

FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



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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



Well, it's a little later than planned, but the August issue is finally in your hands. We'd like to apologize for the delay, and just note that it's because the editor had some unexpected medical problems that resulted in a hospital stay of the better part of a week, during which we didn't have any computer access at all, never mind net access. Things are better now, so we finally managed to put this issue together and post it.

At that, we didn't get everything done that we wanted to. As of the release of this issue of the magazine, last month's articles are still not up on the web-site; we'll be working on that over the coming days.

When *Freelance Traveller* first came out in magazine form, we said we'd like to do some theme issues. Our hope for the first one didn't work out—instead of an entire issue, we ended up just putting out a Special Supplement on *Mercator* (see the April 2010 issue). We're going to try again, but this time, we're going to let you know beforehand what the topic will be, and invite contributions of all types in connection with it.

There's no firm schedule for it, but we'd like to be able to "go to press" with a completed theme issue for the October issue. The theme we've chosen is "The Interstellar Cruise". What we'd like is contributions of *all* types: articles about destinations, articles about the cruise starship (the 600-ton subsidized liner, perhaps?), personal profiles of the principal crew members that the passengers might come in contact with, images representing a "photo tour" of the starport and the ship (and maybe even of the destination), shipboard adventures or adventure seeds, ... whatever you think would be of interest in connection with an interstellar cruise. Send them to the usual addresses.

TravellerCON in Lancaster, PA, is coming up in October, and the editor is tentatively planning to be there as a participant. We have to check on some scheduling issues before we can be sure, but given that it's only a three-hour drive—or less—from New York City, our home, we're not anticipating too much difficulty. It'll be a chance for some of you to meet us (editorial plural; there's only one person), and for us to meet you. Hope to see you there!

Mongoose Traveller: Merchant Prince

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Mongoose Traveller: Book 7: Merchant Prince. Bryan Steel
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
124pp, softcover
US\$24.99/UK£15.00

Mongoose Traveller recaps another Classic Traveller career book, expanding on the Merchant career to good effect

On the Shelf

As with the other Mongoose Traveller career books, the black-with-green-arrow motif identifies the book immediately. The tagline is “Not fair terms and a villain’s mind”.

Initial Impression

As might be expected, this volume is focused on trade and traders, looking in turn at generating individual merchant characters in any of 21 career paths, generating and managing trading companies, engaging in trade at the individual ship level, and privateering. Also included are profiles of trading organizations, a list of trade goods, and capsule summaries of technology useful to merchants. As with other recent Mongoose career books, the text is clear and easy to read, and the artwork does not interfere with it.

On Closer Inspection

Seven general career paths are offered, with three specializations each. These run the gamut from the desk-bound Broker to the hands-on jobs of the Marketer, Merchant Marine, Free Trader, Junk Dealer, and Slaver, and extending to the rarefied heights of the Royal Trader. Several of the specializations appear to overlap somewhat in description, but represent doing those similar jobs in quite different contexts.

In addition to those career tables, the character generation section offers three new character traits: the Buyer/Seller, a new type of Ally; Influence, representing how much other listen to your merchant character; and Bankruptcy, which offers an alternative to mustering out with a major debt load.

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Book 7: Merchant Prince

Not fair terms and a villain's mind

The section on Commercial Entities, “Commercial Success in Ten Steps”, provides rules for in essence treating a company as a character, and “playing” the character (in a company-appropriate context – trading, investing, and managing at the corporation level instead of the “tramp trader” level) in a “game-within-a-game”. To a large extent, this is “Accurate Adventures in Accounting” – but there’s no reason, other than personal taste, to discount it as part of a campaign. After all, the player-characters need to be able to do something with the wealth they accumulate, and it just doesn’t seem satisfactory, somehow, to simply declare that they purchase a habitable moon in the Utopia system and retire there to a life of leisure...

The section on trade (at the “tramp trader” level) expands on the trading rules in the Traveller core rules, in much the same way that the Mongoose Traveller core rules for trade expanded on the Classic Traveller rules for trade: Categories of goods are broken down into several sub-categories, each with

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Critics' Corner

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its own price (instead of one-price-fits-all), and additional DMs are offered for various skills and tasks. Merchant Prince also expands on the types of trading, by adding 'Junk Dealing' and 'Slaving' to the old standbys of Freight Carriage, Passenger Carriage, and Speculative Trade.

For those players who have a taste for both the mercantile and mercenary life, a section on privateering discusses what's involved in satisfying both tastes at once. The difference between privateering and piracy is discussed in brief; the distinction between types of privateers (based on the type of organization backing the privateer), including expectations, obligations, benefits, and dangers, is discussed in depth.

The section on Trade Goods provides basic information on a wide variety of classes of goods, both broadly specified (e.g., Basic Raw Materials) and more closely specified (e.g., Workable Alloys) including a basic price (modified by DMs during the trading process outlined in the trade rules section), availability modifiers, lot sizes, and additional modifiers for origin and destination world trade codes,

and for dangerous goods. Trade goods so specified include both legal and illegal goods, and there is even a section for defining "exotics" and one-offs.

Finally, the section on merchant technology supplements the Central Supply Catalogue with devices and mods that will clearly be helpful to merchants (and may be useful to others as well). A small selection of "tramp trader"-sized ship are also specced out, with the usual one-page deck plans – and the usual comment about how it would be better to compile and release these deck plans in 25/28mm scale, so that they can be used with miniatures. These ships, at least, are small enough that detail neither is lost nor requires a magnifier or squinting.

Summary

This volume is a must-have for anyone interested in trade-focussed campaigns. While there are those who deride trade-based campaigns as "Accurate Adventures in Accounting", one cannot deny that trade can form the basis of any number of adventures with as much tension, risk, and reward as any mercenary ticket – if nothing else, as a privateer. This book is aimed at those who are interested in such mercantile adventures, and it provides well for them.

In A Store Near You

DX-1000

by Tom Rux

DX-1000 is a powerful explosive that was introduced by EFELPD Explosives of Rann (3106 Solomani Rim). On Rann, the explosive would not explode under any conditions without a detonator. The stability of the explosive was a major selling point which helped the company to gain a substantial market share in a period of two years. Another feature that made the explosive so popular was that smaller charges could be used in blasting. A third feature was the ability to easily mold the explosive into a shaped charge that directed the explosive force along specific lines.

Within three years, DX-1000 was being exported

Handle With Care

to many worlds along the Solomani Rim, Alpha Crucis, Dispora, and Old Expanses border. With the export outside of Rann's planetary conditions DX-1000 began to experience major safety issues. Over the course of a year, a series of accidents occurred on dozens of worlds with a wide range of different planetary conditions. Fatal toxic fumes were created on three worlds with different atmospheric profiles. Six worlds reported premature detonation of DX-1000 at temperatures from -5° to $+6^{\circ}\text{C}$.

All the reported detonations are well within the safe storage range of $0^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 10^{\circ}\text{C}$. At least two reports documented that four tons of DX-1000 spontaneously combusted at different humidity levels. Testing of DX-1000 by local and Imperial investigators could not duplicate the instabilities reported on the

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other worlds at any of the manufacturing plants on Rann. EFELPD sent qualified staff to many of the reported location to verify the instabilities with mixed results. Some of the tests resulted in different instabilities reported while on other worlds the instabilities in the chemical composition could be found. Five years after introducing it, EFELPD Explosives voluntarily ceased exporting DX-1000 outside of the Rann system and stopped manufacturing the explosive by the end of the following year.

Originally DX-1000 was shipped in standard explosive shipping crates as a moldable solid and rated as extremely insensitive to exploding or being flammable. No toxic fumes were emitted during normal handling or after the explosive had been detonated at any of the standard atmospheric test points. Temperature testing showed that DX-1000 was stable from -40°C to 50°C but the best results were at 0°C.

Humidity and gravity tolerance at the Rann facilities again showed a very stable product.

The result was a Universal Hazard Profile¹ (UHP) of 400-X5X6-17: Explosive/Extremely Insensitive/Affects all life forms—Store in any atmosphere/0°C ±10°C/Any humidity/6G or less—Store or ship in Solid form/1 to 10 tons per unit.

Adventure seed:

The party is a team from EFELPD Explosives sent to determine why DX-1000 became unstable. In each of the conditions described above the common factor was an extremely small amount of a rare gas that reacted with the different components of DX-1000. I would recommend that the team visit a minimum of 3 sites to no more than 6 before they come up with the cause of the instability.

¹ UHP is from *Challenge* 31, “Hazardous Cargoes”, pp. 20 to 25, by Marcus L. Rowland.

Up Close and Personal

Brigette “Alkithoe” Maelcum

profiled by Ken Murphy

Brigette was born and raised within the protective confines of the family Stead; one of several such communities in the area, and made up of an extended family of some 40 different households; mostly farmers, artists and craftsmen, on the outskirts of bustling seaport New Philadelphia on the marshy southwest tip of Geautreux’s Island on the planet Aretius (C-4667C4C).

In addition to the usual lessons and play, Brigette’s time was spent helping tend the Stead’s large hydroponics system and its rabbit warrens, as well as making a few CR for herself on the side as a much-sought-after babysitter.

Sometime following her first menstruation, Brigette, like all the women of the Stead, underwent ritual dedication to the Goddess. Brigette, *always* a strong-willed girl (and possessor of a mean right hook), chose Alkithoe (Impetuous Might) as her

Stead-name; her old name, Brigette Maelcum, along with her burqua, being reserved for interaction with outsiders.

Alkithoe *loved* being involved first-hand in the Cult rituals she’d only been able to watch previously, as well as the ‘plugged-in’ feeling her deeper commitment to The Goddess seemed to bring. But she felt an especially *powerful* draw to the Stead’s weekly ‘Crash-Bang’ sessions (weapon use and small unit tactics training overseen by several veterans among the Stead-members).

Little Sister Alkithoe, as was soon discovered, was gifted; already a *crack* shot, she simply excelled at ‘Crash-Bang’; occasionally even assisting with the sessions; her ease with weapons and emerging keen tactical sense naturally being attributed to a gift of The Goddess—how else?

Being a world on the Frontier, Aretius had its share of run-ins with Pirates over the years; usually consisting of a single ship, or the occasional small group, which would concentrate on the warehouse

Up Close and Personal

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and business districts, and leave the habitats themselves unmolested.

One memorable exception to this occurred, by happenstance, a few days shy of Alkithoe's 14th birthday; when a well-organized Pirate force, which had been hitting worlds up and down the Frontier, descended on Aretius intent on picking it clean.

Pirates seemed to be everywhere at once, and Alkithoe found herself, along with the other Steadfolk, swept up in street-by-street, and house-by-house fighting. During a lull in the fighting, Alkithoe wondered just how the rest of Geautreux's Island (and for that matter, the rest of Aretius) were faring; the Southern sky being lit by a terrible burning that could *only* be the Downport at Latrobe burning, some 60km distant.

By the following morning, after any meaningful resistance had been dealt with, the Pirates had taken Aretius---The plundering of the world commencing in a most efficient manner; long pack-trains of one heavy grav-sled after another piled high with valuables of every description, as well as chain gangs of future slaves, methodically shuffling forward to enter the holds of now-grounded Corsairs.

The next thing Alkithoe knew, she was lying on her back in the open, looking up at the bright face of Hamza, Aretius' single moon. The *last* she'd remembered, she was holed-up in a Mechanic's shop with a few others; firing on the encroaching Pirates through holes that'd been knocked in the thick thermocrete walls using some of the shop's heavy tools. Alkithoe suddenly remembered how, while reloading her ancient-but-sturdy Automatic Rifle, her eye had caught a heavy stun grenade sailing precisely through the small, fist-sized hole she'd been using as a firing port. The grenade glanced off her knee and clattered to the floor.

"Wow! That's one heck of a toss!." she'd thought, a split-second before the grenade's detonation.

Focusing a little, Alkithoe tried to rub her aching head and found it difficult to move, as she was se-

curely chained; a member of a gang which looked to be made up of about 30 or 40 others; the sullen group sitting or lying on a patch of blood-soaked ground next to a very high and unpleasant mound of Aretiusian bodies, and minded over by several heavily-armed Pirates.

The Pirates cajoled, prodded, kicked, whipped and pulled the gang to their collective feet, and pushed them toward a large clearing where, high above, a Corsair, still popping, pinging and steaming from its recent trip through the atmosphere, was slowly descending; its cargo hatch already opened to facilitate rapid loading once landed.

She'd heard the stories before---about the slave markets at the Pirate Haven of New Tripoli (and those on Newkirk and Flanders as well); and, somewhat detached, watched as the Corsair, now only some 60m from the surface, was silhouetted against the bright, serene face of Hamza for several seconds of its descent.

For some reason, a couple of old saws her Mother was fond of quoting in times of adversity popped into her head, "Nothing in this world happens by mistake. There is no such thing as coincidence".

Alkithoe decided that she didn't find the idea particularly *comforting* there beneath the looming slave ship.

As the ship dropped to less than 20m from the surface, Alkithoe; despair and resignation finally eating away the last of her hope, silently petitioned The Most wise and benevolent Goddess for help---if deemed worthy.

A few seconds later, a sudden explosion rocked the approaching Corsair; instantly vaporizing the thing's bow and a large portion of its starboard side in a sun-bright flash of plasma, and throwing it, effortlessly flipping end-over-end through the air like a .25 CR piece, smashing into a close-packed trio of already-grounded Corsairs; breaking and scattering them all, as well as their contents, numerous grav-sleds, some *very* unlucky civilians, numerous nearby structures, and many, *many* Pirates, in a tumbling

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Up Close and Personal

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mass of burning wreckage.

Alkithoe looked up from where the force of the exploding Corsair, in concert with a sliver of its Superdense hull clipping the top of her head, had knocked her to the ground. She found the whirling cloud of grit and debris kicked up by the sudden arrival of the Imperial Marine Landing Boats, combined with the blood streaming from her a gash in her head, to be quite annoying--- as well as extremely confusing.

One beat-up old Boat, sporting a large image of Terran Atomic-Era icon Bettie Page wearing a peaked cap, stockings, stiletto heels (*crazy* old Terrans!), and holding a large platter of some flaming delicacy, was displayed on the hull's side with the name "Chili Fries" in large letters above; skipped and skidded across the surface; the Boat's dorsal turret and door gunners laying down suppressive VRF Gauss fire for the exiting Marine Platoon even as the thing ground to a halt only a half-dozen meters from Alkithoe and the rest of the chain gang. Still hissing and steaming from its trip through the atmosphere, the the Lander's PA system was blasting out Jimi Hendrix's performance of ancient Terran standard "All Along the Watchtower" at a level *more* than powerful enough to blow Alkithoe's mandible-implanted commlink, as well as being *almost* loud enough to drown-out the sounds of battle entirely.

Rubbing grit and blood from her eyes, Alkithoe could see that while *some* of the Pirates held their ground, most broke and ran; like Orcs from the Pellannor Fields in that old book her Mom had liked so much. Some of the outlaws pleaded for their lives (for all the good it did them); being shot where they stood (or groveled). Some threw themselves from heights, or into flames, or slit their own throats, or shot themselves in the head. A few even went so far as to work themselves into hopeful concealment among the nearby mound of Aretiusian dead, before Marines rooted them out after a simple consult with the Cabal of their suits' sensors. A lucky few were taken prisoner, and sent, Brig Walking ahead of a

few heavily-armed Marines, for later interrogation.

A single, *lucky* Pirate, held until Operation's end, was then *released*, weaponless, to go his own way as best he could; because out of *every* massacre there is always a single survivor left to tell The Tale.

Minutes after the Marines had swept through the area, a trio of IN Corpsmen, each wearing Battle Dress sporting the green-over-white horizontal stripe denoting Medical Personnel, accompanied by a pair of heavily armed Marines, approached.

One of the Marines, a Corporal, if Alkithoe guessed the insignia right, crouched, setting down a heavy and deadly-looking 15mm SMG, saying what the girl could've *sworn* she'd heard as "Don't worry, Little Sister.", before delicately taking the heavy chains in powered grip and effortlessly removing them as if they'd been made of smoke.

The Corpsmen tended to the battered civilians; one quickly passing from one to another, giving each a cone of something to take the immediate *edge* off, as well as something to counter the heavy rads they'd soaked up from the Ortilery strikes so nearby, while the remaining pair of Corpsmen performed triage.

Chemically shifted into neutral, Alkithoe sat quietly, thinking about big things like the Universe and her place in it, while the Corpsmen, working quickly, gently folded her scalp back into place before sewing -up the laceration. Fairly satisfied with his quick work, the Corpsmen continued on to another; there apparently being no end to the number of civilians in need on Aretius.

Several weeks later, following a series of divinations and readings; conversations with friends, family, and the local Priestess, as well as meditating on the subject; Little Sister Alkithoe had eventually come to the conclusion that The Goddess wanted her to join Aretius' saviors, the *Imperial Marines*.

The day following this revelation, 14 year old Brigette Maelcum, wrapped in her chocolate-brown burqa and carrying all of her worldly possessions in an old IN Medical bag (including a teddy bear which simply *refused* to stay put), as well as letters of reference from her Mother, the Stead's Priestess, and her

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Up Close and Personal

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‘Crash-Bang’ Instructors (two of whom were themselves former Marines), walked into the Marine Recruiters office in New Philly, and, trusting to the watchful eye of The Goddess, signed the next dozen years of her life over to the Marines.

Having grown up with a sometime bewildering number of different rituals, both big and small, associated with everyday life, Brigitte took the Marine Corps’ penchant for order and repetitive, often seemingly-unimportant or even *pointless* actions in stride; seeing all as simply being rituals demanded of the cult of “The Emperor’s Beloved Corps” (a term Brigitte often heard being invoked by the Sergeant-Instructors).

On being assigned to IN Corvette *Tezcatlipoca* (The Smoking Mirror), Maelcum was surprised to find herself picked by the Marine Force Commander, Lieutenant Meyer, to fill the position left vacant by the recent death of an Orderly; killed during their last boarding action.

When not otherwise involved in the usual Anti-piracy operations or Merchant Escort duty, Brigitte’s day usually consisted of silently waiting at the skipper’s elbow; whether in the mess, during staff meetings, or in the skipper’s office itself; ready to dispense ice water, drinks (including the Lt’s favorite, the ‘Green Fairy’, *Absinthe*), a lit cigar, a small bowl of the skipper’s favorite fruit compote, or even the occasional ‘Everfresh’ sandwich (having already consulted with her Tarot deck earlier to help divine the skipper’s favorites from among the unmarked packages), at a moment’s notice.

Not having been aboard *Tezcatlipoca* very long, the skipper’s quiet new Orderly was soon propelled to uncomfortable notoriety among her comrades after having managed to successfully ambush and ‘kill’ Ship’s Sergeant Piper and his team representing the OpFor, an unheard of *three* consecutive times during tactical training exercises.

The day following the momentous *killings*, Brigitte reported for duty as usual, to find the skipper wearing an almost irrepressible grin, and Ship’s

Sgt Piper exuding a remoteness even *more* pronounced than usual.

At day’s end, as Brigitte gathered the paraphernalia to administer the customary shots of Absinthe to the skipper and Piper, Lieutenant Meyer took the ancient, Moroccan glass decanter from the young Marine, and with an “Allow me, Marine”, poured three tiny glasses of the ‘Green Fairy’. When they each held one of the small, ornate glasses, the skipper offered a toast to the Corps, then congratulated Brigitte with a simple “Well done, Marine!”

Finishing his drink, Piper took a *long* look at Brigitte over his prominent salt-n-pepper cookie-duster; sizing her up before asking “Marine, am I to understand that you are, *in fact*, only 15 years old?” Brigitte replied she *was* still only 15, but would be *15-and-a-half* in four days; punctuated by a nervous smile. At this, the skipper doubled over with laughter, while Ship’s Sergeant Piper, showing the slightest of smiles himself, gave Brigitte a firm handshake.

A few weeks later, Marine Maelcum was surprised to find she’d been promoted to Corporal.

Several years of Marine routine followed, with Maelcum receiving a number of citations for bravery and exemplary service; including more than a few wound badges, awarded for service in an assortment of Anti-piracy actions (both in Space and Planet-side); rising first to the rank of Sergeant, then to Gunnery Sergeant over time.

Then came ‘Operation Rat Catcher’; a mission to both rescue Imperial Citizens (including one *very* unlucky Imperial Nephew who’d been on the wrong Liner at the wrong time) being held prisoner at a Deep Space, Pirate-operated fuel and supply depot, as well as the destruction of said station.

As ININT planners had learned from their sources (several captured Pirates intent on being helpful to avoid execution), that the station was essentially a large, fusion-hollowed asteroid; the surface covered with dozens of pressure domes and habitat modules, as well as a bewildering variety of Ship’s hulls that had been either simply crashed

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Up Close and Personal

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there, or cut-down and converted to permanent habitats; all being securely anchored to the rock. More layers, consisting of assorted modules, connecting access-ways, and ship's hulls (some still functional), jutted outward; essentially 'spokes' serving as attachment and access points for even *more* modules and hulls, as well as visiting Corsairs, or recently stolen or hijacked Starships; the whole amalgam vaguely resembling a very large, very odd-looking bunch of grapes.

Following several long weeks of slow, deliberate maneuvering on exiting Jumpspace, the heavy hitters of the IN Squadron waited; powered down, big guns silent, hulls blackened, and at the proper IN doctrine-specified range to avoid long-range detection; while their smaller counterparts; including the *Tezcatlipoca* among them, scouted the approaches to the Objective; watching for signs of opposition, and relaying sensor data back to the Squadron's Command Element.

A few days later, Brigitte sat in the darkened compartment of *Tezcatlipoca's* number 2 Away Boat, *Little Eneri*; sipping a cold Earth Cola and picking at the bowl of Poutine she'd been sharing with the Port door gunner, Sgt Kwon; watching the assault team preparing in the weird blue-green glow of several chemical lights, while the Boat slid along, powered down, hull blackened, toward its objective; *Eneri's* EW suite aping the electronic signature of one of the many large, none-too-bright Robotic Mosquitoes that flitted from one icy-body to another in the station's vicinity; draining away raw hydrogen to carry back to the station's purification equipment.

The heavily-stealthed *Eneri*; one of several such craft on similar approaches to the station; stopped a short distance from its objective and opened its hatches; the armored and sealed troopers kicking off from the side of the hull to propel themselves toward the station's surface, while door gunners waited, ready to provide cover-fire.

Once all teams were in place, they waited patiently for 0300 Hours Local Station Time; checking

over their gear or weaponry one last time, or keying auto-injectors to provide performance enhancing stimulants (or in some cases, inappropriate use of the suit's extensive selection of various pain killers) in these last few minutes before the fireworks started.

At 0300, some judicious use of heavy plasma cutters ensued, and the teams (made up of both Marines in Battle Dress, and Special Branch Operators in Combat Armor) were inside; entering the station a few seconds after 0300, to the sound of the Hull Breach claxon blaring, and facing an opposition of (for the *most* part) bleary-eyed and hastily armed Pirates.

Lieutenant Meyer's Platoon, in support of a team from Special Branch Team Six, worked their way toward the station's heart, to the ININT-assured point where the prisoners were supposed to be located; meeting only sparse resistance along the way. When they'd finally passed through the last of the outer structures, and entered the asteroid-proper, things changed.

The Platoon's forward element (including a pair of Special Branch Operators), on entering a large, fusion-carved chamber, was investigating both the chamber itself, and a few small cave-mouths just off the main path, when they were suddenly taken under point-blank heavy laser, gauss and GL fire, and rushed by approximately 20 Pirates wearing Battle Dress; attacking from inside the caves and from other concealed positions; the scouts being struck down almost instantly by the Pirates' deadly fire.

Having been ordered to take up position within 100m of the scouting party, G/Sgt. Maelcum and her squad advanced; standing guard while the scouts searched. Responding to the scouts' sudden calls for help, the Marine squad deployed to engage the enemy; concentrating their heavy laser, gauss, and LAG fire into the outlaws at Maelcum's direction, with heavy effect; destroying 7 of the Pirates' powered suits outright; and routing several more. Aggressively charging the enemy under heavy fire, G/Sgt. Maelcum and her squad quickly closed to hand-to-hand range with the remaining Battle Dress-

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Up Close and Personal

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equipped Pirates.

When her laser rifle malfunctioned (after firing into an attacker's faceplate), Brigette closed in with the rifle, using its Super-dense stock as a club on the head of the nearest Pirate; killing 4 more outlaws in this manner before finally shattering the make-shift bludgeon.

Still facing sporadic sniper and GL fire, G/Sgt. Maelcum and the squad's Corpsman, Pharmacist's Mate Jenkins, unhesitatingly exposed themselves as they worked on the stricken scouts; saving the lives of 3 who might otherwise have succumbed to their wounds; while the remaining squad-members attempted counter-sniper fire from whatever cover they could manage (some using the bulk of an armored corpse as a shield).

When troops from 2nd squad arrived on the scene, Brigette, drawing her heavy gauss SMG, started in pursuit of the fleeing outlaws. Entering a corridor which appeared to empty into a second large chamber, G/Sgt. Maelcum and her squad, with a team from 2nd squad in tow, were suddenly receiving intense plasma fire from a rapid-pulse high energy gun at the chamber's entrance; immediately lighting up a pair of the Marine powered suits. While 2nd squad's fire team laid down heavy VRF gauss fire, the remaining squad members, low-crawling and using the *sparse* cover available, slowly worked their way toward the gun emplacement.

Even prone, and gathered behind the protection from direct fire a slight rise in the ground provided, the plasma gun was *still* wreaking havoc with the advancing squad; quickly reducing G/Sgt. Maelcum's 9 remaining troopers to only 4 effectives.

From a standing position, fully exposed to view, Brigette opened fire at once, killing one of the heavy-suited Pirate gunners. Failing to silence the gun, however, she rushed toward the emplacement; a point-blank plasma blast knocking her down within 3m of the gun; her powered suit wrecked, shoulder shattered, and her right arm cooked-through and nearly severed. Brigette continued to fire into the

emplacement from the ground, killing 2 more of the enemy and dispersing the rest of the crew.

Having ordered Corpsman Jenkins (who applied a spray sealant to her wounds) to help her to her feet, she directed the VRF team and her remaining troopers to man the heavy plasma cannon; and, turning it to face *inward*, directed accurate, high energy fire onto enemy positions within the 2nd chamber; foregoing any further medical treatment until finally relieved by Ship's Sergeant Piper.

Brigette spent the remainder of Rat Catcher (and some time beyond) in the infirmary aboard *Tezcatlipoca*, convalescing after her surgery, and getting used to her new right arm; a beautifully *alien* thing, Brigette had decided; with its smooth, brushed-pewter finish. She certainly was unable to *tell* that one of her lungs and her spleen had been replaced by bionic analogs, but that's what the Navy surgeon had insisted.

Brigette, who'd only heard sometimes vague, disjointed and incomplete bits from the other patients in the infirmary, was happy to finally return to duty; figuring she'd get the straight skinny on Rat Catcher from the Lieutenant.

On reporting for duty that afternoon, Brigette found both the skipper and Ship's Sgt Piper wearing huge smiles. It being lunch time, Brigette would ordinarily go to the Mess and bring lunch back; but in a surprising move, Piper decided that *he'd* go to the Mess instead, since Maelcum, having just returned, needed *light* duty.

Lieutenant Meyer looked over and motioned for Brigette to sit as she went over and picked the silver tray with the Moroccan glass decanter and small glasses, from the top of the filing cabinet and carried it back to her desk; pouring three tiny glasses of the 'Green Fairy' before sitting down again.

Piper returned a few minutes later, whistling the Corps' Hymn, and carrying a tray; asking "Who wants *TACOS*?" as he set it down on the corner of his desk.

At a nod from the skipper, they each picked up one of the small, ornate glasses. The skipper offered

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the usual toast to the Corps, then congratulated Brigitte with “Well done, Gunnery Sergeant Maelcum—Brigette. Well done!”.

Speaking around an overly-large bite of a taco (her *favorite!*), Brigitte thanked them; attributing her actions during Rat Catcher to what *anyone* would’ve done in the situation. A little later, Brigitte let on that she’d been out of the loop since the sedatives had first kicked in on the Dust Off ride back to *Tezcatlipoca*, and was wondering if the skipper could tell her what happened.

Washing her own overly-large mouthful of taco down with a sip of Absinthe, the skipper leaned forward over her desk, and told Brigitte that the Pirates’ had been a particularly tough nut to crack, cornered in their Lair as they were; especially so when it was later learned that their ironmongery included most of the full stock of 80+ suits of Battle Dress, as well as whatever *else* had been aboard IN Corvette *Angkor Watt* at the time of its disappearance.

The prisoners had been located, and *most* made it out; Special Branch Operators and Marine marksmen dealing with the Pirate guardsmen before the outlaws had executed more than a *handful* of captives; Ship’s Sgt. Piper making a difficult shot with the old ‘Greene Rifle’ which put the brakes on the Pirate that’d been holding a razor to the squirming Imperial Nephew’s throat.

The freed prisoners, boarding a pair of docked IN Corvettes under *heavy* security (on the one hand to provide protection for scared Citizens, and on the *other*, to be prepared in the event Pirates had joined the ranks of the Citizenry in hopes of later escaping) were whisked away from the station toward the relative safety and protection offered by the larger ships of the Squadron.

One of these Corvettes, the *Karlstad*, pulled away only to be hit amidships by a station-launched Pirate *thunderball*; the stolen nuke instantly vaporizing *most* of *Karlstad*; the blast also wrecking many of the station’s outer components, and shaking the station to its core; the massive EMP having knocked

its central computer and gravity controls offline.

The Squadron’s heavy hitters, which had been slowly advancing on the station since the Away Boats had departed with their assault teams, went into action; flooding the Pirates’ frequencies with the standard IN Warning on a continuous loop—“Cease hostilities and Disarm. Stand down and remain where you are. Comply or be destroyed!”; the crews of the big guns and missiles coolly waiting for orders to convert any non-Navy ships into tumbling slag, or listening for any calls for ‘Friends in High Places’ to deliver Ortilery support to Marines or Spec Ops Operators in a tight spot.

At some point, several dozen Corsairs had apparently decided to break-out; some individually, some in groups of various sizes; unaware that IN tacticians had *already* designated them as the fish in the well-known Fish in a Barrel scenario; and not able to *see* the barrel they were in, the Pirates tried *anyway*; with pretty obvious results.

A few of the Corsairs, hoping to play their Aces, fired off their share of the *Angkor Watt*’s stolen thunderballs while attempting to maneuver away; the atomics effective, but not *terribly* so against the larger Battleships of the Squadron.

By the end of the Local Day, the few surviving Pirates had been rounded up and transported off-station to an IN ship’s brig. The remaining ordnance or other gear of interest from the *Angkor Watt* or other sources had been cataloged and stored aboard IN transport. All Imperial assets, both living and dead, had been returned to their ships.

A few days later, following some fairly extensive repair work, the IN Squadron turned about; traveling (some still *limping*) back toward their entry coordinates. At the edge of their sensor range, the Squadron’s three largest Battleships, the *Hammer and Anvil*, *Cleon I* and *Tecumseh* each disgorged the entire contents of their missile bays at the corpse-filled, ruined station in a multi-megaton *Coup de Gras*.

Finished with the tale, the skipper informed Maelcum the paperwork recommending Brigitte for the ‘Starburst for Extreme Heroism’ for actions dur-

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ing the assault on the Pirate station had already been sent in.

Brigette was among more than two dozen sophonts (three others being associated with Operation Rat Catcher) to be awarded the Starburst during a solemn ceremony at Capital; reverently receiving both the medal, *and* a congratulatory handshake from HRH the Emperor *himself*; a handshake and clap on the shoulder coming from IN CNO, Admiral Duchess Her Grace Alexandra Pham-Trask; as well as a promotion to Leading Sergeant.

With Leading Sergeant Piper *already* the highest ranking Marine NCO aboard *Tezcatlipoca* (hence the honorific Ship's Sergeant), Brigette, newly promoted to that same rank, soon found herself transferred to the IN Cruiser *Blue Mountain*; filling one of many vacancies a pair of thunderballs had created during Operation Rat Catcher.

Brigette boarded *Blue Mountain* with a pair of grav-cases; the large, gray-black, pebble-finished cubic meter model holding her gear, with the smaller containing her meager collection of personal items acquired over the years—scented candles; a half-dozen books on religion and philosophy; copies of ancient Terran pulp adventures *Starship Troopers* and *Treasure Island*; her well-worn Ryder Tarot deck securely wrapped in a piece of silk and sitting within a small O'Reilly's Mincemeat Wondercookies tin; a framed holo-pic of *Tezcatlipoca*'s Marines arrayed behind a small placard with Meyer's Maniacs inscribed on it right above some 56 small skull-and-crossbone icons; the ancient Moroccan decanter and glass set Lieutenant Meyer had given her in appreciation; the remnants of a *very* large batch of chocolate white-raisin oatmeal cookies Ship's Sergeant Piper had baked for her *himself*; a case of her favorite Everfresh sandwich (Hard Salami, Swiss, bean sprouts, sun-dried tomatoes and hot mustard on a cheese roll—divined using her cards, and stashed away in the event the favorite sandwich aboard the *Blue Mountain* wasn't to her liking); as well as the teddy bear she'd first boosted

off of Aretius with; happy in the knowledge that she'd now have a room completely to herself on *Blue Mountain*. Stepping right into the job as 2nd Platoon's top NCO; Maelcum served as the Lieutenant's right hand; effectively running the Platoon for almost 8 years before being promoted to First Sergeant and joining Company Commander Captain Forester's staff.

Eventually, through the cycle of accident, combat casualties, transfer (both desired and the utterly mysterious), and hoary old retirement, Brigette was promoted to Sergeant Major a few years later; at that point, being the senior NCO aboard, she became *Ship's Sergeant* aboard IN Cruiser *Blue Mountain*.

Sometime later, Brigette was off-duty, sitting at her usual table in the portside Mess; playing Parcheesi, and discussing philosophy (but *not* politics, thank you) with the usual gang of off-duty cronies and subordinates (the irritating Spanachi brothers among them) and sharing the usual plate of whatever confection Mess Specialist Nguyen had brought along when he'd come off of Galley duty.

Maelcum; enjoying a mouthful of the Tiramisu, was listening to an exchange between Nguyen and Chaplain Charlie over just *how* Elvis; being a *man* by all accounts (well, more of a *Man's Man*, actually), had *somehow* managed to ascend to Godhood; when a sudden explosion rocked *Blue Mountain*; the blast wave traveling through, flexing and warping the ship's Superdense hull in a microsecond; pieces spinning off into the void as the *Mountain*; Hull Breach claxon blaring, was thrown from Jump Space back to normal space in an uncontrolled, 3 axis 'Deadman's' tumble.

A few awful seconds being slammed from deck to bulkhead, to overhead, and back again in the dark followed; smashing into falling bodies, as well as both loose and securely-rooted furniture and assorted equipment along the way, before coming to rest again when ship's emergency power flickered to life; the subdued lighting showing that the port bulkhead was *now* apparently being recognized as the deck. Looking around at the chaos of broken furniture and

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ruined and dead bodies, Brigitte was relieved to find that, aside from the *drubbing* she'd just taken, her worst injury seemed to be a broken ankle; and, if her double-vision was any indication; a *concussion* as well; though feeling her aching jaw and subsequently spitting-out 3 teeth probably bothered her the *most*.

The Ship's (or maybe just the part occupied by Brigitte) gravity suddenly shifted again; *back* to the deck-proper; slamming everyone from the port bulkhead to the floor.

Maelcum, wincing, got to her feet; the starfield outside the viewport still spinning; indicating the *Mountain*, with its emergency power providing gravity and inertial compensation for the *moment*, was unable to alter or control its course.

With Engineering only a few compartments abaft of the Mess, Brigitte; leaving behind enough of the less-injured crew to render first aid to the others; ordered volunteers to accompany her.

Leaving the Mess, they found that the short path down the accessway to Engineering was blocked; an iris valve squeezed tight automatically by the computer; the thing's entire surface and surrounding wall now uncomfortably warm to the touch.

Popping an access panel besides the valve, Maelcum began working the heavy manual locking mechanism (ordinarily requiring heavy equipment to do so) with her powered arm. The lock opened, allowing Brigitte to grab the edge of one of the valve plates, and, bracing her legs against the valve's outer frame for leverage; Brigitte, her right side slowly burning from contact with the hot metal for the duration; eventually pulled the iris wide enough to use as an entryway.

With clouds of scalding steam pouring from a burst line, Brigitte wedged herself in the doorway; holding the iris back from repeated computer-ordered-directions to close again for a good five minutes; yelling to the Engineering crew inside to escape through the doorway she was holding, which three of them did; while two of her shipmates who had rushed into Engineering, drove more crew out, drag-

ging some, and carrying others to the safer area of the Mess, where there was air to be breathed instead of steam.

Using her powered arm, Brigitte eventually managed to bend one of the valve's plates badly enough that the thing remained half-opened. Ship's Sergeant Maelcum, accompanied this time by more of the less-injured from the Mess, entered the Engineering compartment several more times; some locating and rescuing injured shipmates, while others assisted the remaining gang of badly burned and irradiated Engineers with repairs.

During the entire time, Ship's Sgt Maelcum remained cool and collected, offering encouragement, and showing an abundance of nerve under the most trying circumstances.

Brigitte found she'd been recommended for the SEH by Commander Tanaka, *Blue Mountain's* Master; as one of seven sophonts on *Blue Mountain's* crew to be awarded the Starburst (four posthumously) during another solemn ceremony at Capital.

Brigitte stood once again before HRH the Emperor; reverently receiving this 2nd medal and the Emperor's congratulatory handshake. IN CNO, Admiral Duchess Her Grace Alexandra Pham-Trask, once more offering her firm handshake as well.

At the reception following, Brigitte, who was leaning forward at an uncomfortable angle which allowed the consumption of her favorite little drunken weenies without getting the thick and volatile sauce in which they'd been simmering, *all* over the front of her seldom-worn Dress uniform; was accosted by yet one more person wanting to talk the *minute* she'd started working on a mouthful of food.

Turning towards the inconvenience, Sgt. Major Maelcum was stunned to find herself facing the somewhat flushed, and smelling of 100CR-a-shot Double Malt Whiskey and Jasmine, *Empress Iolante*, who was bent forward slightly, palms resting on knees and taking a few deep breaths, trying to regain her composure after executing a *very* spirited (and quite dangerous looking!) Highland Fling with a trio of her kilt-clad Household Troops (who, unlike The

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Emperor's guard, wore as little as possible).

Brigette snapped to attention; dropping her cover and splashing the sauce she'd been trying to *avoid*, all across the front of her Dress uniform in the rush to salute HRH The Empress.

Iolanthe, finally getting her breath back, and straightening her hair somewhat, simply gave that lopsided, soothing *Mona Lisa* smile of hers, and asked Brigette to come along. Nervously walking along beside the tipsy Empress; a squad of the Household jogging along beside, Brigette didn't have a *clue*.

Passing through a portal cut into the tall hedge-row bordering the reception area, and going down a several wide, ancient steps, they came to a wide lawn with a copse of young, easily-seen Terran Redwoods at the far end. A large Command Sled could be seen sitting in the shade the trees provided; a squad of 'The Emperor's Own' in Battle Dress forming a perimeter around the heavily-armored grav vehicle. As the Empress' party approached, Brigette noticed the sled's turret tracking them.

Following HRH The Empress Iolanthe up the rear entry hatch, Brigette was surprised at the *space* of the thing; not having had to duck down to avoid banging her head on the APC's low overhead. The interior was amazingly appointed; Brigette absently reminding herself that she wanted to get one for herself, while being directed to have a seat.

As Brigette sat, awaiting *whatever*; she watched as a fairly non-descript type in an IN Dress uniform lacking insignia or identification of any kind, leaned over and whispered something in The Emperor's ear; HRH Emperor Strephon chuckling to himself as he made a few notes on some paperwork he'd been looking over.

"Brigette Maelcum, we are pleased we could tear you away from our buffet table." Strephon said, smiling slightly, and looking at the front of Brigette's uniform. Then, looking down at the front of his own tunic, which was similarly stained, he continued "Those little devils can be *most* tricky, can they not,

Sergeant Major?"

At this, The Empress Iolanthe burst into her very-loud, *snorting* mule-bray of a laugh. Strephon sat, silent, allowing The Empress to wind-down a bit before he continued.

"A decade ago, while reading through dispatches, I ran across a Marine Lieutenant's recommendation that a trooper in her Platoon be awarded the Starburst for Extreme Heroism for the then-Gunnery Sergeant's actions during an operation to help free our beloved Imperium from the scourge of Piracy. On reading through the account a second time, I agreed with this Lt. Meyer's recommendation *completely*, and looked forward to meeting this selfless and dedicated young Marine, and having the honor of shaking her hand in thanks. Which you'll remember, I *did* at our first meeting."

"Our second meeting a few hours ago during the ceremony got me to thinking...With the sheer number of sophonts living here in the Imperium (as well as our ever-growing number of Client States and Systems), for *you* to come before me a *second* time, Sergeant Major, I believe *Blind Fate* (or maybe *not* so blind, eh?) is *clearly* standing the laws of probability on their heads! A *remarkable* turn of events, to be sure..."

Strephon gave an almost imperceptible nod, and the gentleman with the eminently-forgettable face wearing the IN Dress uniform stepped forward from his place at HRH's elbow; refilling HRH's glass; then offering a full glass of the same to Brigette.

"Which leads us to *this*, our *third* meeting, Sergeant Major. The remarkable young Marine I first met is now not so young, maybe, but remains no less remarkable. The Empress Iolanthe and I were discussing just this with Admiral Duchess Her Grace Alexandra Pham-Trask at the buffet earlier, after a cursory checking of your service record, and *We* have decided that your long years of heroic and selfless service deserve something more from a grateful Imperium than that *pittance* of a pension you'll be receiving on retirement next year."

A few minutes later, HRH The Emperor Stre-

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phon stood, and ordering Brigitte to kneel before him, drew his blade; nonchalantly explaining to her that on completion of this simple and *very* ancient ritual, she'll have received a Patent of Nobility; making her a Knight in the 'Order of the Emperor's Guard', and giving her the privilege to use the honor-title of Imperial Dame. (While the title was more honorary than anything else, it *had* come with both a small stipend, and a TAS membership).

The ceremony completed, HRH The Emperor Strephon, instructed his newest Knight to rise, and welcomed her to the Order. Then, leaning conspiratorially-close to her, softly said "No my dear, I *doubt* you'd be able to afford *this* particular model.", as he looked about the interior of the heavy APC, smiling.

On retiring from the Marines, former Sergeant Major Maelcum took some time out to just *travel*. Taking full advantage of her new TAS membership, Brigitte traveled to, and spent a year back on Aretias; even traveling all the way to 'Old Earth', and staying there for a few years before again moving on.

Sitting there in the TAS Lounge in Tethis Highport, waiting on a ship—the *Fisher King* (or was it *Kingfisher*?) and eating an Everfresh sandwich (the Philly Cheesesteak, favorite of Marines aboard IN Cruiser *Heracles*, as it happened); her attention split between a Fozzball game at a table a few meters away, and half-watching a transmission of ancient, Atomic Era 2D Terran Epic, *Full Metal Jacket* on the Imperial Forces History and News channel (IFHN) on the Tri-V (She'd seen the thing probably *twenty* times, over the years, but that demonic little Sergeant *still* never failed to make her laugh); Brigitte wondered what *else* she could do. She *supposed* it would be possible to just travel *forever*; one ticket to the next—she *was* wealthy enough to become a professional 'Traveller', afterall. But she had already lived (and fought) aboard various ships for the past 25 years, and was beginning to feel that enough was enough! She needed to leave ships behind (for a while at least) and put down some roots!.

Brigitte blew-off the Last Call for boarding the *Fisher King*, and instead decided to do a little walking to see what Tethis Highport was all about.

While her resumé could very *easily* have gotten her a position with the local Starport Authority, Brigitte wanted to steer well away from a career spent handling cargo, policing drunks, and having to take or write reports.

Brigitte decided that she'd probably do all right for herself running one of her favorite joints growing up; a Gea's Sandwiches franchise. During a meeting with a functionary from the sandwich chain's Corporate Masters, LeHatte Foods and Plastics (owned in turn by Stoker Laumb Ironmongery), the haughty middleman was unimpressed with Brigitte's business plan, and Brigitte was having a hard time with both the high cost involved in acquiring the franchise, as well as the degree of *control* LeHatte insisted on having in entirely too many aspects of *her* shop.

At an impasse, Brigitte and the factor went their separate ways.

Meditating on the problem for some time, Brigitte decided the Next Right Thing for her to do was open her *very own* sandwich shop.

Brigitte's restaurant, *The Ship's Sergeant Sandwiches & Deli* is located in a squat cylinder of a building; a distinctive placard hanging outside the front door above the street, and featuring an image a trooper in white Battle Dress, standing with his suit's helmet under one arm. The trooper's head remains either invisible or missing entirely; lending something of an ethereal air to the picture; a landing boat, its mass silhouetted in black behind the trooper, is in mid-flight—suspended halfway between earth and the sign's large, glowing, crescent moon.

The interior walls are painted a vague blue-gray above the chair rail, and are mostly covered with a wide assortment of different images (both 2D and 3D), models, dioramas, a few dartboards, a chalkboard, and Imperial Marine (as well as some IN) memorabilia, including several of Brigitte's War Trophies (functional, but empty); while below, the

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walls are painted the same startling white as the chair rail, door jambs and moulding. The furniture consists of sturdy, white pine, so heavily-varnished as to be smooth as glass. Light fixtures, door and drawer handles, tankards, flatware and plates, vent covers, the restroom fixtures and all of the kitchen equipment have brushed pewter finishes.

A trio of Tri-V tanks are mounted on different walls; each set by Brigitte to a specific channel; and only *rarely* ever being switched; the first is set to entertainment powerhouse, Imperium Tonight (IT), the 3I's window to all things entertainments, and the producers of the immensely popular Vanguard Reaches; the 2nd is set to the Imperial Forces History and News channel (IFHN); and the 3rd is set to the The Imperial Explorer Network (IEN).

The restaurant does a brisk business, and is a popular eating and meeting establishment with both former and currently-serving IN and Marine personnel, as well as the plain Citizenry. The menu is made up of *around* 50 different sandwiches (the specific number at any given time depending on availability of ingredients), as well as a fair variety of side items. Every sandwich is served with a small bowl of pickled hot peppers, a 'foot long' extruded dill pickle, and a handful of Old Cleon's olives. Use of the menu is encouraged, but the kitchen can pretty easily whip up any sandwich not on the menu.

Non-alcoholic drinks (and refills, naturally) are *always* free with the purchase of a side item or sandwich. The only alcoholic drink served there is a stout little Ale, which Brigitte calls Old Rat Catcher. It is micro-brewed on the premises and sells pretty fast. However, when a batch is gone, it is *gone*, and alcohol is unavailable until the next batch matures; this production sometimes running like clockwork, and sometimes not.

A wide selection of ship and unit patches (and magnets) are kept behind the counter; as well as selected history books (including several copies of the massive *Atomic Era Goddess: Betty Page, Pin-Up Queen of Terra*) and several different ship models

(the 1/72 scale 'Imperial Marine Landing Boat' being by *far* their best seller). Statues of The Goddess, encompassing several different styles, materials and Pantheons, as well as a mind-numbingly wide selection of incense and different crystals, are also available.

Over the last 6 years, the Ship's Sergeant has done very well. So well, in fact, that 3 years ago, Brigitte opened 2 more restaurants dirtside.

Dame Brigitte "Alkithoe" Maelcum

Former highly-decorated Imperial Marine Sergeant Major

Currently owner of "Ship's Sergeant's Sandwiches"

Homeworld Aretias, but currently living and working at Tethis Highport.

UPP D9LECB* Age 48

DET 24

EXP 27

Lifeforce 42

Hits 6/9

AF 4 (on torso, if using hit locations)

* Her natural STR was 12 (C). The bionic limb provides a STR14 (E), and the rules I was using had you average the values if using one of each; hence 13 (D). Two of Brigitte's internal organs have been replaced by bionic analogs; providing a hearty +10 END; giving a total of END L(20). It also toughened her up with the equivalent of AF 4.

Skills: Combat Rifleman-4, Tactics-4, Brawling-3, Battle Dress -2, Leader-2, Philosophy-2, Survival-2, Zero-G Environ-2, Admin-1, Jump-1, Large Blade-1, Liason-1, Medical-1, Steward-1, Cargo Handling-0, Computer-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Handgun-0.

At a little shy of 1.5m tall, Brigitte is an example of a *very* short human female. She is compact and muscular, with large, *almost-black*, deep brown eyes (the epicanthic folds pointing toward likely Asian descent at some point). Her shock of long, coarse red hair is usually kept in a pair of long, very thick, copper-wire-wrapped pigtails or braids; or sometimes in tight coils; one worn on each side of her head. Should her hair ever be released from its confines for any amount of time, it quickly becomes a wavy, tangled explosion of comb and brush-wrecking unmanageability. Brigitte's skin is light brown, with a scat-

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tering of freckles across her shoulders, arm, nose, and cheeks. When exposed to actual direct sunlight for an extended period, however, her skin will pretty quickly darken; tanning (*not* burning) to a very deep, slightly-reddish mahogany. People familiar with Brigette in only one environment are usually *quite* surprised to see her in the other.

Growing up in the Stead, tattooing was very common, with almost *everyone* having at least a few. Brigette is no exception; having a spidery, baroque design encircling her neck; “Love” in Greek letters across the back of her left hand; several bands of varying thickness, style and complexity encircling her left tricep; a small pentacle at the base of her spine, and ‘Aretius Forever!’ on her left shoulder.

Brigette’s right arm *had* been tattooed in a manner mirroring the left; but with ‘Death’ in Greek letters, with a lightning bolt beneath, across the back of her right hand; and the right shoulder having ‘Girl Power’ on it.

Soon after getting her new arm, Brigette had one of *Tezcatlipoca*’s Maintenance crew; a Machinist’s Mate who was *also* a fair hand at doing tattoos; inscribed the ‘missing tattoos’ right back where they ‘belonged’.

Brigette is both pleasant and patient; with a *very* high boiling point. She loves good conversation, good food, and is a good listener. She feels that everyone’s opinions have merit, and *all* are worth listening to (unless of course they *obviously* don’t know what they’re talking about).

As the proprietor of a popular gathering and eating spot; Brigette is privy, either through direct conversation, things overheard in passing, or even rumor, to a *great* deal of information; both military and mundane; often important, and other times *not* so. If befriended, she will make a knowledgeable, and very well-informed (though *certainly* not exhaustive) contact into the world of things Military. Note that, while the clientele of her establishment are, for the most part, honest. Should she be made aware of an *obvious* extra-legal scheme, or if someone is *foolish*

or crazy enough to offer her a part in one they’re planning, Brigette will not hesitate to bring ININT or other agencies into the matter.

Growing up as a Steadchild, Brigette is in the habit of calling females younger than herself ‘Little Sister’, and those equal in age, or older than herself simply ‘Sister’; such titles being used *instead* of, or as an honorific *before* the person’s first name; males being addressed normally.

Brigette will usually be found wearing a long-sleeved shirt, or a roomy sweater; and *either* a pair of heavy-duty denim pants with bloused legs tucked down into a battered pair of knee-high leather boots, *or* an ankle-length skirt with combat boots beneath.

When she gets cold (and she *always* seems to be cold these days; halfway convinced she’s picked up ‘The Chill’ from too many years spent in space; the irony of her *still* being in space having not escaped her), she’ll wear her old chameleon-surfaced, Marine-issue field jacket, or one of those heavy, padded, multi-pocketed and hooded, chocolate-brown ballistic body suits popular with the ISS.

She carries a pair of heavy Electro-knucks; one in each pants or jacket pocket. A large-framed, snub barreled AutoMag pistol with built-in targeting-laser is carried in a shoulder-rig. Worn at her side is a heavy, Superdense Cutlass; the entire thing—guard, blade, etc, being a product of Nadjian artisans and craftsmen.

In addition to several different Registered War Trophies (as well as a few *unregistered* ones), Brigette owns a folding-stock Gauss Rifle with built-in targeting-laser which is kept on a shelf under the counter, sitting on a large folded bar towel, and blocked from view by another bar towel lying atop it; 3 extended magazines (86 rounds each) of gauss ammunition, as well as 4 magazines of 15mm ammunition for the pistol, kept in a wicker basket beside it.

Brigette speaks Anglic and Greek, as well as just *enough* Polish to be mistaken as a tourist.

While Brigette *is* a combat-hardened veteran, she is now at a stage in her life, she insists, where she shouldn’t *have* to deal with people by sticking the

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business-end of a rifle in their faces.

She'll try to resolve any problems efficiently and diplomatically; though if the situation is particularly serious and it looks as if sophonts will be hurt, a

quick, solid chop across the bridge of any miscreant's nose with her sleek alloy arm ought to settle their hash *right quick*. If trouble makers are packing anything larger or more advanced than a knife or improvised cudgel, they'll instead be dropped at range as quickly and efficiently as possible.

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; 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:

What is your favorite type of “one-off” adventure? Why?

What is your favorite type of campaign adventure? Why?

Previous questions:

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?

“Leitz” answers: 2d6 is *Traveller*. More than 2d6 is *Champions*. In light of the wide range *Traveller* covers I like story development. A good setting really helps provide depth for the story. Rules keep us players from running rampant, but should not cripple a good story.

“kafka” answers: *Traveller* is only limited by my own imagination; therefore, lines are relatively meaningless. However, that said, I don't believe in

an ‘anything goes’ approach. *Traveller* must be grounded in science, as opposed to superstition or the supernatural. Notwithstanding, our understanding of the physics, biology, chemistry of today and as we can extrapolate trends into the future where feasible paradigms can be broken in favour of (re)new(ed) understanding of how the universe works must be the baseline. Therefore, there is no Magic In My Traveller Universe but there are phenomena that might be mistaken for magic.

I am also strongly against player stupidity – which is a fine line between heroics and folly. So, if an action ventures too far into silliness, players will be punished. I stick to the rules, save where the rules interfere with good play. For instance, I don't believe it is necessary to role play the week in Jump Space unless something significant is planned. Hence, travel may seem instantaneous, when in fact, it is still being clocked.

Setting is the most important thing. For rules can be improvised and created but capturing a different mood or getting me to think differently than stereotypical archetypes is the key. I absolutely love the Original Traveller Universe (OTU) as the 11,000 worlds of the Imperium provide ample sandbox... and should I run out there is lots of adjacent real estate in the Zhodani Core Expeditions, Dark Nebula, Stargates, Pocket Universes, etc. that I am never likely to find myself limited not to fail to remember that the OTU has over 700,000 years of history to play around in.

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Essay Question

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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?

“Leitz” answers: When the DM sets up a game I try to learn about the universe as they draw it. There are often interesting points or conflicts that get my attention, and I will take some character concepts and form them around aspects of that particular game. In the campaign I want my characters goals to be advanced and their story to be made enjoyable. The campaign is just a backdrop.

“kafka” answers: Multifaceted campaigns, I think work the best for running. A bit of everything – Trade & Profit, with Merc Ticket leading to an Exploration adventure. Thus far, I have been severely disappointed by SFRPGs in being able to deliver a decent adventure/campaign and *Traveller* in particular. I can take ideas from all from them all.

As I grew up with *Dragonlance* and similar modules in which campaigns were not entirely sandbox but also not entirely railroaded just gently guided. To date, I have found no SFRPG that does this adequately. I am a big fan of the purpose of those TSR products even as I would manipulate them to my heart’s content.

If were to be a player, I think, exploration is cam-

paigned style that best suits my nature – with a bit of room for gunplay. For me, *Star Trek* is both the best and worst example of what I like – but having said that I do not think *Traveller* should be reduced down to that one element. Where I have found an adventure that comes close to my ideal (that was not homebrew or modified) – was the old DGP/GDW adventure – Lords of Thunder.

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?

“Leitz” answers: A good adventure is one where the GM has fun playing out their ideas and the players get to develop their character story more.

Previous questions, not yet answered:

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?

Other questions previously appearing in this column can be found on Freelance Traveller’s website, at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/columns/eq/>.

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.

Fifth Imperium

Shannon Appelcline



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 July 2010.

#11 - My Rules Part Two: Expanded Ship Combat 1.0

The *Traveller Core Rulebook* has an entirely passable space combat system, which can be found on pages 146-151. It offers up a simulation of combat that is fairly simple, but offers up enough details to make space combat interesting.

It also briefly touches upon the biggest problem

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in starship combat: how you can keep all of the players involved. This is partially solved by a set of “crew positions” which are listed on page 146. You can have your players assign their PCs to positions for command, gunnery, and engineering.

However, I thought it had a few issues, namely:

- It wasn't very cleanly laid out and thus didn't make it abundantly obvious what each position does.
- It didn't have enough positions for my own gaming group, which at its height was regularly hitting 8 players (or at least it didn't on a small ship with only a couple of weapons).
- It had some “useless” positions like “marine” and “passenger” who couldn't do anything fun during combat.
- It had some actions like “sensor lock” and “electronic warfare” without associated positions.
- It didn't clearly lay out tactical decisions which each position could make.

To solve these problems I wrote up my own system, which to be clear is just an expansion of the excellent groundwork that Mongoose already laid out. I've included it here. I list it as version 1.0 because I've only used it once, and I think it could still be polished up to make an even better standalone “mini-game”.

Expanded Ship Combat: New Rules

Though these rules largely cleave to Mongoose's, there are a few variations:

Order of Initiative: Rather than maintaining one initiative per ship, each player gets to take their action at a specified time. Here's the general order:

1. Captain Initiative
2. Pilot Initiative
3. Other Initiatives

During the Captain Initiative, the Captain of each

ship takes actions that will affect the whole ship. Then, the Pilot does the same. These can be done in initiative order among the Captains, then among the Pilots.

You may want to shortcut major elements of this system for NPC/Enemy ships, since the main point is to get all the players involved. Some notes on that follow at the end. Otherwise, their initiatives should be interspersed among the players, but the players shouldn't get to hear the specifics of Captain and Pilot actions, just see the effects of the various actions on themselves.

Multiple Roles: This system is intended to let each character take one and exactly one role. There are two situations when a player can take on multiple computer-facing roles (e.g., not medic or engineer), and perform an action for each of them:

With a Penalty. A player takes a -1 DM to *all* actions for each additional role he takes on.

In a Small Ship. Smaller ships may be designed to let characters take on multiple roles. Specify this in your ship specs, to account for the number of crew that *can* be on a ship.

Moving Among Locations: In a typical ship, Captain, Co-Pilot, Pilot, and Sensors are all on the Bridge. Moving among those locations can be done without penalty.

Every other location—any turrets, bays, and the M-Drive—is more distant. A character moving from one to another or to the bridge must spend an entire combat turn doing so.

Crew Hits: This system increases damage done to characters, to both increase the danger level and give the medic something to do.

Whenever a location is hit, apply 2d6 damage to the characters in *that* location. Most crew members take damage in the bridge, gunners take damage if their turret or bay is hit, and the engineer takes damage if the M-drive or Power Plant is hit if he's working on the M-drive—else he takes damage wherever he is.

This should supersede damage to a “random” crewmember but is superseded by damage to “all

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crew”, on the p.151 Crew Damage chart.

Expanded Ship Combat: The Roles

Here’s all the possible roles, along with their potential actions. Each one is intended to have one or more tactical decisions (though for gunners, that’s presumed to be “what to shoot”).

Captain: The Captain can roll *Tactics* (EDU) to provide an EFFECT bonus to the Initiative of his crew or he can roll *Leadership* (SOC) to give a Task Chain DM to a character of his choice (see p.51).

Co-Pilot: The co-pilot may Dodge an incoming attack with a *Pilot* (DEX) roll to give the attacker -2 DM. Each Dodge costs 1 Thrust which must have been allocated by the Pilot.

Engineer: An engineer may repair a system that he is at with a *Mechanic* (EDU) roll. This roll is unmodified for a first hit on the system and Difficult (-2) for a second hit on the system. Repairs cannot be accomplished on systems with three or more hits. An engineer also cannot repair hull, structure, or armor damage.

A success repairs a system by one level. It should be considered a very temporary fix; more work will be needed when the battle is done.

Alternatively, an engineer that is at the M-drive can “give ’er all ’e’s got”, goosing the engine to increase Thrust. A Difficult (-2) *Engineer* (EDU) roll gives +effect in Thrust, to a maximum addition of the ship's normal M-rating. However, the engineer must also make a Difficult (-2) *Engineer* (EDU) roll to avoid damaging the engine. A failure gives the engine a 1/2 hit that may not be repaired during combat. These half hits stack.

Engineers often have to move around a lot, as per the rules above.

Gunners: There must be one gunner per turret or bay weapon. They roll *Gunner* (DEX). Specialties like Turret, Screens, or Capital Weapons might apply.

Instead of attacking, a Gunner on a turret laser may play Point Defence (see p.149) while a Gunner on a sandcaster will always be ready to Fire Sand

(see p.149).

Medic: Medics also tend to move around a lot. They can *First Aid* (INT) one character each combat round (see p.75).

Pilot: The main role of the pilot is to determine how to allocate the Thrust of the ship, as detailed on pages 147 & 149 of the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Essentially he calculates the total Thrust (which may have been increased by an engineer) and splits it up among four uses:

1. **Closing.** Thrust spent to adjust engagement range (see p.146).
2. **Docking.** *Pilot* (DEX). 1 thrust, only once per turn.
3. **Lining Up Shot.** *Pilot* (DEX). 1 thrust, only once per gun. Gives a Task Chain DM (see p.51).
4. **Dodging.** Thrust points given to co-pilot.

Sensors: Each round a sensor specialist may either attempt a Sensor Lock by rolling *Sensors* (INT) or attempt Electronic Warfare by making a *Sensors* (EDU) roll.

A Sensor Lock works exactly as stated in the rules (p.150), but must be rerolled every round.

An Electronic Warfare roll may be used to jam smart missiles (p. 150) or it may be used to give a specific ship a -1 DM for all attacks. Like a Sensors Lock, this must be rerolled each turn.

Modeling the Enemy

You probably don't want to expend all this effort on the enemy, as the goal here is to make sure the *players* get fun screen time.

To keep your enemy ships balanced:

- Assign a two-part DM to each ship, to account for gun bonuses and other bonuses, like this +2/+1. These points should represent average for Captain assists, Pilot assists, and Sensors assists. At the start of each round,

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divide the first number among guns and the second number among guns, initiative, and engineering. If you prefer, assign these bonuses once at the start of a battle and keep them there, for more simplicity.

- Optionally assign a Engineer DM of +0 or better to each ship. Every other round, try to repair a system on the ship if there is system damage.
- Have each gun fire individually, with all guns on the same ship firing at the same initiative

number. Use the best gunner's DEX for the initiative at the start of the fight.

Conclusion

That's how I'm currently running space combat, with a little something for everyone to do. I welcome any comments, and if I make any notable changes, I'll repost them here sometime as a v2.0.

Now, having talked about the crunch I've added to my game, next time I'll talk about some of the fluffier ideas I've borrowed to improve character and plot interaction.

The Shipyard

Imperial Naval Doctrine

Original author unknown; contributed by Kevin Walsh

The Imperium has the largest fleet in known space, with more than 1,000 squadrons organized into over fifty fleets and independent entities. Imperial fleets are made up of one or more Groups, each of which is made up of three or more Squadrons. In smaller or less-populated Sectors, there might be a small fleet, made up of one Group with three Squadrons. In Sectors that are likely to be attacked, there are often 3 or more fleets, each with three or four Groups of up to ten Squadrons each. Each Sector has at least one Fleet assigned to it.

A Squadron generally consists of eight to twelve ships. Some of the ships are support or communications vessels, and the rest make up the 'line' of the Squadron. For example, a typical Heavy Battle Squadron (HBatRon) would consist of one Dreadnaught, two Battleships, four Battlecruisers, two Fleet Couriers and one Squadron Tender. The Fleet Couriers and Squadron Tender would be the support element, while the Dreadnaught, Battleships and Battlecruisers would be the Squadron line.

A Group is a collection of Squadrons, usually organized around some large ship or important Squadron. For example, a Battle Group would be formed around a HBatRon, while a Carrier Group would be formed around a Fleet Carrier Squadron

(FCarRon). The Imperium also has Assault Groups, Raid Groups, Patrol Groups, Transport Groups, Support Groups and even a few Recon Groups. Each Group will have its own Group Support Squadron in addition to its component Squadrons; this unit would have a number of couriers, tenders and perhaps troop transports or hospital ships. Squadrons are often re-assigned to other Groups at various times, or even other Fleets.

A Fleet is a collection of Groups, usually organized along mission lines as necessitated by the needs of the Sector the Fleet is based in, or on the conditions around the Sector. In some sectors, the Fleet might consist of a Patrol Group of only three Squadrons. A Fleet generally has a few Squadrons of attached elements, with couriers, tenders and some troop transports, but this varies by Fleet.

All Imperial Depots house a Reserve Fleet, made up of over-age and reserve vessels stored there. Reserve Fleets are generally used for training activities and to support Depot operations, but in the event of a crisis they could be used to provide replacements for regular Fleets, or could be mobilized into action as a Regular Fleet in its own right.

Many worlds of the Imperium field military star-ships. These ships are all subject to mobilization in the Colonial Navy, an ad-hoc organization formed when the Sector or Domain Duke mobilizes non-

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Imperial starships and mercenary warships. In general, most of these ships tend to be patrol ships or smaller combatants, so mobilized Colonial Squadrons are most often used to form a single Sector-wide Colonial Fleet, which would usually be used for rear-area security. Those mobilized ships which are stronger combatants will either be used to support Colonial Fleet operations, or may be combined into Colonial Squadrons attached to combat-oriented Imperial Fleets.

Imperial doctrine has changed over the past 200 years. Formerly, the Imperial Navy was geared toward offensive actions. Imperial fleets were configured for rapid raiding operations, with enough heavy firepower to tie down defenders while the raids were undertaken. The goal was to cripple an enemy's economy and military infrastructure to the point that it collapsed, leaving the enemy frontier defenseless.

This began to change in the face of wars with the Zhodani Consulate and other foreign powers. The Imperium had been successfully attacked in the past, but these were minor raids by pirates and small splinter groups within the Imperium. The new situation was that the Imperium had an active, hostile enemy on several borders (Zhodani, Aslan) and rebellious elements within another border region (Solomani Autonomous Region). This new reality caused the Imperial Navy to realign itself towards a more defensive role. The Imperium did not give up its offensive capabilities; but offense was no longer the focus of Imperial design. Large, high-jump vessels were replaced with large, high-firepower vessels. Lighter raiding ships remained part of the Imperial Navy structure, but these were no longer supported by larger ships in their penetration raids.

The Solomani Rim War caught the Imperium in the midst of this change. The Solomani fleet, made up of former Imperial personnel and equipment, shared a similar doctrine, but was more oriented towards offense due to Solomani cultural biases, and due to the inability of the Solomani economy to support a protracted attritional defense. The Solomani sphere was badly hurt by small-scale Imperial raid-

ers, but the rimward portions of the Imperium were even more devastated. The result was a tie; both sides withdrew in the hopes of rebuilding enough strength to finish the job, but the horror of the conflict made the armistice a more permanent treaty. To the Vilani-dominated Imperial Naval Staff of that time, this only proved the need for a more defense-oriented military structure, and spelled an end to the Solomani-influenced emphasis on raiding tactics in the Imperial Navy. Thereafter, raids would be but minor sideshows in Imperial Navy thinking. The modern Imperial Navy philosophy is to use overwhelming firepower and numbers to break any attack, and to then counterattack against the now-disorganized enemy forces. This is made possible by the fantastic logistical advantage of the Imperium. The Imperium is three times larger than the other interstellar states, and has a huge industrial and manpower potential the other states can only dream of. This means the Imperium can send fleets from quiet Sectors to trouble areas, and rapidly build replacement ships or even fleets. Obviously, the Imperial Navy cannot be at all border points at once, so the philosophy envisions a defense in depth, buying time until sufficient forces are gathered to make a stand, after which the lost territory will be regained (with possibly more territory being claimed in the process).

Note that the ships listed below are nearly all TL15 ships. Lower tech ships can be found in Imperial Navy Depots and in Colonial units. There are also a number of experimental TL16 ships, but these are largely found in composite Experimental Squadrons (XRon) in Depots. Final decisions on TL16 fleet designs was scheduled for 1120, but that has been interrupted by the Civil War. Existing TL16 ships have been activated with other Depot forces.

Ships of the Imperial Navy

"dtons" is the standard abbreviation for "standard displacement tons".

Dreadnaught: Range from 750,000 to 1,000,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry up to three wings of fighters, and up to a division of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for Emperors of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd

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Imperia. They serve as the core of a Heavy Battle Squadron (HBatRon) There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Cleon* class, 1,000,000 dtons
- *Plankwell* class, 850,000 dtons
- *Ishuuli* class, 750,000 dtons

Battleship: Range from 500,000 to 700,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry up to a wing of fighters, and up to a division of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for worlds in the Imperium. They serve as the core of most Battle Squadrons (BatRon), or as the support of an HBatRon. There are four classes in active Imperial service:

- *Deneb* class, 600,000 dtons
- *Dingir* class, 550,000 dtons
- *Vega* class, 500,000 dtons
- *Antares* class, 500,000 dtons

Pocket Battleship: Range from 250,000 to 500,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 3G thrust. These ships carry a wing of fighters, and a brigade of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for worlds in the Imperium. These ships provide the bulk of the firepower in a BatRon, or are the core of a Light BatRon (LBatRon). There are five classes in active Imperial service:

- *Prometheus* class, 400,000 dtons
- *Warrington* class, 300,000 dtons
- *Asaaga* class, 250,000 dtons
- *Kirke* class, 250,000 dtons
- *Kuulimaar* class, 250,000 dtons

Battle Rider: Range from 50,000 to 75,000 dtons. Rated at 6G thrust, with no Jump. These ships carry up to a wing of fighters, and a platoon of Marines for security duties. These spacecraft are named for famous battles in Imperial history. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Rhylanor* class, 75,000 dtons
- *Terra* class, 60,000 dtons
- *Shudushaam* class, 50,000 dtons

Battle Tender: Range from 500,000 to 700,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry five battle riders, up to a wing of interceptors,

and a company of Marines for security duties. These ships are named for famous fortifications in Imperial history. Several of these ships, supported by a Light Carrier and a Battle Cruiser, are used to form a Battle Rider Squadron (BatRidRon). There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Losenor* class, 700,000 dtons
- *Eben Emael* class, 550,000 dtons

Battle Cruiser: Range from 100,000 to 250,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry up to three squadrons of fighters, and a force of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for governments and similar organizations in Imperial space. The Battle Cruiser is very similar to the Heavy Cruiser, but a Battle Cruiser is configured for independent operations. These ships form the bulk of a LBatRon. There are five classes in active Imperial service:

- *Fenwick* class, 250,000 tons
- *Dariida* class, 200,000 tons
- *America* class, 200,000 tons
- *Terhuun* class, 150,000 tons
- *Karalonda* class, 150,000 tons

Heavy Cruiser: Range from 75,000 to 150,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry up to three squadrons of fighters and up to a battalion of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for famous rulers of Imperial worlds or nations. They form the core of a Heavy Cruiser Squadron (HCruRon). There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Farrakor* class, 100,000 dtons
- *Hengist* class, 75,000 dtons

Attack Cruiser: Range from 50,000 to 100,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry one or two squadrons of fighters configured for close support, and up to a battalion of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for famous Imperial generals. Combined with an Attack Carrier, these ships are used to form the core of an Attack Cruiser Squadron (ACruRon). There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *General Toraag* class, 100,000 dtons
- *General Wang* class, 75,000 dtons

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Light Cruiser: Range from 25,000 to 75,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry a squadron of fighters, and up to a company of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named for winners of the Imperial Starburst for Extreme Heroism. They form the bulk of a HCruRon or ACruRon, or are used to make up a simple Cruiser Squadron (CruRon). There are six classes in active Imperial service:

- *Johnstone* class, 75,000 dtons
- *Obaya* class, 60,000 dtons
- *Gionetti* class, 50,000 dtons
- *F'leyah* class, 40,000 dtons
- *Wansea* class, 30,000 dtons
- *Ishiggli* class, 25,000 dtons

Scout Cruiser: Range from 20,000 to 50,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry up to twelve scout/couriers, and several other auxilliary craft. They also carry a number of Scout Service ground teams and specialists, including a platoon of Strikers (IISS Paramilitary Security). These ships are generally assigned to Support Squadrons (SupRon) when mobilized for Imperial Navy service. These ships are named for famous Imperial Scouts. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Ferndale* class, 50,000 dtons
- *Belker* class, 30,000 dtons

Intruder: Range from 10,000 to 25,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 5, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry several auxillary vehicles, and a reinforced company of Marine Commandos for security and assault duties. These ships are named for legendary warriors. They combine with Intruder Escorts to form Intruder Squadrons (IntRon) for rear-area raiding. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Agamemnon* class, 25,000 dtons
- *Aeneas* class, 15,000 dtons

Fleet Carrier: Range from 750,000 to 1,000,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 1G thrust. These ships carry six to eighteen wings of fighters, and a company of Marines for security duties. These ships are named after Empresses and Royal Consorts of the Imperium. These ships serve as the core of a Heavy

Carrier Squadron (HCarRon). There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Empress Arbellatra* class, 850,000 dtons
- *Empress Eulayle* class, 750,000 dtons

Attack Carrier: Range from 100,000 to 250,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry three to five wings of fighters two of which are configured for close support, and a company of Marines for security duties. These ships are named after moons in the Imperium. These ships are generally found supporting Attack Cruiser Squadrons (ACruRon). There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Luna* class, 250,000 dtons
- *Garaala* class, 150,000 dtons

Light Carrier: Range from 100,000 to 250,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry three to five wings of fighters, and a company of Marines for security duties. These ships are named for famous fighters from Imperial and pre-Imperial history. These ships can be found in many different types of BatRon or CarRon, acting in support of the squadron. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Curgarth* class, 250,000 dtons
- *Mustang* class, 100,000 dtons

Escort Carrier: Range from 25,000 to 50,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry a wing of fighters (mostly interceptors), and a platoon of Marines for security duties. There is no overall convention for naming of Escort Carriers. They form the core of an Escort Squadron (EscRon) or a Patrol Squadron (PatRon). There are four classes in active Imperial service:

- *Aegis* class, 50,000 dtons
- *Diluuri* class, 40,000 dtons
- *Bifrost* class, 30,000 dtons
- *Je-Tuan* class, 25,000 dtons

Frigate: Range from 10,000 to 20,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry several auxillary craft, and a reinforced platoon of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named after major cities in the Imperium. They form the bulk of a PatRon. There are three classes in

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active Imperial service:

- *Capital* class, 20,000 dtons
- *Ysev* class, 15,000 dtons
- *New York* class, 10,000 dtons

Intruder Escort: Range from 5,000 to 7,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 5, with 3G thrust. These ships carry one or two auxillary craft, and a platoon of Marines for security and assault duties. These ships are named after legendary or historical weapons. They are generally found supporting an IntRon. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Phalanx* class, 6,500 dtons
- *Skean-Dhu* class, 5,000 dtons

Fleet Escort: Range from 5,000 to 10,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry several auxillary craft, and a platoon of Marines for security duties. These ships are equipped with enhanced folding sensor arrays, and are used to picket the edges of a fleet during docking, landing or refueling operations. These ships are named after oceans in the Imperium. They make up the bulk of non-Tender ships in a SupRon. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Holder* class, 10,000 dtons
- *Kilaamu* class, 7,500 dtons
- *Jarvis* class, 5,000 dtons

Destroyer: Range from 2,500 to 5,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 4G+ thrust. These ships carry one or two auxilliary craft, and a squad of Marines for security duties. These ships are named after famous Imperial admirals. They are found providing support in many types of CruRons, or forming the bulk of an EscRon. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Hortense* class, 5,000 dtons
- *Kelly* class, 4,000 dtons
- *Midu Agashaam* class, 3,000 dtons

Destroyer Escort: Range from 1,000 to 1,500 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 4G+ thrust. These ships carry one or two auxilliary craft, and a squad of Marines for security duties. These ships are named after famous Imperial starship commanders. They are found providing support to EscRon activities. There

are four classes in active Imperial service:

- *Fer-de-Lance* class, 1,500 dtons
- *Gormancy* class, 1,250 dtons
- *Chrysanthemum* class, 1,000 dtons
- *Kiduusi* class, 1,000 dtons

Patrol Cruiser: Range from 300 to 800 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 4G+ thrust. These ships carry no auxillary craft or Marines. There is no overall naming convention for ships of this classification. They are found providing support to PatRon or SupRon activities. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Usdikki* class, 750 dtons
- *Jermole* class, 600 dtons
- *Wombat* class, 400 dtons

Close Escort: Range from 200 to 500 dtons. Rated at Jump 4, with 3G+ thrust. These ships carry one auxillary craft, and up to a squad of Marines for security duties. There is no overall naming convention for ships of this classification. They are found as the main ship type of many EscRons or PatRons. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Gazelle* class, 300 dtons
- *Fiery* class, 300 dtons

Force Assault Transport: Range from 10,000 to 25,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry drop capsule tubes and a squadron of assault landers, and are optimized to carry a full Marine Assault Force and its equipment. These ships are named for Marine winners of the Imperial Starburst for Extreme Heroism. They are found in many Group or Fleet SupRons, or attached to ACruRons. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Marteens* class, 25,000 dtons
- *Huluuga* class, 20,000 dtons

Brigade Assault Transport: Range from 50,000 to 100,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry several drop capsule tubes and a squadron of assault landers, and are optimized to carry a full Marine Landing Brigade and its equipment. These ships are named for famous Marine battles in Imperial history. They are found in many Group or Fleet SupRons, or attached to ACruRons. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

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- *Iwo Jima* class, 100,000 dtons
- *Jae Tellona* class, 75,000 dtons

Light Transport: Range from 25,000 to 50,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry several shuttles and other auxilliary craft, and are configured to carry up to 5,000 troops and their equipment (or half that many with vehicles). The ship carries a platoon of Marines for security purposes. These ships are named for famous non-Marine ground battles. They are generally assigned to Transport Squadrons (TranRon). There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *El Alamein* class, 50,000 dtons
- *Xochtil* class, 35,000 dtons

Heavy Transport: Range from 100,000 to 250,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry several shuttles and other auxilliary craft, and are configured to carry up to 25,000 troops and their equipment (or half that many with vehicles). The ship carries a company of Marines for security purposes. These ships are named for Imperial Army winners of the Imperail Starburst for Extreme Heroism. They are generally assigned to TranRons. There is one class in active Imperial service:

- *Quintus* class, 175,000 dtons

Hospital Ship: Range from 25,000 to 50,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 1G thrust. These ships carry one squadron of assault landers and several other auxilliary craft, and up to a platoon of Marines for security duties. The ship carries a 500-1,000 bed hospital, fully equipped with labs and special equipment. These ships are named for famous doctors from Imperial Navy or Marine history. They are generally found in Group-level SUPRons, and in some ACruRons and TranRons. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Dr. Kaligaan* class, 50,000 dtons
- *Dr. Yamashita* class, 35,000 dtons

Squadron Tender: Range from 10,000 to 25,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 1G thrust. These ships carry several shuttles and other auxilliary craft, and a squad of Marines for security duties. There is no overall naming convention for ships of this classifi-

cation. There is generally one assigned to every squadron. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Sule Jukala* class, 25,000 dtons
- *Calfix* class, 17,500 dtons
- *Opendra* class, 10,000 dtons

Fleet Tender: Range from 250,000 to 500,000 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 1G thrust. These ships carry numerous shuttles and other auxilliary craft, and a platoon of Marines for security duties. There is no overall naming convention for ships in this classification. They are usually assigned to Group-level or Fleet-level SupRons, as well as some TranRons. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Terwitch* class, 450,000 dtons
- *Wutusi* class, 250,000 dtons

X-Boat Tender: Range from 750 to 1,500 dtons. Rated at Jump 3, with 1G thrust. These ships carry three to five X-Boats or Scout/Couriers. There are no troops regularly assigned to these vessels. There is no naming convention for ships of this classification. These ships are sometimes called up for Imperial Navy service to carry larger non-starships (gunboats, SDBs); those that are will generally be assigned to SupRons or TranRons. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Yerkes* class, 1,500 dtons
- *Jaballa* class, 1,000 dtons
- *Idmaani* class, 800 dtons

Fleet Courier: Range from 250 to 500 dtons. Rated at Jump 6, with 1G thrust. These ships carry no auxilliary craft or Marines. These ships are named for famous Imperial Navy personnel who did not win the SEH. Most larger ship squadrons will have one or more of these ships. There are two classes in active Imperial service:

- *Renfield* class, 500 dtons
- *Jalaaga* class, 300 dtons

Scout Courier: Range from 100 to 150 dtons. Rated at Jump 2+, with 2G+ thrust. These ships carry no auxilliary craft or Marines. These ships are used by both the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. There is no overall naming convention for ships of this classification. When these

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The Shipyard

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vessels are called into Imperial Navy service, they will be assigned to all squadron types as another type of Fleet Courier. There are six classes in active Imperial service:

- *Serpent* class, 150 dtons (TL14, Jump 4)
- *Robilar* class, 125 dtons (TL13, Jump 4)
- *Merkur* class, 100 dtons (TL15, Jump 5)
- *Komodo* class, 100 dtons (TL14, Jump 4)
- *Eagle* class, 100 dtons (TL12, Jump 3)
- *Sextant* class, 100 dtons (TL10, Jump 2)

Fighters: Range from 5 to 50 dtons. Rated at 6G thrust. These craft have no auxilliary craft or Marines. Interceptors have less fuel, and thus less patrol time, while Heavy Fighters carry a great deal of fuel and extended accomodations, making them excellent spacecraft for patrol or picket duty. All are equipped with a laser (two in the case of the Talon) and can carry a missile in an undercarriage cradle (two missiles in the case of the Talon). The underwing pylons may be equipped with extra fuel tanks, less-powerful TAC missiles or even autocannon or fusion weapons for ground support. There are three classes in active Imperial service:

- *Isveddi*-class Light Fighter (interceptor)
- *Rampart*-class Fighter
- *Talon*-class Heavy Fighter

Gunboats: Range from 50 to 1,000 tons. These are all heavily-armed and -armored non-Jump vessels, rated at 6G thrust. This classification includes

heavy support craft, landers and the more numerous System Defense Boats (SDBs). There are nine classes in Imperial service:

- *Raptor*-class SDB, 600 dtons
- *Warhawk*-class SDB, 500 dtons
- *Thunderbird*-class SDB, 400 dtons
- *Fury*-class SDB, 300 dtons
- *Rusiidi*-class SDB, 200 dtons
- *Sherman*-class Close Support Gunboat, 400 dtons
- *Galiaagin*-class Close Support Gunboat, 200 dtons
- *Janeerir*-class Assault Lander, 50 dtons
- *Astarga*-class Assault Lander, 30 dtons

Auxiliaries: Range from 10 to 1,000 tons. These are all non-Jump vessels, ranging from 1G to 6G rating. All of these ships are standardized only in size and control interfaces; individual fleets generally procure their own auxiliaries from local manufacturers. All such vessels must be TL14, and must conform to the requirements for the listed classification. Vessels may be armed or unarmed, depending on mission. The standard classifications in Imperial service are:

- Shuttle, 100 dtons
- Fuel Skimmer, 400 dtons
- Cutter, 50 dtons
- Pinnace, 40 dtons
- Ship's Boat, 30 dtons
- Launch, 10 dtons
- Gig, 20 dtons



The Starburst for Extreme Heroism, as visualized and rendered by Megan Robertson

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.

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.

