*.



# Submission Guidelines

## Content

*Freelance Traveller* supports *Traveller* in all of its incarnations, rulesets and settings, both. However, there are some limitations on the combination of ruleset and setting that we will enforce:

We refer to the rules defined in *Classic Traveller*, *Mega-Traveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller* (T4), *Traveller*<sup>5</sup>, and both editions of *Mongoose Traveller* as “Classic Compatible” or “2D6”. This includes Sceptune Games’ *Hyperlite*, and Samardan Press’ *Cepheus Engine*. For these rulesets, any setting, whether official, commercially-published-but-unofficial, or house setting, will be supported. A partial list of published settings supported under 2D6 *Traveller* includes the Third Imperium setting (including polities other than the Third Imperium proper), Reign of Discordia, Clement Sector, Hyperlite, Twilight Sector, Orbital, 2300AD, Foreven Sector, Mindjammer, and I’m sure I’ve missed others.

Other rulesets, such as *GURPS Traveller*, *Traveller*<sup>20</sup>/*SF20*, *FATE*, *Hero System*, and so on are different enough from 2D6 *Traveller* to make conversion more difficult, and will only be supported for the Third Imperium setting (including polities other than the Third Imperium proper)—we feel that combining these rulesets with a non-Third Imperium setting makes the game something other than *Traveller*. The Third Imperium setting includes *all* eras and polities of the Third Imperium, however, so mixing (for example) the “Milieu Zero” Third Imperium with *FATE* rules would be fair game, as would be playing out some of the Zhodani core expeditions using *SF20*.

Send us any type of article—house rules and rulemixes; animals you’ve created for encounters; adventures (both long form and short); after-action writeups of conventions or your gaming night; equipment; vehicles; starships; other consumer goods; character profiles (NPC or PC); reviews of *Traveller* products, of products for other games that you feel can be “mined” for use in *Traveller*, of fiction (or non-game non-fiction) that “feels” like *Traveller*, or presents ideas that would be of interest to *Traveller* players or referees; new races or organizations or societies; artwork; or pretty much anything else you can think of. Articles on real-world science are of interest, when accompanied by rules for applying that science to *Traveller*. Tools and techniques you use for preparing for a session or a game are also welcome. We’re also compiling a “*Freelance Traveller Cookbook*”; quick and interesting recipes for snacking before, during, or after sessions go here.

Published *Traveller* has generally been kept to a rating approximating the MPAA “PG-13” rating, or the ESRB “T” rating, and *Freelance Traveller* respects that, but does not draw a hard line. Mature themes may be addressed, but explicit or excessively violent/bloody material will not be accepted for publication.

## Where To Send It, and What To Send

Except in very rare cases, all submissions must be through email, sent to either [editor@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:editor@freelancetraveller.com) or [submissions@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:submissions@freelancetraveller.com). All submissions should include the submission itself and a full name and valid contact information for the submitter. If you wish the material published under a “handle”, please give the preferred handle and explain why publication under your real name is not acceptable—we prefer to publish under the real name, but realize that this can be a problem in some cases.

## Rights

By submitting material, you grant *Freelance Traveller* a non-exclusive perpetual right to use the material in our PDF magazine and website (and mirror sites authorized by us), with minor editing for space and other suitability issues. While we generally will only use an article once, if we feel it appropriate, we’ll reprint it.

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## Formats

Text material can be submitted in any common textual or word-processing format, but we prefer (in no particular order) Microsoft Office, Open Office or one of its forks (we currently use Libre Office), RTF, minimally-formatted HTML, Markdown (including CommonMark and Github-flavored) or plain text, all with full Unicode support. Our readership is principally English-speaking, however, so foreign languages and scripts should be used sparingly, and if not intended as purely decorative, an English transcription of pronunciation (and possibly a definition in English as well) should be included.

Graphics should be submitted in an appropriate format for the subject matter—in most cases, that will be GIF, JPEG, or PNG at 100dpi or higher. If it’s principally line-drawing material, it may be more appropriate to submit it in a vector format; most common vector formats can be imported by our tool of choice, CorelDRAW! X4 or X6. Please try to leave some space around the edges for cropping, especially for covers. We publish in PDF in US Letter and ISO A4 sizes, and columns in the magazine are roughly 3.5 inches (actually a little more) wide.

Avoid submitting in XPS or PDF format; these are generally seen as “output-only” formats, and trying to extract material in usable form from these formats is problematical.

