

# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



The Traveller game in all forms is owned by Far Future Enterprises. Copyright 1977 - 2009 Far Future Enterprises. Traveller is a registered trademark of Far Future Enterprises. Far Future permits web sites and fanzines for this game, provided it contains this notice, that Far Future is notified, and subject to a withdrawal of permission on 90 days notice. The contents of this site are for personal, non-commercial use only. Any use of Far Future Enterprises's copyrighted material or trademarks anywhere on this web site and its files should not be viewed as a challenge to those copyrights or trademarks. In addition, any program/articles/file on this site cannot be republished or distributed without the consent of the author who contributed it.

---

All articles in Freelance Traveller, whether in the magazine or on the web site, are copyright by their respective authors, and may not be reproduced elsewhere without the express permission of Freelance Traveller (which will generally be granted) *and* the author of the article. Freelance Traveller will not give out contact information for our authors without their specific permission on a case-by-case basis, but will where possible pass on requests for initial contact.

## Contents

Freelance Traveller #007: July 2010

### Editor

Jeff Zeitlin

### Contributors

Jeff Zeitlin, Shannon Appelcline, David Billingham, Dave Redington, Ken Pick, Samuel V. Wilson III

### Artwork

Cover: *Ndege Diamond*

From the Editor: *Jeff Zeitlin, from the Freelance Traveller web site*

Fifth Imperium: *Shannon Appelcline, from the Fifth Imperium Column at rpg.net*

Critics' Corner: *Samardan Press, from their web site*

Multimedia Gallery: *David Billingham and Dave Redington*

From the Editor

*Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 1

Critics' Corner

Flynn's Guide to Magic in Traveller *reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 2

Kurishdam: Lecture Hall and Library

Jump Destination: Khorlu, Bronson's Star *by Ken Pick* ..... 3

Essay Question

*Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 10

Fifth Imperium

#10: My Rules, Part One: The Mechanics of XP and Grenades *Shannon Appelcline* 11

Doing It My Way

Zhodani Commandos Revisited *by Samuel V. Wilson III* ..... 12

In A Store Near You

The Promenade: Gig *by Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 19

Multimedia Gallery

Burrowwolf: A Traveller Graphic Novel (Chapter 2)

*by David Billingham and Dave Redington* ..... 20

Freelance Traveller is published monthly in PDF form by the editor. The current issue is available from the Freelance Traveller web site, <http://www.freelancetraveller.com>.

## From the Editor



Up through this issue, *Freelance Traveller* has printed articles focusing on the various rulesets for *Traveller*, or on settings that are “compatible” with the Official Traveller Universe (OTU).

That’s because of what people have offered us, not because of any specific decision to not support other settings, but simply because that’s what we’ve received from our contributors.

If that’s what we continue to receive, that’s what we’ll continue to print. But we’re perfectly willing to print materials supporting other settings that have had *Traveller* rules applied to them. That specifically includes (but isn’t necessarily limited to) *Strontium Dog*, *Judge Dredd*, *Reign of Discordia*, and *Twilight Sector*. It also includes fan-written settings such as *Mercator*, printed a few issues back as a Special Supplement to *Freelance Traveller*.

We’ve been happy to cover “house rules” against settings compatible with the OTU, as well, and will continue to be happy to do so. That, too, should be understood to apply as well to other settings—but it gets

a bit fuzzy, here, because that has a tendency to move us in the direction of being a general gaming magazine, and that’s been done already, several times, by people more competent to do it than we are—including by at least one company whose offerings we are supporting. Nevertheless, if our readers and contributors make it clear that we should move slightly farther afield and support such products as *Hyperlite* and *Diaspora*, we will be willing to “go there”.

Right now, we fill a niche, and will continue to do so; we’d simply like to know what that niche should be, and how we should fill it. To that end, we’d very specifically like people to answer the two as-yet-unanswered Essay Questions that ask, in essence, “What is *Traveller*?”. It is only by knowing what you feel the answer to that question should be that we can do our level best to serve you, our readers.

As an additional question, we’d like to ask something else, so please send us feedback on this as well: We’ve had a tendency to print fewer longer articles rather than more shorter ones. Should we look to change this, or are you happy with it?

## Critics' Corner

### Flynn's Guide to Magic In Traveller

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

*Flynn's Guide to Magic in Traveller.* Jason Kemp  
Samardan Press <http://stores.lulu.com/samardanpress>  
54pp, softcover  
US\$11.99 (US\$5.99 PDF)

Jason 'Flynn' Kemp has brought a well-thought-out magic system to the Mongoose Traveller ruleset.

#### On the Shelf

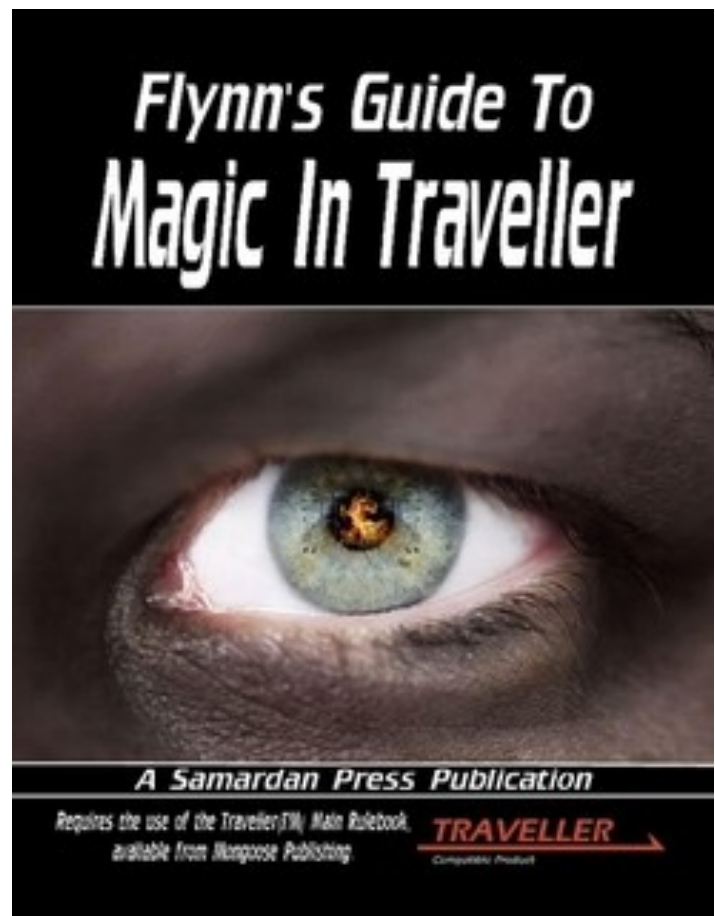
The title is in quite large type, making it visible from any reasonable distance. This is set over a picture of an eye with an image of a flame in the pupil. Below the image is the Samardan Press announcement, the Traveller-compatible logo, and a note indicating that the Mongoose Traveller core rules are required.

#### Initial Impression

This is decently-organized book, two-thirds of which discusses every aspect of magic, from general types (e.g., Create, Move, Summon, Illusion, etc.) and their enhancements, to magic items, to the various issues and differences with respect to "low fantasy" vs. "high fantasy" or "ritual magic" vs. "spontaneous magic", to specific skills pertaining to magic use, to guidelines for creating new spells not already described in this volume. This is followed by a (non-exhaustive) list of common spells, with concise descriptions of each. Finally, a career path for Mages is presented.

#### On Closer Inspection

The discussion of magic is, as per the initial impression, quite comprehensive, and does a good job of covering essentially any reasonably-expectable use of magic in a campaign. The information in the spell list is concisely presented, providing all of the necessary information without extraneous elaboration or ornamentation. A cross-reference by magic skill specialization would have been useful, as would one by 'level', but the list is short enough that the industrious referee with a halfway-decent spreadsheet or database program - nothing even necessarily as featureful as Microsoft Excel or Access (perhaps the



Microsoft Works level would be about right) - could generate both cross-references in fairly short order.

Admittedly, the greatest likelihood of magic use would be in a fantasy campaign, and thus the focus on using it in such is appropriate, but it is nevertheless a notable omission that there is absolutely no discussion of the use of magic in a postmedieval environment, or of the potential interactions between magic and technology.

The basic assumption, stated at the beginning, is that magic, as written in this volume, is skill-based rather than power based. Nevertheless, some discussion of power-based magic and power sources, perhaps with references to relevant fiction (or even, perhaps, other gaming systems), could profitably have been included. Discussion on incorporating aspects of other frameworks into these rules (e.g., granting of specific spells by deitic intervention, or deitic limitation on what spells may be used and under what conditions) would also have been a good inclusion.

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

The typography is similar to that of the early Mongoose rule books, with the same deficiencies. This is only a minor criticism in this case, however; as "Flynn" has not used as much artwork in proportion to text as Mongoose did, nor is it used in the same way, the readability is much less impaired than with the early Mongoose publications.

## Kurishdam

### Jump Destination: Khorlu, Bronson's Star

by Ken Pick

#### Bronson's Star system

Bronson's Star is a K4v main-sequence star ("orange dwarf") with five planets, an asteroid belt, and a small backwater colony. Despite its backwater location and low population, it is the subsector's main source of the ultra-rare Second Stable Series "Ransdell Metals" used in high-temperature alloys and high-tech batteries.

**Wend (X401000-0, Orbit 0)** is a cratered Mercuriform rockball, tidally-locked, icecapped on its permanent dark side, usually lost in the sun's glare.

**Khorlu (D787671-6, Orbit 1-2)** is the system main world, in a highly-eccentric orbit with extreme seasons; for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the year, its orbit takes it outside the liquid-water habitable zone. A population of around three million lives on-surface, primarily in five domed cities. Three small moons, **Ocron (D100516-6)**, **Lagon (XS003M8-6)**, and **Itol (XS003M8-6)**, house a lunar highport/outpost and system defense facilities.

**Bronson's Belt (E000200-6, Orbit 3-4)** is the system's asteroid belt, sprawling well outside its nominal orbital region from the tidal pull of Gorfulu. Some sporadic Belter activity.

## Summary

For the referee that wants to run a classical fantasy campaign with the Traveller rules, this volume should be considered next to indispensable; I can conceive of few treatments that would be better than this one, even given the omissions. The referee who wants to incorporate magic into a more technological setting would still be able to use this volume properly, but would find it necessary to supplement it with other (as-yet-unidentified) works. Most assuredly, money spent on this volume should not be considered wasted.

## Lecture Hall and Library

**Gorfulu (LGG, 500 T-mass, Orbit 5)** is the main gas giant in the system, with a magnificent ring system, six regular moons, and almost a hundred captured-asteroid irregular moons. Almost twice the mass of Jupiter, Gorfulu has too high a surface gravity and too strong a magnetosphere to be suitable for fuel skimming. Its gravity has swept clear the empty orbits between Bronson's Belt and Strahl.

From Khorlu, Gorfulu appears as a brilliant yellow planet; close-up, the massive gas giant resembles "Saturn with smallpox", with yellowish cloud bands peppered with white and pastel-colored storm systems, including at least a dozen "Great Red Spots".

**Strahl (SGG, 50 T-mass, Orbit 7)**, a small, pale blue gas giant with five moons, is the main fuel-skim site for the system. Almost the ideal mass for the purpose, Strahl's surface gravity of  $\frac{3}{4}$  gee allows even 1-G ships to skim and boost clear.

Strahl is barely visible in Khorlu's night sky, appearing as a faint pale-blue star.

**Danot (SGG, 20 T-mass, Orbit 8)**, a small gas giant with two moons, marks the edge of the system. Though its atmosphere is suitable for fuel-skimming, its surface gravity and location make it much less convenient for the purpose than Strahl. Beyond Danot lies only a moderate-density Kuiper Belt of small iceballs and comets.

Effectively a twin of Neptune, Danot is only visi-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

ble from Khorlu through a telescope.

Khorlu (Bronson II) D787671-6 Ag, NI, Rich  
Eaglestone Trade Index 1

The system's sparsely-settled main world is a medium-sized surface-habitable world, barely habitable due to its eccentric orbit. The extreme seasons (primarily harsh winters) are caused by the world's orbit instead of axial tilt; Khorlu's orbit takes it outside the habitable zone for ¼ of its year.

### Planetary Geography

Most of Khorlu's land area is concentrated in the Northern and Southern hemispheres, with an open "ring ocean" around its equator. Except for small outposts, all the population is concentrated in the Northern Hemisphere on one of the continents and a couple adjacent islands.

### Surface Conditions/Sky Picture

Braked by suntime, the day is 30 hours long, with a year of around 125 local days. Climate in the settled area (one of the Northern Hemisphere continents) is extreme, temperate during Perihelion Summer and completely frozen over during Aphelion Winter. During Winter, all open water except the equatorial oceans freeze over, and even there ice crusts form overnight.

The first thing a visitor will notice is the sky color, which varies over the year. Most of the year, the sky is green, tinted by layers of aeroplankton in the upper atmosphere. Every late Autumn as the world cools, these floating plants sporate and die off in autumn rains of sticky green sludge called "Ublek", fertilizing the lands, seeding the oceans, tainting the atmosphere, and leaving the sky a cloudless cold blue throughout Winter.

The next is the gravity, around 10% below a standard gee. Then the yellow (greenish yellow in Summer) shift in colors from the sun, distinctly orange, half again normal size in the green sky of Summer, shrinking down to a little under "normal" size

in the blue sky of Winter. The orange sun shares the sky with three moons, two barely large enough to show a disc.

### Native Life

Life Score 4 (microbes and simple vegetation), mostly in the seas and sky (aeroplankton), reproducing asexually through spores. The two most noticeable forms of multicellular vegetation are the aeroplankton and "stalkers".

**Aeroplankton** are colonies of tiny plants that float in the upper atmosphere, held aloft by hydrogen in "gasbag" cells. They are annuals, growing on the ground and blooming atop the thawing oceans in early spring, floating into the air (and tinting the sky green) from secreted hydrogen during mid-to-late Spring, then sporating/dying off and falling as Ublek – green sludgy rain – as Winter freezes the world. During the skyfall in early winter, the atmosphere becomes Tainted; the dead aeroplankton are slightly toxic until winter snowfall and spring thaws wash the toxicity away. The aeroplankton also changes Khorlu's appearance over the course of the year:

*Aphelion Winter:* Khorlu appears as a conventional "semi-snowball" world, with large polar icecaps, land white with snow and mountain glaciers, and coastal oceans frozen over with visible pack ice in the deep oceans.

*Spring:* As the planet thaws, aeroplankton blooms in the equatorial oceans, changing their color from blue to green; as Spring progresses, the atmosphere fills with a green haze, obscuring the surface. This haze begins around the Equator, but is soon carried over the planet in green swirls of "superclouds".

*Perihelion Summer:* With surface features all-but-hidden beneath a green haze of aeroplankton, Khorlu resembles a slow-spinning gas giant, a featureless green speckled with swirling clouds and "ghosts" of surface features.

*Autumn:* As the planet cools, the aeroplankton dies off and falls out of the atmosphere, starting at the poles and moving towards the Equator. By mid-Autumn, Khorlu has taken on a unique appearance;

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

an irregular equatorial belt of Summer green, poles of Winter icecaps, and two belts of “normal”-appearing surface in-between.

“**Stalkers**” are the largest of Khorlu’s land vegetation, the size of trees but appearing more like giant asparagus stalks. No leaves, just photosynthetic cells covering the entire surface of the tall serrated stem. Roughly analogous to bamboo, but grow from the tops instead of the bases. These plants go dormant during Aphelion Winter, secreting alcohol-based antifreeze sap; any break or cut in the surface smells of alcohol, as do all forested areas. New stalks sprout from underground rhizome-roots every Spring thaw. These plants provide the only “lumber” on-world, more like bamboo than true wood; logging is in the form of clear-cutting forests in a rotating pattern, as last year’s clear-cuts resprout the following Spring.

#### Cautions and Hazards

The main hazards all have to do with the eccentric orbit and extreme seasons.

During Perihelion Summer, the main hazard is sunburn; though K-class stars don’t put out as much UV as hotter stars, Khorlu doesn’t have as strong an ozone layer.

During Autumn, as the world swings away from its sun, the Ublek falls begin as the nights go below freezing; the dead aeroplankton are slightly toxic, tainting the atmosphere. This hazard lasts for around 10-15 days until the temperature drops further and snow buries the organic residue for Aphelion Winter. Ublek-fall begins near the poles, then over the next few days moves towards the Equator.

The first sign of Ublek-fall in a region is a cold snap of two or three days duration; then the Autumn rain turns bright green and thick. The first few rains provide warning; by the time the rain turns green enough to become toxic, filter masks must be worn when not under cover (such as under the city domes).

Within a few days, Ublek-fall is at its peak, falling even from clear skies; unmixed with rain, it is a sticky green sludge that gathers everywhere until the

cold Autumn rains wash it away into watercourses, lakes, and eventually the oceans. This is the time of maximum inhalation hazard, as the sky changes color from green to a normal deep blue.

Ublek is most toxic when inhaled as an aerosol (such as spray or mist). The toxicity manifests as a severe allergic reaction with symptoms similar to an asthma attack; the severity varies from person to person and according to the amount inhaled.

Inhaled, Ublek-spray or mist causes 1 point of damage per hour plus a chance of a severe allergic reaction. When first exposed, roll 2D against Endurance. If End+, take 2D damage from anaphylactic shock. (Ephedrine injector will stop the reaction; Endurance recovers 1 point/hour.) If continuous exposure, check no more than once every hour.

Ublek is only toxic when inhaled or ingested. It has no other effects, and can easily be washed off.

As Aphelion Winter sets in, snow buries the remaining Ublek. There is still a danger of residual toxicity in lakes, rivers, and oceans, or when digging into the snow. In the last case, the danger sign is when you hit a layer of green snow. (Never mind the yellow snow, *don’t eat green snow*.) This secondary hazard ends only when the Spring rains wash away the residue.

Though not as toxic as when inhaled, Ublek residue is still toxic when ingested (as in drinking “green water”); the toxicity manifests as GI symptoms of varying severity, usually nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea as the body tries to flush out the toxin.

When ingested, roll 2D against Endurance. If End+, take 1D damage (starting with Endurance) from GI symptoms plus 3D minutes incapacitated while the body purges itself. If End-, temporary DM -4 on all actions from mild stomach cramps.

During Aphelion Winter, freezing and exposure are a constant danger outside of the Five Cities; the cities are domed and geothermally-heated and rural settlements are insulated and heated. Outside the temperature never climbs above freezing – and dips even lower at night – until the Spring thaw breaks the spell of snow and ice and the sky once more turns

(Continued on page 6)

*(Continued from page 5)*

green. If you are stranded outside during Aphelion Winter without proper shelter or Arctic survival gear, **you will die.**

### Population and History

Khorlu appears to have been in the process of being colonized when the Long Night went down; the original colonization project was in the process of building four or five large settlements under huge geodesic dome arrays when the project apparently went bust. Abandoned in mid-construction, the domed cities were left as-is through the Long Night; no one knows if any of the original colonists were left behind on-world. When the current colonists first settled (completing the unfinished domed cities), there was no sign of any existing inhabitants.

Around forty years ago, a consortium of several nonconformist groups (some of them refugees from nearby worlds' political upheavals) staked out Khorlu for settlement, completing the domed cities and settling in. Within a generation, friction between the two main factions in the cities of Hendron and Midian (with additional friction between two Midianite factions) split whatever unity the colony may have had. Since then, the Four (now Five) Cities have been effectively independent in a very loose association.

The result of this final wave of colonization, Khorlu's current population is fairly-generic light-skinned humans, varying slightly among the Five Cities. The people of Hendron and Ransdell are of a more "European" ethnic type, those of Midian a medium-skinned "Asian" type, and the isolated religious colonists of Eberville are yet a different ethnic type, a generic medium-skinned people. The people of Talon are a mixture of those of Hendron and Midian, and outside the Five Cities you can find any combination or mixture of the above.

Politically, Khorlu is a loose federation of five city-states, each named for their founders, each built in a domed-over crater for climate-controlled protection from the harsh winters. All except Talon have

an almost fairy-tale appearance under their dome, with a central crater lake rimmed by terraced buildings, bridged over by further arcological structures.

**Eberville (population 200,000 Gov D with elements of A, Law 9)** – A small religious colony that has little to do with the others or offworlders. Not hostile so much as standoffish. The sect that named and settled Eberville was a last-minute addition to the colonization project.

**Hendron (population 600,000, Gov 2, Law 1)** – Second largest city, home to one of the two D-ports on-surface. Most easygoing and hospitable of the Five Cities, major rival of Midian with a completely opposite political philosophy and social climate.

**Ransdell (population 500,000, Gov 1)** – Third largest city and Khorlu's hook into the interstellar economy, with a mining-based economy in partnership with several offworld corporations. Ransdell sits in the midst of a "fossil" impact basin containing the subsector's only known deposits of unique natural Second Stable Series metals, valuable for high-temperature alloys and high-tech electric batteries. Ransdell has a dedicated E-port for shipping metals offworld, administered by one of its partner corps.

**Midian (population 800,000, Gov B with elements of 3 & 9, Law 9)** – Largest city and nominal capital, a bureaucratic oligarchy with high law level. The Midianites fancy themselves the dominant city-state and planetary government; in practice, they have effective control only over their valley. Major rival of Hendron; the governments of the two cities do not like each other, and have a low-grade "Cold War" underway.

**Talon (population 300,000, Gov 2, Law 3)** – Newest of the Five Cities, founded by exiles/expats from Midian and still under construction. Unlike the other four cities, Talon is composed of a sprawl of small domes in various stages of completion instead of a single large dome-over-crater. Pretty much a boomtown with a "frontier" atmosphere.

Of the Five Cities, Hendron, Ransdell, and Midian all cluster within 300km of each other; Eberville is around 500km distant from the three, and

*(Continued on page 7)*



*(Continued from page 6)*

Talon is along the coast some 1000km away. All five cities have a “halo” of smaller settlements and rural holdings, and are connected by a series of roads passable even in the dead of Aphelion Winter.

Like its destination, the road to Talon is still under construction. Only about a third of the road is passable, aided by a Winter shortcut – an ice-road plowed and marked over frozen ocean separating Talon from the main inhabited landmass. This ice-road shortens the distance to Talon by half, but is only useable when the oceans freeze over during Aphelion Winter, about 1/3 of the year. (Ice Road Truckers, anyone?)

The remaining population (some 600,000, about the same as in Hendron) is scattered all over in various homesteads, farmsteads, and small rural holdings (similar to those in Andre Norton’s *Postmarked the Stars*), dug in along the roads connecting the Five Cities. These farmsteads provide most of the agriculture leading to the Ag world classification. All agriculture on-world concentrates into Perihelion Summer, less than half the year. Between Ublek-fall Autumn and Spring Thaw the farmsteads hunker down for the freezing Aphelion Winter. During this time the only agriculture is specialty items grown under the city domes.

The Five Cities are all-electric, using geothermal power. Ransdell metals are used in high-efficiency batteries which power most everything on-world, including the in-town “runabouts” and long-haul cars, buses, and trucks. Local battery technology is the main exception to the Tech Level of 6, being more like Tech 10-12. Rural holdings without city power feeds often use some form of solar power.

### Economy

Khorlu’s entire offworld economy and hook into interstellar trade is the mining and exporting of Ransdell Metals. Strip-mined from meteoric deposits around the city of Ransdell, these ultra-rare Second Stable Series metals are vital in the manufacture of high-temperature alloys and high-tech batteries.

The mining industry is owned and operated by the City of Ransdell in partnership with various Midianite, Hendronese, and offworld corporations, and is very straightforward. The Ransdell Metal ore is taken from various open-pit mines in the highly-eroded impact basin around Ransdell, refined in vast smelters on the outskirts of the city itself, and shipped offworld through Ransdell’s E port. Being meteoric, the ore comes out of the ground pre-refined and requires only minimal smelting to separate out and alloy the various Ransdell Metals in the optimal combinations for offworld use. Details of the smelting and alloying operations are jealously-guarded Trade Secrets.

### Starports

All five cities maintain their own small starports; Hendron’s and Midian’s are both Class-D, while the other three are Class-E. An additional Class D highport is located on Ocron, the largest moon. All five surface ports have aero-shuttle service between them, mostly by charter.

Hendron and Midian are both Class-D ports (minimal maintenance and fueling facilities), scaled around a maximum ship size of 2000-dton Type TI Frontier Transports. Between the two, traffic is usually a couple small (200-600 dton) ships a week.

Ransdell’s attached port, though only Class-E (no repair or fueling facilities), is the largest of the five, able to handle 6000-dton bulk freighters for the Ransdell Metal trade and minimal other traffic. Ransdell normally sees a large (2000-6000 dton) freighter once or twice a month.

Eberville and Talon are also Class-E ports, but can only take ships of under 1000 dttons. Most of their traffic is aero-shuttle service from the other cities, usually by charter.

Ocron provides the Class D Highport facilities for unstreamlined ships with on-call shuttle service to Hendron and Midian.

Other than Ransdell Metal exports (averaging a couple thousand dttons/month), traffic is fairly minimal, with an Eaglestone Trade Index of 1 – less than

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Continued from page 7)*

50 passengers and 500 dtons of freight per week.

Except for the abovementioned Ransdell Metal shipments, offworld traffic normally routes through either Hendron or Midian, and the rivalry between the two ports (as between the two cities) is fierce, including extralegal “dirty tricks” to make sure the Free Traders use *their* city’s port and not the other. Given the choice, most offworld crews prefer Hendron’s easygoing attitude and low Law Level to the Midianite bureaucracy and high Law Level; most of the “dirty tricks” steering in traffic are Midianite.

The only local insystem patrol and rescue craft are small craft from the D ports.

Local Folk Belief: The Old Ones

A widespread folk belief is that of “The Old Ones”, a hidden population of quasi-fey folk left over from before the Long Night. Depending on who is telling the story, The Old Ones are either descendants of the vanished original colonists deliberately hiding from the new settlers – or their ghosts.

Filling a niche similar to Irish Faeries or Icelandic Huldefolk, The Old Ones are credited in folklore with causing disappearances or deaths in Aphelion Winter, rescuing or covertly helping settlers in trouble in the wilderness, appearing to give warnings in the manner of a Vanishing Hitchhiker variant, or performing various acts of petty thievery and mischief in backwoods settlements – never anywhere where the tales can be fact-checked.

Belief in The Old Ones varies from place to place, but the farther away you are from one of the domed cities, the stronger the belief and more numerous the stories and legends.

Tech Level Anomalies

Though officially Tech Level 6 (World War Two technology), imported high-tech is fairly common, especially in Ransdell. Midian and Hendron also have their share of imported high-tech. Midian’s is firmly in the hands of the ruling oligarchy; Hendron’s is a bit more evenly distributed.

The higher the tech level of imported technology, the more difficult it is to maintain; TL6 can maintain mechanical and basic electrical systems, but not the solid-state electronics that become universal at TL8 and above. Because of this, most imported “high-tech” is still relatively low, around TL8-9. Anything TL10 and above requires dedicated offworld maintenance and spares – yet another strain for a sparsely-populated Nonindustrial world.

The other main exception is electric (not electronic) and battery technology, which thanks to Ransdell metals is more like TL 10-12. These high-tech batteries are locally maintained.

Armed Forces

Each city-state maintains its own militia force, equipped to Tech Level 6 with some offworld higher-tech. Hendron’s and Midian’s militias are brigade-sized, Ransdell’s regiment-sized, and Eberville’s and Talon’s are reinforced battalion-sized. All are equipped for arctic conditions, including the ubiquitous “snowcrawler” APCs powered by Ransdell batteries. Given the political situation, there have been skirmishes between the Hendronese and Midianite forces, and Ransdell has had to take up arms on occasion to protect their mining/export economy.

System defenses are under the authority of a joint Hendron/Midian/Ransdell command, and consist of missile bases both on Khorlu’s surface and on all three moons. A couple armed gigs (“poor man’s fighters”) are available, as are a dozen or so non-combat Small Craft. So far, System Defense Command has been relatively free of the friction between the two largest of the Five Cities.

As is typical for orange/red dwarf systems, the hundred-diameter safe Jump limit is determined by the sun, corresponding to Orbit 2. Khorlu’s eccentric orbit carries it inward to Orbit 1 for Perihelion Summer and out to Orbit 2 for Aphelion Winter, causing great variations in minimum Jump distance.

In Summer when Khorlu is at perihelion, safe Jump distance is its maximum of .3 AU (45,000,000km) outsystem, corresponding to “close

*(Continued on page 9)*

*(Continued from page 8)*

neighbor world” distance. This helps system defenses, as any attacker Jumping in must boost for 18 to 36 hours to reach Khorlu; even a “Dump-and-Jump” with 6-G missiles would give some 15 hours early warning.

In Winter, Khorlu arcs clear of its sun’s hundred-diameter limit; at this time, the safe Jump distance is at its minimum, the standard for a Size 7 world.

Between these two extremes, the safe Jump distance varies depending on the time of year, from the maximum of Perihelion Summer and the minimum of Aphelion Winter.

The Moons: Ocron, Lagon, and Itol

The three cities with starport facilities (Hendron, Midian, and Ransdell) maintain a joint highport/outpost on the largest moon of Ocron; this outpost has a population of less than 10,000 and maintains the fuel-skimming operations from Strahl’s atmosphere. This highport/outpost is a warren of domes and dugouts surrounding a small D-class port used mostly for refueling and fuel lighter basing, all in Ocron’s 0.1g.

The only facilities on Lagon and Itol are System Defense Command missile bases; both these moons are Redzoned to civilian traffic.

Bronson’s Belt (asteroid belt)

A handful of Belters operate in the sprawling asteroid belt of the system, searching for asteroids with the same Triple-S metals as Ransdell. So far, nobody’s found any.

Belters are sponsored by or involved with Midian, Hendron, and Talon; the only support facilities in the Belt are a couple non-starship “motherships” and domed outposts on a couple of the larger asteroids, totaling a few hundred permanent/long-term population.

Adventure Nuggets

The two cities of Hendron and Midian are bitter rivals, competing for interstellar traffic and the min-

eral/industrial wealth of Ransdell. Though too small to launch actual warfare, both have a miniature “Cold War” underway that could easily suck in visiting player-characters. Even if the rivalry doesn’t blow up into actual shooting skirmishes, espionage and intrigue are always underway.

This even extends to competition between Hendron’s and Midian’s D-class starports to attract traffic (such as player-character ships.)

Player-characters could also get mixed up in corporate espionage (up to and including “wet work”) around the trade secrets involved in Ransdell Metal production. The valuable industrial-metal shipments could also become targets of tradewar theft or piracy.

The Road to Talon is still under construction, without the amenities of the other main roads. A Talon run in the dead of Aphelion Winter can all too easily turn into a survival situation.

Much of Khorlu is unexplored, and much of the original colonization project remains a mystery lost during the Long Night. Maybe there is something to all those stories of The Old Ones...

And even a “conventional” adventure during Autumn or Aphelion Winter could be complicated by the toxic presence of Ublek. (Tip: Better to Eat Yellow Snow than Green.)

And if there’s even a rumor of a Ransdell Metal strike outside of Ransdell – in either Khorlu’s wilderness or Bronson’s Belt – all bets are off and Jokers are wild.

Designer’s Notes

Khorlu is loosely patterned after Bronson Beta from the 1933 novel *After Worlds Collide* (sequel to *When Worlds Collide*) by Philip Wylie & Edwin Balmer. System nomenclature was taken from the geography and characters in the novel.

Ublek was also taken from the novel, in the sense of a green sky from upper-atmosphere aeroplankton. The toxicity was added during Travellerization. Yes, it was named after the substance in the Dr Seuss story *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. (“It’s not like rain, it’s not like snow; Oobleck, Oobleck, Oobleck, Oh!”) On Khorlu, the colonists probably named it after the fictional substance, similar to Pandoran Unobtanium.

## Essay Question

Essay Question is designed to allow our readers to share their experiences and ideas in playing or refereeing *Traveller*, or in designing things to be used in campaigns. Each issue, we'll print one or more questions, either submitted by one of our readers, or invented by the Editor. Readers are invited to send their answers (and their questions for future issues) to us at [questions@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:questions@freelancetraveller.com); we'll print a selection of the answers received in each issue.

This month, we get replies to some of our previous questions, and we add two new questions at the end.

*New questions for this month:*

**Where do you, personally, draw the line between “Traveller” and “not Traveller”? Why? Is your focus more on the rules, or on the setting? Again, why?**

**What sort of campaign do you prefer to run, or to play in? Why? Within such a campaign, what sort of activities are the most fun or most interesting for you? Again, why?**

*Previous questions:*

**How do you, as a referee, encourage your players to play “in character”?**

*Travis's answer:* I encourage my players to do two things: 1) keep a log of their perspective of the action we encounter in each session' somewhat like a diary. This they can reflect on as we begin each subsequent session to build on and develop their character. 2) I begin each session by asking all of the players 3-5 questions about their character's past.

These range from: “What is your mother's maiden name?” to “What was your college physics professor's name? ... Was he tough or easy?” “What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?” Story is important, and the characters, like people, act based on their past experiences.

**What, in your opinion, makes an alien race “interesting”? (“Alien race” may include humans other than “mainstream Imperial”).**

*Travis's answer:* An alien race, or monster, is made interesting by the common motivations they act from. What makes them different from humans? We are achievement oriented by and large, but what about a race with a hive mind, or maybe a splinter of humanity where communism actually worked? Stats and physical differences aren't really that interesting.

*Previous questions, not yet answered:*

**What, in your opinion, are the characteristics of a “good” adventure? Does it vary based on the context in which the adventure is being run? If so, how does it vary?**

**Someone has just asked you “What is *Traveller*?”. It's obvious that they want a better answer than “It's a SF/space-opera role-playing game, like D&D is a high fantasy role-playing game.”. How do you answer them?**

We encourage our readers to answer any question that has appeared in Essay Question, past or present, previously answered or not. We also encourage our readers to propose new Essay Questions to [questions@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:questions@freelancetraveller.com).

## Raconteurs' Rest

### ...From the Machine

Leslie Bates, the principal author of *...From the Machine*, has advised us that the story is going on hiatus while he works on a story for which he will be getting paid.

Since *Freelance Traveller* neither pays for nor charges for material, we will *never* suggest that an author give us priority over paying work. We wish Leslie the best of luck with his venture, and hope that he will be able to return to *...From the Machine* soon.



This column is intended to be a referee's guide to Mongoose's Traveller, the fifth incarnation of the Traveller game system. Often it'll talk about the many printed resources out there and available to the gamemaster, supplementing my own reviews on those topics, but sometimes it'll offer more specific advice for GMing the game.

*Editor's note: The initial Fifth Imperium column was published on the RPG.Net website in July 2009, and appeared in Freelance Traveller's initial issue in November 2009. This column originally appeared on the RPG.Net website in June 2010.*

## #10: My Rules, Part One: The Mechanics of XP & Grenades

For the last year now, I've been running a Traveller campaign using Mongoose's Traveller rules. It's been a monthly affair that's largely set up as a string of one-off adventures to accommodate the somewhat infrequent play. I invite you to read my Actual Play for the game if you happened, which I keep up in (sometimes excruciating) detail.

I'm generally happy with the Mongoose rules. The unified task system works well. It's easy to arbitrate, and ever since I got my Referee's Screen it's been extra easy to set difficulties and move up and down timeframes accordingly.

However, I've never known any GM who was 100% happy with the rule system he was using, and thus I've introduced a few tweaks, the first two of which--experience and grenades--I've written up below. I invite you to use them in your own games, and if you have slight tweaks that you use in your own Mongoose Traveller games, I'd love to hear about them over in the forums.

### Character Experience

Experience has always been a bit of a bugaboo for Traveller, ever since the 1977 Classic edition of the game came out without experience rules at all. Mongoose's Traveller instead offers up "training" rules (see Traveller Core Rulebook, page 59)--but having adventurers sitting around starports spending weeks of time just to bump up some skills kills my

whole sense of adventure. I'd rather have them, well, travelling.

As a result I've introduced a simple experience system to my Traveller game. Its goals were: to offer constant reward; to offer incremental improvement; and to not throw off the power level of the game as the campaign goes on.

Here's the result:

**The Rules.** Each active character receives a "tick" at the end of an adventure. This tick may be placed in any skill they rolled during the adventure or in any other skill which they could be reasonably said to have used, whether it was rolled or not.

**Conversion.** This ticks can later be converted into skill levels. Two ticks can raise an untrained skill to level 0. Otherwise, a skill can be raised to a new level with 4x the level in ticks: e.g., 4 ticks for level 1, 8 for level 2, etc.

**High-Level Limits.** A character is limited in how many high-level skills he can maintain at a time. This limit is typically one level 4 skill and two level 3 skills. If a player raises a skill up to level 3 or level 4, and thus exceeds this limit, he must simultaneously drop a skill down from that level as well.

### Grenades

I'm generally happy with the Mongoose Traveller combat system. It's sufficiently tactical to keep things interesting, both in moving around a grid and in making combat choices. I think it learned some good things from D&D 3E. However, I found at least one place where it just hadn't been thought through enough: the use of grenades.

The main problem is that though the weaponry exists, the rules for how to use it are unclear. Here's what I do:

**The Rules.** In order to fire grenades, you use a skill appropriate for the way in which the grenade is fired:

Thrown Grenade: 2d6 + Athletics (co-ordination) + Dexterity DM

Grenade Launcher: 2d6 + Weapon Skill\* + Dexterity DM

\* For underslung launcher, use the appropriate Gun Combat specialty; for standalone launcher use Heavy Weapons (launcher)

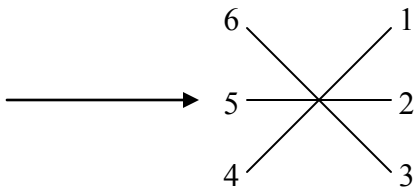
*(Continued on page 12)*

## Fifth Imperium

(Continued from page 11)

The Traveller rules correctly list blast radii for various grenades, and those should always be considered. However, what they miss is scatter, and that grenade always lands somewhere.

*The Scatter Direction.* Use 1d6 to determine the direction of scatter. Skip the two directions directly perpendicular to the grenade throw. For example:



(If you want to do this with a 1d8 instead, that might be simpler, but I figured it was better keeping to the only die that Traveller uses.)

*The Scatter Range.* The grenade scatters to a distance of 1d6\* squares. If you want to keep things simple, just roll that as 1d6 in the appropriate direc-

tion. However, for a bit more unpredictability, roll that as an "exploding" 1d6, which means you reroll the die and sum up the total if you roll a high number, continuing until you don't get that high number.

For all thrown grenades and grenades fired at short range or less, explode on a "6". For example a "5" would scatter to 5 squares range and a "6" + a "4" would scatter to 10 range.

For medium or long range, explode on a 5-6. For very long or distant range, explode on a 4-6.

### Conclusion

That's it for this, the first in my (short) series on rules variants. In future articles I'll talk about my starship combat variant and my narrative variants.

This month, I'd also like to point you to a Traveller article I recently wrote for Mongoose. It's got complete crunchy rules for creating Sword Worlder characters in Mongoose Traveller and can be found in Signs & Portents #80 (which you can download for free).

## Doing It My Way

### Zhodani Commandos Revisited

by Samuel V. Wilson III

*Author's Note:*

*I want to take a moment and say thank you to Frank Chadwick and Loren Wiseman who were the authors of the article 'Zhodani Military Organization' that appeared in JTAS #11 and has inspired my own interpretation as seen here. Also a special thanks to Marc Miller for being the mastermind and "spiritual advisor" of the creative team that worked on Traveller® "adventure in the far future".*

#### Introduction

Within the ranks of the Zhodani military establishment exists the paragon of elite light infantry forces in the universe. They are the commando forces of the elite Consular Guard. The commandos are a product of the synergistic fusion of technology, psionic development and applied military doctrine. Many in military circles would agree that the commandos' pre-eminence rests firmly on the extraordi-

nary psionic capability of teleportation (the psionic jump), but that is not to say that they are not on par with the Imperial Marines where tactical proficiency is concerned. Yet, it is this unique psionic capability that allows the Zhodani Military High Command to overmatch their opponents through tactical mobility and surprise. Thus, Zhodani commanders have an edge in maintaining the strategic initiative. Oftentimes commando missions can enhance ongoing military operations by inhibiting or sapping the initiative, tactical flexibility and or morale of enemy forces. This force multiplier effect is inversely proportional to the commandos' actual size and strength<sup>1</sup>. It is noted that the commando forces represent 2% of the actual combat battalions deployed in the Zhodani military theater of operations confronting the Imperium and it's allies in or near the Spinward Marches. Also, it stands to reason that they are the most feared unit of the Zhodani ground forces<sup>2</sup>.

(Continued from page 12)

### Doctrine and Training

The commandos by nature are light troops and as such are vulnerable to enemy armor and/or artillery/artillery fire. They rely on stealth and mobility to carry the day. It is important to take into account that these elite troops usually go into combat with only their high-energy weapons, tactical missiles and battledress. They don't have the staying power and organic heavy support weapons of a normal lift infantry company/battalion. Thus, operations are planned to make use of: surprise (via jump capsule infiltration or psionic infiltration), speed, maximum violence in a short period combat exposure, and a sound exfiltration (either a physical retrieval or psionic) plan to minimize friendly casualties. Though they are capable of fighting pitched battles, they prefer to perform swift direct action operations that have a higher likelihood of force preservation. When they are committed in pitched battles they are often inserted at the critical center of gravity of operations. Often the case their insertion proves to be the *coup de grace* for the enemy and, regrettably, they can take heavy casualties in execution these operations.

It is important to discuss the commandos' unique capability of teleportation. The Zhodani military procedure for psionic infiltration begins with the detachment directors (clairvoyant/telepaths) constructing the mental image of the infiltration zone (IZ). The image is a combination the directors using clairvoyance to view the IZ and other intelligence data<sup>3</sup>. This image is then telepathically "downloaded" to the commandos, who concentrate on the image for the psionic jump. Operational commanders and staffs when selecting an IZ have to take into account items such as temperature, latitude and longitude, and velocity of the target compared to the jump point of origin<sup>4</sup>. If telepathic infiltration operational parameters are not heeded, they can have disorienting effects on the jumping troops and diminish combat effectiveness on the ground. operations have been aborted when troops are psionically infiltrated and

are too disoriented or injured due to environmental factors or poor planning to execute the mission. These are important factors that have to be addressed when planning a psionic jump and are often avoided by a thorough proper reconnaissance (clairvoyant, electronic, visual, thermal and seismic) of the target and the IZ. Some telepathic infiltrations over distant ranges (5-50km) or operations with telepathic exfiltration can be very draining and as a precaution commandos take psionic booster drugs to enhance performance<sup>5</sup>. Another item of doctrine of critical importance is the disguising of the commandos from enemy intelligence collection efforts. The concealment of commando units from enemy intelligence multiplies the chances of a successful outcome of their employment in the theater of operations. Commandos' counter-intelligence (CI) sections work at great lengths to conceal the logistical and electronic signatures of commando formations. CI sections further conduct electronic warfare to inhibit enemy collection activities and broadcast misleading unit signatures to confuse enemy analysts. Operational security (opsec) surrounding commandos' movement and deployment is tight to prevent accidental disclosures of information. Successful missions occur when opsec is effective, it is in some part due to the fact that the opposition lacked the information that psionic commandos were in the area and countermeasures weren't taken. When Zhodani counterintelligence and opsec efforts fail the losses are devastating.

### Ground Operations

**Raids** The frequent tactical operational targets of the commandos in surface operations are: command and control centers, key logistic points, communication nodes, and staging areas for special weapons. Strategic missions are normally planetary raids in conjunction with naval forces along the periphery of the axis of advance or deep penetration operations hitting the rear area systems with the primary objective of tying down and otherwise obligating useful enemy military resources in a static defensive posture. The secondary objective is to destroy or damage targets of strategic value: governmental complexes,

(Continued on page 14)

*(Continued from page 13)*

industrial centers, high-density population areas, and locations of cultural importance, thus crippling the enemy's ability to execute the war from the home front and further lowering civilian morale and support.

**Prisoner Snatches** Commandos are used in detachments (squads) to infiltrate enemy formations and snatch prisoners for interrogation and tactical intelligence exploitation. Sometimes, if an enemy ranking officer's whereabouts are known, a commando raid to snatch the target is launched for the value of gaining strategic intelligence.

**Intelligence Collection and Deception Missions** Small sub-detachments of two to three commandos will infiltrate and establish observation points in enemy held areas to collect intelligence and act as forward observers. Sometimes pathfinder teams infiltrate in advance of operations in order to provide security or further collect Intelligence on the IZs. Many teams could be infiltrated and act as decoys in order to deceive the enemy as to the true target and tie down counter-attacking forces.

**Disruption Operations in Support of Conventional Forces** High profile missions conducted by the commandos are often in conjunction with conventional forces offensive or retrograde operations<sup>6</sup>. These types of direct action missions offer the senior military commanders the ability to react at a moment's notice to a change in the fluid tactical environment. Commando units further act as a strategic reserve to exploit any breakthroughs. Units are directly inserted into the combat area are: to lay ambush at vital enemy chokepoints; to overwhelm and seize fortified strongpoints; to materialize behind enemy spearheads to disrupt or ambush follow-on forces<sup>7</sup>.

**Counter Insurgency Operations** The operational capabilities of the Consular Guard Commandos usually facilitates a very quick mop up of insurgency forces. The Psi-abilities of the direction team combined with proper intelligence gives a comprehensive target package. Acting as and area fire force swift and often surgical application of the comman-

dos neutralizes or eliminates insurgent high profile or value targets and it allows Zhodani field commanders to maintain the initiative in COIN ( counter-insurgency) operations.

### Naval Operations

A commando groupment is always attached to a fleet command. Commando troops or detachments are dispersed to various ships and squadrons within the fleet. There they spearhead (via teleportation) boarding actions that have lead to the capturing or crippling of enemy naval vessels<sup>8</sup>. They are also frequently are employed in advance of operations (using either teleportation or Jump Troop capabilities) to support the Zhodani Special Naval Landing Forces (ZSNLF) seizure of starports, orbital stations, and in establishing beachheads on the surface.

### Operations Other Than War

It is rare in Zhodani society that the military is seen aiding civil authorities against its own citizens. There are documented times that the commandos have been used in hostage rescue operations and special tactical situations that demand their area of expertise. Usually the commandos in these cases are operating against non-Zhodani or extreme fringe groups (rare though present within the Consulate). It is also known that the Tavrchedl' are now retaining in times of peace commando squadrons that operate in special tactics and hostage rescue roles<sup>9</sup>.

Also, the commandos are sometimes detached to special security duties guarding members of the supreme consulate. This duty is highly prestigious and the selection for such an assignment is competitive. The duties include personal and site security whether at Zhdant or aboard the renowned *Dranzhrin*-Class Consular Corvettes. Those commandos selected often attend select special courses pertaining to VIP security, advanced unarmed and blade combat, and special protocol training in how to interact with non-Zhodani dignitaries. This special assignment lasts an Olympiad and the benefits are increased chances for promotion and social advancement.

*(Continued on page 15)*



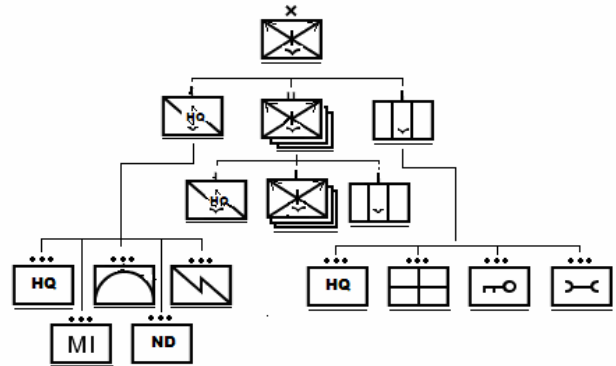
(Continued from page 14)

### Training

The selection and training of the commandos contrast somewhat with the normal practices of the military. The nature of Zhodani society as being one that embraces psionics enables potential commando candidates to be identified at early ages. The Consulate, through state sponsored youth programs and psionic institutions, accurately gauge the aptitude and fulfill the training of Zhodani youth who show significant psionic potential<sup>10</sup>. Many of these adepts are recruited early on for service in the Consular Guard. Recruits possessing the teleportation talent and strength required for the commandos are enticed by strong incentives (financial and social) to enter that respective branch of the Consular Guard. Commando volunteers undergo an intense two-year training syllabus: heavily stressing light infantry skills and tactics; military teleportation attunement and procedures; jump capsule and protected forces training; and not to be left out are the basic cascade of commando skills. Upon completion of training, they are promoted to the grade of commissioned specialist (the equivalent of imperial warrant officers) and are assigned to their first commando troop. Officers are selected, usually from the Nobility, and trained beside their troopers in order to create an *esprit de corps* and install a healthy confidence between the leaders and the troops. Officers also undergo a further year of training in operations planning and staff work in order to be able to function independently with their commands without the need for extensive staff support and guidance. When not conducting operations, commando units undertake intensive training cycles to maintain unit tactical and individual skill proficiency. It is also important to note that the commandos contain personnel who are not teleportation adepts. And while they go through just as rigorous training syllabus and a jump capsule qualified, they are for the most part vehicle drives and gunners in the commando squadrons. Specialist staff officers (intelligence, medical, communications, and

etc.) and support technicians attached to the headquarters or support squadrons.

### Organization



The Commandos' organization and structure reflects that of a light highly mobile self-contained unit. The following formations are provided of examination.

**Commando Force** The Commando Force is the largest tactical formation of teleportation capability deployed in the field by the Zhodani. It is similar in scope and size to a regiment. They are part of the organizational tables as one of the three jump troop regiments assigned to the elite Consular Guard jump divisions. A commando force is also attached as corps troops to Consular Guard Lift Infantry and/or Lift Mechanized Infantry Corps level formations. In the consular army it is attached as army troops to regular Zhodani Field Army level formations. It is commanded by a General and consists of a Force Headquarters and Signal Squadron, three Commando Groupments, and a Force Support Squadron.

*Force Headquarters and Signal Squadron* The Command Troop contains the commanding general, his deputy, and the force battle staff (personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics staff officers and deputies, and a master warrant officer); they are protected by an eight-man security detachment on the battlefield. The command and staff is divided into two large command grav sleds, which are fully integrated C7I command centres, each with a driver and gunner.

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

The Combat Electronic Warfare and Intelligence Troop supplements the already existing capabilities at the groupment level as well as the platoon's function to ensure the force's survival in the combat electronic warfare and intelligence dimension of the modern battlefield. It comprises of an Intelligence section that has a production team of two officers (assimilation and analysis), a counter intelligence officer and technician ensuring tactical operational security, two interrogator specialists, two tactical intelligence support specialists (droid operators) and the drivers in two intelligence support sleds. The electronic warfare section contains a jamming and deception sled, manned by a warrant officer and four technicians with a driver, and an Intercept /direction finding sled that has also a warrant officer and four technicians with a driver. It is important to know that the CEWI troop has a significant number of Droids attached to the unit to enhance capabilities. The intelligence section fields 4 reconnaissance droids and they are carried on the intelligence support sleds. The electronic warfare section has two remote jamming droids and four remote direction finding / intercept droids they are all carried by their respective sleds and greatly enhance the CEWI capability of the troop.

The Communications Troop for the Force is supported by the signals troop. They are capable of laser, maser, radio, microwave and meson communications. The unit communication network is interfaced digital and encrypted for security. A junior officer commands the troop and two warrant officers assist him. The troop is divided into a meson comm. sled with an NCO and four tech with a driver, three Laser, maser, radio, microwave comm. sleds each with an NCO, driver and three techs. A communications utility support sled has a driver and it carries the four repair technicians who assist in maintenance and repairs of the troop's communications equipment.

The Nuclear Damper Troop is dedicated to force protection duties from incoming nuclear weapons attacks. It is commanded by a lieutenant and contains six damper projector vehicles each with a crew of a

driver, a NCO and two technicians, and a damper support vehicle with a driver and two repair technicians.

The Point Defence Troop provides a defensive umbrella for the Force to operate under. It contains four vehicles: three point defense sleds and a Fire Direction Control/Sensor sled. Commanded by a lieutenant, the troop's PD sleds consist of a driver, a NCO, and a gunner. The FDC/S sled has a driver, the lieutenant, and three FDC/S technicians. It can also deploy three PD Sensor droids who enable the continuity of coverage.

**Force Support Squadron** The Force Support Squadron consists of a Command Section, a Medical Troop, a Maintenance Troop, and a Support Troop.

*Command section* The command section oversees the disposition and efficiency of the force support section. It consists of the Squadron Commander (captain), a deputy (senior warrant officer), and has two grav sleds for admin and support of the command and allocation of support resources.

*Medical Troop* Led by the Force surgeon (Maj) it consists of a treatment section containing the Physician, his deputy, an admin specialist officer, two physician assistants, seven medics, and six medical droids, all of which are contained in three grav vehicles that comprise the mobile treatment station. The Evacuation section, commanded by a NCO, contains four field grav ambulances, each capable of supporting four patients, containing driver, gunner, two medics and two medical litter droids. Support Section is a grav-sled with a driver, two Tech specialists, and four repair droids who service and repair the medical equipment.

*Maintenance troop* Commanded by a senior warrant officer this Troop's role is to service and repair all of the Force equipment and to provide expanded service to the groupments assigned. It contains six maintenance vehicles for service and repair each consisting of a driver, gunner, NCO and four techs and four repair droids.

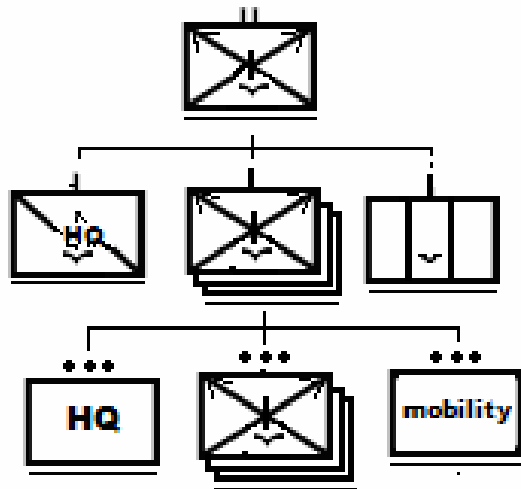
*Support Troop* The Support Troop provides logistical support as well as culinary support to the

(Continued on page 17)

## Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 16)

force. The Logistics section contains six logistics vehicles with two personnel assigned and four robots apiece the logistics vehicle are stocked with required sundries and parts needed to support battlefield conditions. There are three culinary and hygiene support vehicles that each support a groupment with food and hygiene facilities. The support Troop is commanded by a senior warrant officer.



**Commando Groupment** The commando groupment is a battalion-sized tactical element attached to regular army jump divisions (albeit they contain supplemental firepower in the jump divisions), Consular Guard Lift Infantry and Lift Mechanized Infantry Divisions. A groupment is further attached to regular army corps as corps troops and to Zhodani fleet formations. A colonel, assisted by a lieutenant colonel, commands the groupment. It is composed of a Headquarters and Signals Squadron, three Commando Squadrons, and a Support Squadron.

*Groupment Headquarters and Signals Squadron*  
The Groupment Headquarters and Signal Squadron is comprised of a command troop, combat electronic warfare and intelligence (CEWI) troop, signals section, a nuclear damper section and a point defense section. The command troop contains the Colonel, his deputy and the force battle staff (personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics staff officers and deputies and the groupment chief master warrant officer); they are protected by an eight-man security detach-

ment on the battlefield. The command and staff is divided into two large command grav sleds, which are fully integrated C7I command centers, each with a driver and gunner.

*The Combat Electronic Warfare and Intelligence Troop* supplements the already existing capabilities at the level as well as the platoon's function to ensure the force's survival in the combat electronic warfare and intelligence dimension of the modern battlefield. It is comprised of an Intelligence section that has a production team of two officers (assimilation and analysis), a counterintelligence officer and technician ensuring tactical operational security, two interrogator specialists, two tactical intelligence support specialists (droid operators) and the drivers in two intelligence support sleds. The electronic warfare section contains a jamming and deception sled, manned by a warrant officer and four technicians with a driver, and an intercept/direction finding sled that has also a warrant officer and four technicians with a driver. It is important to know that the CEWI troop has a significant number of Droids attached to the unit to enhance capabilities. The intelligence section fields four reconnaissance droids and they are carried on the intelligence support sleds. The electronic warfare section has two remote jamming droids and four remote direction finding/intercept droids. They are all carried by their respective sleds and greatly enhance the CEWI capability of the troop.

*The Communications Section* for the Groupment is supported by the signals troop. They are capable of laser, maser, radio, microwave and meson communications. The unit communication network is interfaced digital and encrypted for security. A junior officer commands the troop and two warrant officers assist him. The troop is divided into a meson comm. sled with an NCO and four techs with a driver, and a Laser, maser, radio, microwave comm. sled with an NCO, driver and three techs. A communications utility support sled has a driver and it carries the four repair technicians who assist in maintenance and repairs of the troop's communications equipment.

(Continued on page 18)

## Doing It My Way

*The Nuclear Damper Section* is dedicated to force protection duties from incoming nuclear weapons attacks. It is commanded by a Staff Sergeant and contains two damper projector vehicles each with a crew of a driver, a NCO and two technicians, and a damper support vehicle with a driver and two repair technicians.

*The Point Defence Section* provides a defensive umbrella for the Force to operate under. Commanded by a warrant officer it contains four vehicles: three point defense sleds and a FDC/S sled. PD sleds consist of a driver an NCO and a gunner. The FDC/S sled has a driver, the warrant officer and three FDC/S technicians. It can also deploy three PD Sensor droids who enable the continuity

### **Groupment Support Squadron**

*Command Section* The Coordination of support elements for the squadron rests with the command section of the support squadron. Commanded by an captain the squadron support section contains two command and control vehicle, both have a driver, gunner and vehicle commander. The section also includes the Senior squadron NCO and the squadron XO all who assist in the coordination of support efforts

*Medical Section* Commanded by the squadron Physician Associate, the section is composed of a surgical/treatment vehicle (with a driver, commander, gunner and three medical assistants and four medical support droids) that performs minor surgery and tailgate medicine. The three other vehicles are the medical evacuation grav carriers that have a driver, gunner-commander, and two combat medics for casualty treatment the vehicles have also the support of two casualty litter droids.

*Maintenance Troop* This troop attempts to maintain the groupment's equipment and weapons at a local level, the more serious repairs and overhauls are completed at a higher echelon depot. It is commanded by a senior warrant officer and has three repair sleds containing a driver, gunner and four repair specialists lead by a experienced NCO. Each vehicle has two heavy repair droids.

*Support Troop* The support troop manages the supply chain and provision of stores for the com-

mando groupment. Led by a senior warrant officer, it contains a warehouse section and three transport squads. The warehouse section is composed of three heavy logistics vehicles and lead by an NCO with twelve enlisted men assisted by four heavy logistics robots. The Transport squads are each two light logistics vehicles commanded by an NCO. The squad is made up of two drivers, two gunners, and two logistics specialists. Each vehicle has two logistics droids to aid them.

*Commando Squadron* The commando squadron is a company-sized unit it is independently attached to Independent Consular Guard Lift-Infantry and Lift-Mechanized Infantry Regiments. Commanded by a major the squadron's composition is: Command & Direction Troop containing a command party: the major and his deputy, the squadron chief warrant officer, a security element of four commandos, a small staff of two senior warrant officers who act as an intelligence and an operations staff technicians, and a senior medical specialist. All members of the command party are teleport adepts. The direction section (where the eleven detachment directors, clairvoyant / telepaths, are located), three Commando Troops and Commando Mobility Troop.

*Commando Troop* The platoon sized commando formation is commanded by a captain and assisted by a lieutenant and a troop chief warrant officer (he acts in the role of a Platoon Sergeant and is normally a well-seasoned combat veteran) and has three detachments (squads) led by sub-lieutenants, and he is assisted by two subalterns, and has eight commissioned specialists. It is important to note that the command party also includes two additional teleport adepts who functions as a medical specialist for the troop..

*Commando Mobility Troop* The Mobility Troop provides a greater combat range, protection and firepower for the commandos. Often used to transport the commandos to and from the battlefield at times they are often used in conjunction with operations in a retrieval or insertion capacity. It contains twelve *Dravar*-family Grav AFV sleds each with a driver/mechanic.

*(Continued on page 19)*

## Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 18)

**Equipment** The Zhodani Consular Guard Commandos are equipped at highest quality arms and armaments within the Consulate (tech level 14). Due to the restrictions placed by jump and psionic operations emphasis is placed on portability and lethality. Guards Battledress is standard issue for teleport and psionic personnel. The units' support personnel are issued Guards Combat Armor and gauss weapons. Powered troops enjoy a plethora of integrated weapon systems. Their primary weapon is ever-present PGMP-13 personal weapon or FGMP-14 detachment support weapon. The Y-rack is a destructive infantry enhancing system that launches hands-free a variety of grenade-sized munitions. A ranged weapon at the commandos fingertips is integrated Tactical Rocket Launcher (with fire and forget HE, HEAP, SAM and small yield (.2 Kt) thermonuclear rockets for engaging targets at range. The Thiazhashal corporation designed the droppable *Dravar*-family light armoured grav-fighting vehicles for the jump and commando forces. They provide a mobility platform and improve the firepower of these light forces, and they include: a standard infantry carrier, a armed reconnaissance/direct fire support version, command and control versions (to include electronic warfare and communications), combat support (point defense, screens, combat engineering, and etc.), service and support version (logistics, surgical, ambulance, and repair versions). Unlike many interstellar organizations the Zhodani military makes extensive

use of warbots in conjunction with military operations in combatant and non-combatant roles. The commandos due to the nature of psionic operations have little use for the warbots commonly seen in other Zhodani formations<sup>11</sup>. Yet, they do have many 'expert' droids within the TO&E in order to assist support personnel with support tasks. They include medical droids, repair droids, recon probes, and remotesensor droids made by either IAD or Tliazhashal.<sup>12</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "Commandos cause disruption and moral deterioration greatly out of proportion to their actual numbers", *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society (JTAS)* #11 (GDW) 'Zhodani Military Organization' p.26.

<sup>2</sup> "Even though the 95 Groupments (battalion-sized units) known to be in the Spinward Marches represent only 2% of the combat battalions in the sector". p26.

<sup>3</sup> *JTAS* #11 'Zhodani Military Organization' p.28

<sup>4</sup> *Book 3: Worlds & Adventures* p.44

<sup>5</sup> *JTAS* #11 'Zhodani Military Organization' p.26-27

<sup>6</sup> p.28

<sup>7</sup> p.28

<sup>8</sup> *Adventure 7: Broadsword*

<sup>9</sup> *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1* p.41

<sup>10</sup> *JTAS* #9 'Contact: Zhodani' p.9-11

<sup>11</sup> *Book 8: Robots* p.11

<sup>12</sup> p.17

## In A Store Near You

### The Promenade: Gig

By Jeff Zeitlin

There is fashion, as in "designed by someone to look good on a specific unrealistic shape of model on a runway, and nobody actually wears it in real life", and there is fashion, as in "looks good on anyone, because it is of the highest quality, and tailored to the person". Gig is a fashion shop in the latter sense.

What sets Gig apart from other fashion shops is that the customer can have any color desired - as long as the desired color is black.

Gig will dress anyone, regardless of age, sex, or species, for any occasion, from the skin out, entirely in black. Styles cover everything from the most conservative of Vilani high-society styles, to the most avant-garde use of skinpaints-and-nothing-but from

(Continued on page 20)

## In A Store Near You

(Continued from page 19)

the most “mod” and “cosmopolitan” worlds of the Solomani Rim, to sleepers and “onesies” for infants. Their staff, who universally answer to the title “Mezukeshe”, are all trained to the highest standards, and familiar with the expectations of high society on the world that the particular shop is located on, and on most of the nearby worlds that could be expected to be a destination for the customer.

When a customer walks in with a description of the occasion for which he, she, or it needs to be dressed, a process is set in motion which results in the customer being measured, scanned, and ‘simulated’, with a small selection of appropriate outfits subsequently displayed (to show how the customer would look in said outfits) for the customer’s

choice. Once an outfit is chosen, production is set in motion, and within hours, the outfit is ready for the first fitting. It is subsequently adjusted for optimum fit and appearance, with additional fittings as needed. The end result is a complete ensemble that is virtually guaranteed to Be Noticed.

This sort of service comes with a price tag; no customer of Gig that has ever spoken about their experience has ever admitted to spending less than 50KCr, and claims of twice to three times that have been heard.

Gig’s shops are few and far between; it can be said, truthfully, that only one world in a thousand will have a Gig, and that world will invariably have a Class A starport, a high tech level, and a marked concentration of wealth.

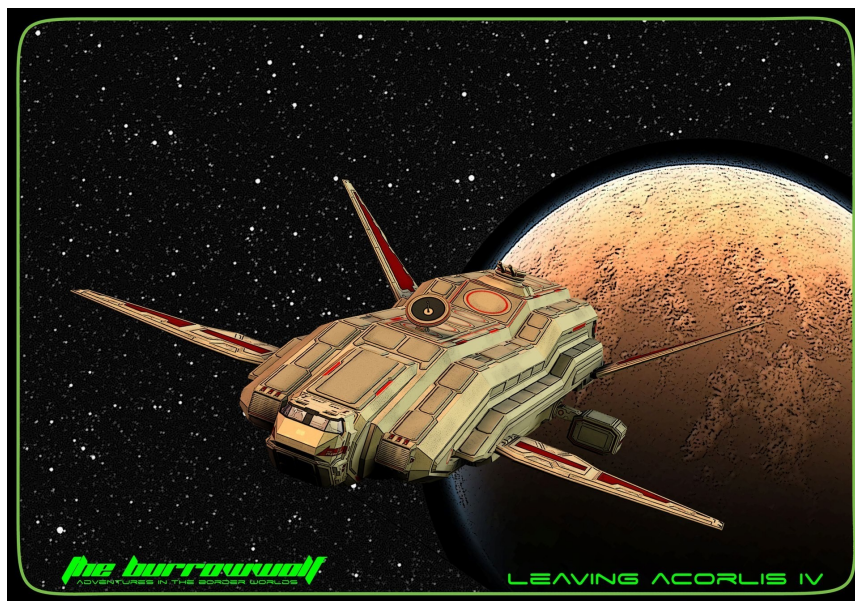
## Multimedia Gallery

### The BurrowWolf: A Traveller Graphic Novel

We continue our presentation of *The BurrowWolf: A Traveller Graphic Novel*, created by David Billinghamurst and Dave Redington. The previous chapter appeared in the May 2010 issue, and is also on our website in the Multimedia Gallery. As usual, we will post the portion that appears in this issue of

### *The BurrowWolf: A Traveller Graphic Novel*

the magazine on our website when next month’s issue is released. You can also see it in a much more elegant presentation at Dave Redington’s website, [http://web.me.com/dredington/Traveller\\_Art/BurrowWolf/BurrowWolf.html](http://web.me.com/dredington/Traveller_Art/BurrowWolf/BurrowWolf.html). That site also contains chapters not yet released to *Freelance Traveller*, and some background information and images (like the one below) that are not part of the graphic novel. The actual chapter starts on the next page. We hope you enjoy it.



# *The BurrowWolf*

ADVENTURES IN THE BORDER WORLDS

## Chapter Two



*A Traveller webcomic. Story by David Billingham. Art by Dave Redington*

## Chapter Two: Jump Space Blues

BurrowWolf - Elapsed time in Jump:  
Three hours forty-seven minutes.



WHAT GIVES YOU THE VOID-DAMNED  
RIGHT TO MESS WITH MY NAV  
COMPUTER?



YOU WERE HIRED AS A  
FREKKIN' STEWARD!



YOU MORON! YOU'RE RUNNING  
TRAINING TAPES TO PLOT JUMPS!  
NOT ONLY IS IT ILLEGAL, IT COULD  
FLAMING-WELL KILL US!

Avenger class Destroyer Dougherty  
- Acorlis system.



WELL?

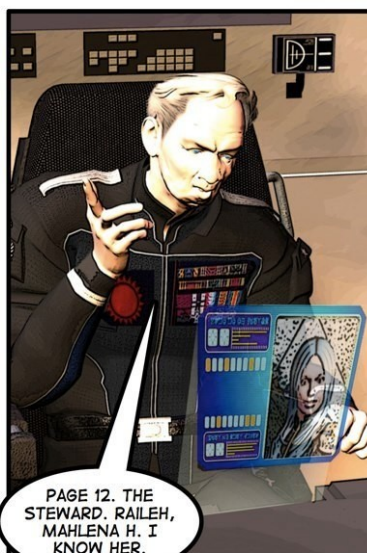
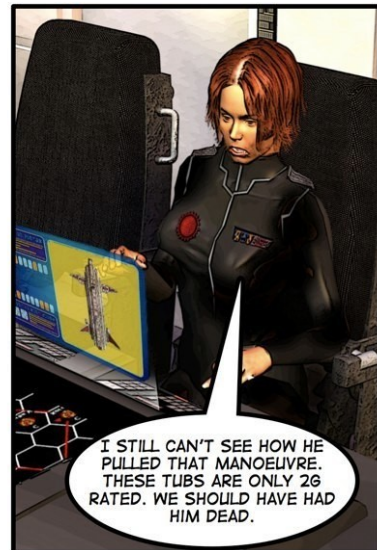


WE'VE NARROWED IT  
DOWN TO EITHER  
POR'VIA OR FINDLIL,  
COMMODORE.

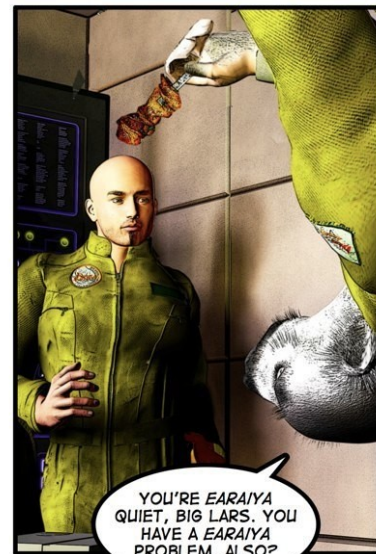


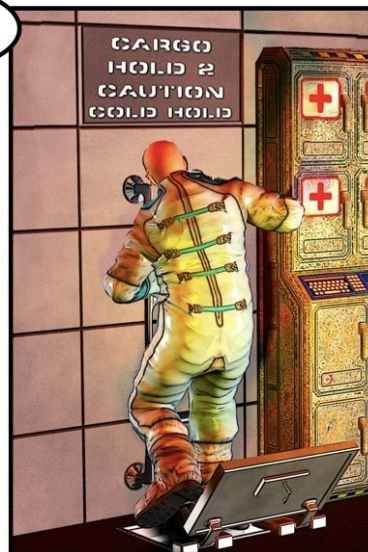












Continued in September issue...

## Feedback

We'd like to hear what you think of Freelance Traveller, both the magazine and the website!

We want to know what you think of the basic idea of Freelance Traveller as a magazine, not just a website; what you think of the articles we publish, and how we can make our magazine better and how we can make our website better.

We want to know what kind of articles you want to see, and what you *don't* want to see.

We want to know what you think of our look, and how we can make it better.

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

You can send e-mail to us at [feedback@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:feedback@freelancetraveller.com).

You can use the feedback form on our website, at

<http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.

If you're a member of the SFRPG Forums, we monitor them, so you can post comments in the **Traveller Fanzines** section, at <http://www.sfrpg.org.uk/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>. Please tag any commentary about Freelance Traveller with the string "[Freelance Traveller]", or reply to our message announcing the issue.

If you're a member of the Citizens of the Imperium forums, we monitor them as well, so you can post comments in the **Lone Star** section, at <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>. As with the SFRPG forums, please tag any commentary about Freelance Traveller with the string "[Freelance Traveller]", or reply to our message announcing the issue.

## Traveller on the Internet

Freelance Traveller sponsors a channel for Traveller fans on the Undernet IRC network, and RPGRealms sponsors one on the Otherworlders IRC network—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

## IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

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. It's generally quiet in both channels—but you can change that, and make both channels “jumping” places to hang out!

## Traveller on the Internet

After a long absence due to technical problems that turned out to be somewhat expensive and time-consuming to fix, the Freelance Traveller forums have returned! Because of the way they were implemented originally, no messages or user profiles were lost, and you can pick up where you left off when we had to take them off-line to identify and address the problems. They're at the same address, <http://forums.freelancetraveller.com>, and there is no change whatsoever in the ways you can access them—or, sadly, in the admitted deficiencies in the

## The Freelance Traveller Forums

software—that's another long-term project that we're working on as we have the time. If you're visiting the forums for the first time, please see our FAQ at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/forums.html>, and our Acceptable Use Policy at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/ftforumsaup.html>.

We're currently looking into an alternative web interfaces, but don't let the current one stop you from participating—we also support email and usenet-style (nntp) access.

