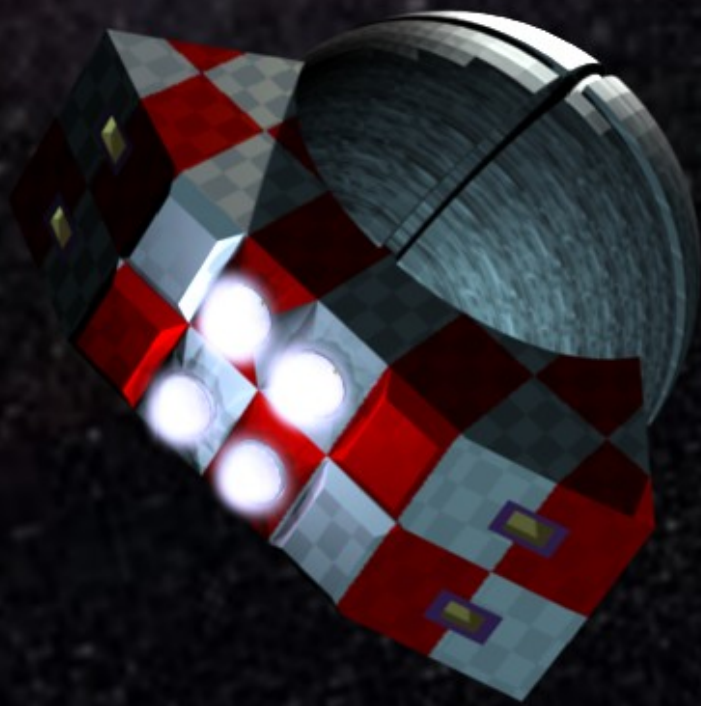


FREELANCE TRAVELLER

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



Recently, we posted a poll in the various forums asking whether we should expand our coverage beyond *Traveller*, to things like *Hyperlite*, *Diaspora*, and so on. The response rate was quite acceptable, but the responses themselves indicated some confusion as to what *Freelance Traveller* currently covers.

So, for clarification: *Freelance Traveller* is intended to support anything that is purely *Traveller*—all of the published rulesets, and all of the published settings—including such settings as Twilight Sector, Babylon 5, Judge Dredd, and Strontium Dog. But, in addition to that, “crossover” articles are fair game for us as well—do you have a “referee’s guide” to using *Traveller* rules to play in the setting from *Space: 1999*? That’s within our scope. So too would be “*Traveller: 1889*”, regardless of whether you’re talking about the *Space 1889* setting with *Traveller* rules, or vice-versa. And if other settings are formally published in the future—for example, 2300AD using the Mongoose Traveller ruleset—those will be considered

valid settings for coverage in *Freelance Traveller*.

Going slightly further afield, gaming resources that can be mined for *Traveller* ideas are also fair game—that’s why we reviewed the products that appear under the “Other People’s Toys” heading in Critics’ Corner.

Finally, we’ve made provisions for reviews of fiction that the reviewers think has a “Travelleresque” feel. Beginning in July, we’ll start printing reviews of such fiction under the “Off the Table” heading in Critics’ Corner; Fifth Imperium columnist Shannon Appelcline has already posted some reviews suitable for this section over on RPG.Net, and we’ve obtained permission to reprint them, just as we did with the Fifth Imperium column.

So... expand, or not? If we do, we will do so cautiously, so as not to lose our core identity, which is tied to *Traveller*, and has been since we were a badly-designed website back in about 1993 with only a few articles and no domain name of our own. Share your thoughts with us; our email at feedback@freelancetraveller.com is always available.

Mongoose Traveller: Supplement 1: 760 Patrons, Second Edition

reviewed by "kafka"

Mongoose Traveller Supplement 1: 760 Patrons, Second Edition.

August Hahn

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

408pp, hardbound

US\$49.99/UK£34.99

This is the book that many *Traveller* referees have been waiting for, as the previous edition missed the mark by not understanding what a patron fundamentally is in *Traveller*. In the first edition of *760 Patrons*, Mongoose appeared to think that a patron was akin to an encounter, whereas it has been long established in *Traveller* that a patron is a job offer. So, while the first edition is highly useful for generating colourful and interesting NPCs in a flash – they contained no seeds for adventure. Therefore, bravo to Mongoose to revising their initial offering to conform to the pre-existing and established criteria.

Now, this book is also a monster of a book. Fully detailing 760 individuals each with 1-6 different ideas/seeds for adventure is a monumental task and they made it a hardcover to boot. Therefore, this book is a valuable tool for those referee that either need something in a pinch while players are in-between the main adventures to facilitate a sandbox play or simply need to generate ideas in which to construct an adventure of their own design. Either way, this is a good book for them. One regrettable omission is art detailing the patrons. Whereas, the first book had all sorts of art – some good, some bad and some just in-between. This book is almost without any art save a few sketches done or inspired by the same Careers art those who appear in the main rulebook. Fortunately, the jokey aspect has been for the most part purged. It would be nice but wholly unrealistic to expect 760 portraits without upping the price tag even more. However, it still would have been nice to have a little more art and one could wish that Mongoose had employed an artist who had a better eye for the *Traveller* milieu (grim, dirty realism), like a Blair Reynolds or Richard Sparke or at the very least the interior artist who did much of their

TRAVELLER

Supplement 1:
760 Patrons

SECOND EDITION

Darrians book. What *Traveller* art is missing is diversity. Hardly any African, east Asian or Amerindian representations grace the interiors – to say nothing of the non-Terrestrial humans, or recognized *Traveller* aliens. Too much of the *Traveller* artwork omits what Star Trek has done for decades now. Anyway, enough ranting about the art...

Although, I could not digest all 760 Patrons – many of the seeds are credible and fit well with the description. The most important thing to remember is that *Traveller* in this book is a generic Science Fiction universe. Although some of these employment opportunities would be very odd in the Original/Official Traveller Universe (OTU) – yes, I am looking at you, Star Deity and Demon – they are not entirely without precedent or enjoyment factor in the Science Fiction literature. So, if you are a player/referee who plays a specific game either set in the OTU or another setting – you will have to be highly selective in these encounters/employment opportunities. This is not say they cannot be tweaked to work

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Critics' Corner

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within another universe – say, have the Star Deity or Demon be Grandfather in disguise. But, tweaking is required which rather negates the random engine. Also, it would have been nice, if rather than Star Base, the term Starport which would be consistent with the Main Rulebook would have been employed. So perhaps in the future we might hopefully see that builds upon this book and makes it OTU specific for all the raw material is already there. So, I think the author could have done a little more by referencing some of the Gamelords, GDW, and DGP stuff that is already out there – not copy but more actively reference or mimic their style and ideas.

Is this book worth the money? If you are a Refe-

ree who has long spells of writer's block like I am then most certainly – you will find a seed or several dozen to plant yourself a venerable garden and your players will enjoy the harvest. However, if creativity is not a problem for you and that you can read a newspaper and generate ten plot points from just skimming the headlines then perhaps you should look to other Traveller books instead. All-in-all this book is a significant improvement over the previous edition, aside from the rather minor quibbles noted above. It is a solid addition to what is proving to be a solid line from Mongoose.

This is a beneficial and first-rate book that will give you 760 beginnings for adventure that either viewed as seeds or fertilizer to germinate into a full garden that will allow your imagination to flourish.

In A Store Near You

PersonaCore Expert System

By Scott Diamond

PersonaCore is a mixed firmware and software system that forms the core of an advanced computer network for a starship (or ground installation of equivalent complexity) which allows the user to replace or supplement skilled personnel with automated systems built on the latest expert systems and software. Although some skills cannot be replaced by this system, most of the tedium and time-consuming work involved in routine tasks can be reduced dramatically by restructuring your network around one of the PersonaCore lines.

The PersonaCore line includes a wide assortment of pre-generated standard personalities for enhanced ease and efficiency when interacting with the system. Some manufacturers are licensed to build custom personalities based on client needs.

It should be noted that PersonaCore systems are more flexible replacements for standard expert systems and intellect emulation programs; such programs cannot be used to supplement a PersonaCore system.

The basic PersonaCore system can be constructed and installed in TL-12 computers. The skills

available are limited by the TL of the computer in which the PersonaCore system is installed.

At TL-12, PersonaCore “Expertware” allows for basic skill level (0) in limited skill areas. The system acts mostly in an advisory capacity and has limited decision making capabilities but can present accurate predictions based on the knowledge base and some user input. It cannot control or interact with robots or weapons systems, and is not certified for medical use beyond reference consultation by a Doctor. This level of PersonaCore is particularly useful in areas such as Legal, Admin, Mechanical, Electronic, etc.

At TL-13, PersonaCore “Advanced Expertware” allows for skill level 1 in a wider range of areas. Less input is required from a user, and the PersonaCore system can make intuitive predictions and diagnosis. Can be used for medical diagnosis, but is not certified for surgical assists.

At TL-14, a Semi-Autonomous PersonaCore functions to replace skill level 1 as TL-13, but adds a personality core to the routines which, based on the personality type used, can make independent decisions based on the system's own observations and experience. Skill areas that may involve potential safety risks (Pilot, Navigate, for example) have an

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In A Store Near You

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inbuilt interrupt that requires the user to explicitly choose from a list of program-recommended actions. PersonaCore personalities are capable of operating under minimal supervision within the areas of expertise of the personality, with a low level of supervision in areas peripheral to the area of expertise, and as a TL-13 PersonaCore Advanced Expertware system in all other supported areas. The PersonaCore personality defines the system's central and peripheral areas of expertise—for example, a PersonaCore Combat Medic personality would have core expertise in such specialties as trauma/injury medicine and field-expedient surgery, with peripheral expertise in e.g., routine diagnosis and pharmacology.

At TL-15, the Fully-Autonomous PersonaCore can act independently within the personality's area of expertise and peripheral areas, and with minimal supervision in all other supported areas, making the personality more of an interface aid and a skill set facilitator than an expert system. User override is available for situations where a higher skill level is needed, and is enforced in safety-critical situations, but the system can replace most skills at level 2. The personality can make suggestions, carry on conversation, and learn from experience. It has been suggested, but never conclusively demonstrated, that a Fully-Autonomous PersonaCore is fully sophont.

At all levels most of the following basic parameters apply:

1. A minimum of a Model/2 computer is required. PersonaCore will use half of the computer's capacity, giving it the ability to replace skills at one level below half of the computer's rating (e.g., a Model/2 or Model/3 with PersonaCore can replace skill-0; a Model/4 or Model/5 can replace skill-1, and a Model/6 can replace skill-2). Note that this effectively reduces the model of a computer with PersonaCore installed by half.
2. PersonaCore requires all ancillary software needed for performing the required tasks.

For instance, if the ship is going to Jump, then the needed level of Jump Program is required. All rules of program space and use limitations apply.

3. PersonaCore can replace crew in most positions (remote robots may be required for some applications, e.g., Steward, that require mobility and/or interaction) at the PersonaCore's skill limit.
4. Because of the safety interrupt built in to the Semi-Autonomous and Fully-Autonomous PersonaCore, a sophont with relevant skills at a minimum of one level above the PersonaCore's must be available to supervise the PersonaCore system.
5. Weapons stations may be "manned" by the system, but will only be able to fire on one target at a time. PersonaCore cannot exceed skill level 1 for any weapons, and acts only defensively when manning weapons (see below). Gunner Interact is required. The system presents a list of target choices and the user selects the target from that list each round.
6. All success rolls are made by the referee.
7. Manual override is possible from any crew station for that skill.
8. Evade programming limited to Auto-Evade if that program is present.

PersonaCore sets priorities to starship operations based on user-defined limits, but at all times the system checks the logic of those tasks against the following rules:

1. Ship and crew safety is paramount and the system must take no action that will place those two categories at risk while operating.
2. The system will engage in combat only if no means of evasion or escape is available. If combat is engaged the first rule will be applied by continuously searching for a means of escape or evasion while using the ship's weapons and defenses to protect the ship and crew.

Up Close and Personal

Sohair Chen

profiled by Ken Murphy

Sohair Chen 578996 Age 46

7 Terms Computer Technician/ Consultant

Rifle-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Brawling-0, Computer-5, Electronics-4, Sensors-4, Intrusion-1, Streetwise-1, Linguistics-3 (Arabic) (Greek) (Chinese), Survival-1, Persuade-1, Vacc Suit-1, Jewelry-4, Racquetball-3, Carousing-1

Sohair grew up on Xerxes in The Warrens, a chain of 30 some islands connected to the sprawl that ran down the Washington peninsula, and was interconnected by more than 200 traffic and foot bridges. The maze of tiny islands was some 15 km from the Downport at Armagh, and a world away from the seedy Startown district around the Port.

Sohair began dabbling in potent potables while still at private school, and while indifferent to the beers and wines consumed by her peers, discovered the frontier that was double-malt whiskey; making and selling jewelry around campus for the extra spending money required of her Cr10-a-shot hobby.

Before long, Miss Chen dropped out of school and became a full-time barfly, lowering her standards to the point where she'd drink, smoke, take, or do anything working to continue living the high life.

After three and a half years of living on the streets (and after at least a dozen times being rescued after having fallen off a bridge, loaded, in The Warrens), and some time spent in the Ironwood, Sohair managed to regain a tentative hold on her life and returned to school, graduating two years later with

The Traveller Product Catalog

Freelance Traveller is trying to put together a comprehensive, searchable, on-line catalog of all known commercially-published *Traveller* products, any era, any system, any setting, both in and out of print. If you are a publisher, or if you have a listing from a publisher, please send the information to us at editor@freelancetraveller.com. Your list should contain the publisher name, publisher website if any, product name, the type of product, and whether it's in or out of print.

Expert accreditation in computers and electronics.

Sohair works as a private computer and security expert around The Warrens, up and down the Washington sprawl, and consulting at Armagh Down with Starship owners. The Starport Authority has twice hired Sohair as a consultant on their computer, sensor, and security system overhauls.

When not on the job, she'll try selling her jewelry to rich swells she sees coming and going around the Port.

Sohair likes the many cups of coffee she drinks each day black, and honestly, it seems as if she's never without a cup.

Sohair is a fierce Racquetball player, and has a wicked backhand.

Sohair is 1.6m tall, and roughly 75 kilos, with thick, shoulder length dirty blonde hair and dark eyes. She wears high-end business attire, and has a pair of portable computers, one worn on each forearm. A set of technical tools is carried inside a roll-up mat that fits inside a sturdy, 80cm-long, tubular transport case. When off the job she'll wear comfortable clothes and heavy boots.

Having been one herself, Sohair has a soft spot for Street Prophets, and will usually be happy to engage them while offering up a few Credits.

Doing business, Miss Chen usually uses a private car service, but on her own time will most often be seen walking, busing, or riding an old-fashioned bicycle—a vehicle still common in The Warrens, with its tight, winding streets and foot traffic.

In addition to Anglic, Sohair speaks Arabic, Greek and Chinese.

The Freelance Traveller Forums

We're continuing to have problems with connectivity at the intended server site, but we think we have almost everything we need on the software side to get the Forums back up and running. We hope to have something set up for limited testing soon, and are seeking volunteers for testing and discussion of various features. Interested people should contact us at tech@freelancetraveller.com. We apologize for the continued delay in restoring this service.

Golden Age Starships Compilation 1-5

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Golden Age Starships Compilation 1-5.

Michael Taylor and Ron Vutpakdi
Avenger Enterprises and Comstar Games,
via Mongoose Publishing "Flaming Cobra" imprint,
<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

176pp, softcover
US\$29.99/UK£21.99

On the Shelf

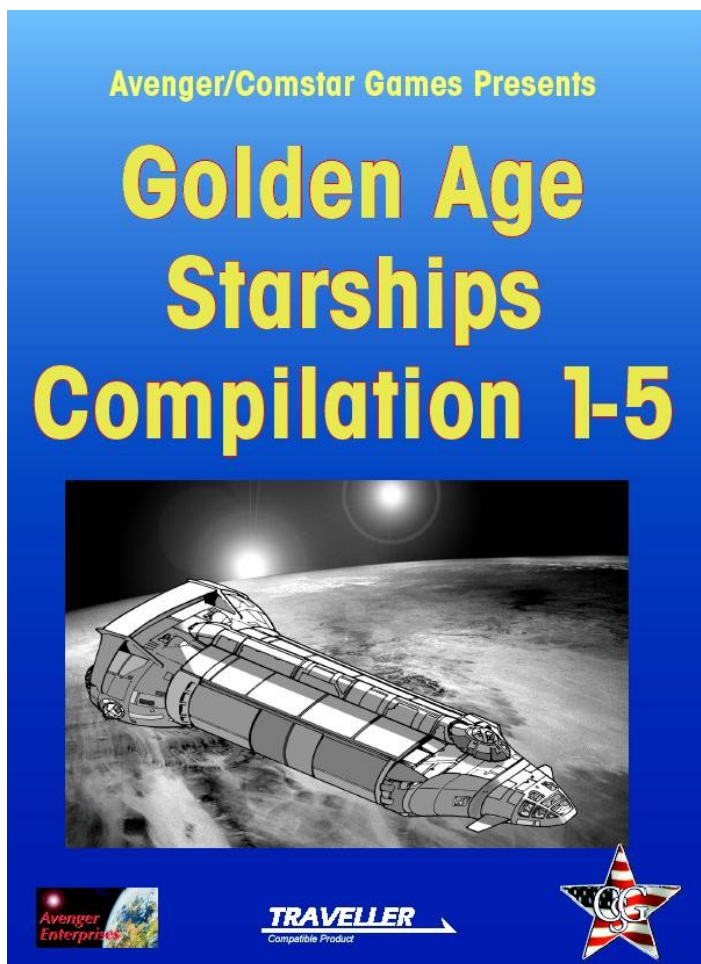
As with other Avenger/Comstar/Flaming Cobra releases, the basic cover color is a light blue shading to medium blue at the bottom. The top half has the title in yellow, over a black-and-white image related to the content. Below the image are Avenger's and Comstar's logos, and the "Traveller Compatible Product" logo.

Initial Impression

One could get the impression that Avenger/Comstar or Flaming Cobra is something of a 'stepchild' of Mongoose; the paper has a definite texture to it more reminiscent of newsprint than of the not-quite-glossy bright white of the Mongoose Traveller direct products. (Note: It's definitely not newsprint; it just feels like it's coarser and lower-quality than the Mongoose direct products.) That's not to say that less care was taken in the product itself; the Avenger Enterprises editor-in-chief is Martin J. Dougherty, whose reputation for quality Traveller product extends back many years. The volume backs up that reputation, and is chock-full of deckplans and stat blocks, with text and adventure seeds for each of the five ships included in the compilation.

On Closer Inspection

The deckplans are clear enough and large enough to be usable, though not for miniatures. Paging is separate for each of the five products in this compilation; this has resulted in at least one product having the odd pages on the left and even pages on the right, instead of the (normal) opposite. Text is clear and readable, with adequate white space and artwork, along with the deckplans and drawings, to break up 'grey walls' and hold the reader's interest.



The included starships cover a variety of missions, and one of them, the LSP Modular Starship, offers plenty of options for customization for virtually any mission at all. Another "starship", the Archaic Small Craft and Space Stations, offers the opportunity for playing in a milieu where the technology is likely to be familiar to most players, and where information on how it works and what its capabilities and limitations are will be readily available. With this module and limiting the campaign to TL7 or TL8, one could easily run a Clancy-esque adventure on the International Space Station.

Each starship (including the Archaic Small Craft and Space Stations) comes with a set of relevant scenarios, adventure seeds, and/or Amber Zones (what Freelance Traveller has renamed "Active Measures"). Where desirable or appropriate, profiles for "generic" characters of scenario-required types are provided, along with information on other materials not profiled elsewhere (such as the Zhodani corvette

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Critics' Corner

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and the Zhodani and Imperial fighters, included in the LSP Modular Starship package).

The provided information is set against a Year 1105 Spinward Marches/Official Traveller Universe background, but it would be simple to “file off the serial numbers” and incorporate it into virtually any campaign, regardless of setting specifics.

In A Store Near You

TL1 Stage Coach

designed by Ewan Quibell

CraftID: Stage Coach, TL1, Cr 389
Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.5, Conf=4USL, Armour=0W
Unloaded=0.2 tons, Loaded=0.75 tons
Power: External=0.00298 Mw
Loco: 1/2, Simple Wheels x4, Outboard Suspension,
P/W=3.13, Road=26 kph, Offroad=3.9 kph
Comm: -
Sensors: -
Off: Hardpoints=1
Def: -
Control: Direct
Accom: Crew=1 (Driver), Seat=Bench x2 inside
(6 sophants), x1 outside (2 sophants)
Other: Cargo=0.75 klitres, ObjSize=Small,
EmLevel=None

This TL1 wooden, livestock drawn, stage coach is a swift passenger/mail delivery vehicle that can be found on almost any low tech planet. The hull is 2cm thick wood covering the whole vehicle offering weather protection to the passengers inside. The driver sits on the outside bench on top of the main body of the coach using direct controls to the live-

Summary

While by no means a ‘must-have’, it would be difficult to consider money spent on this volume to be wasted. It’s a solid product, with a high degree of utility. More products like this one would be quite welcome.

The Showroom

stock, reins, and a direct lever action foot break that can be applied to the on-side front wheel. On mail runs, drivers are normally accompanied by an armed guard sitting next to them to protect the mail. There is a small luggage compartment at the rear of the vehicle; however, additional cargo can be strapped to the roof if necessary.

The stage coach is drawn by 4 animals. The external power source was calculated using the standard Terran horse thus producing 4hp. The speed of the vehicle varies considerably depending on road conditions, and while theoretically can be driven at full gallop, approximately 56kph, the wheels are likely to disintegrate at these speeds. The transmission for the stage coach (the “harness”), is external to the vehicle itself and attached to the animals that are positioned in a 2×2 formation. The suspension is also external to the vehicle. The harness can be removed from the stage coach and broken down into its individual wooden, metal and leather parts to a much smaller volume for storage as needed.

Traveller on the Internet

Freelance Traveller sponsors channels for Traveller fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks, and the two channels are “bridged” so that if you’re visiting either, you can see what’s going on in the other, and talk to people there. For more information about both channels, see our informational pages at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travnet.html#IRC> and <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travchat/index.html>. Come talk “live” with other Traveller

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

fans about anything at all, Traveller or not, and make both channels “jumping” places to hang out!

We’re looking to hold a Topical Chat the evening of April 8, 2011, at around 8:00 PM New York time. The planned topic is “Making An Adventure Work”. Participants—and we hope there will be plenty—are asked to share their experiences and tips on what makes an adventure session “fun” and “successful”.



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 March 2011.

As I've written in my last few articles, toward the end of last year, I completed a twenty-session *Traveller* campaign. Though I invite you to read the complete AP <http://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?t=451150> of the campaign, in this article and the next, I'm going to summarize all of the campaign's plot hooks, in short easy bits that you can expand for your own usage.

These plot hooks are all numbered per my session numbers, so that you can look at the AP if you want to see what I did with the hook. Some of the sessions were based on published adventures, which I've noted.

Plot Hooks #1-11

Sessions #1-2 were character creation and setup.

3. ***There's Always a Boom Tomorrow***. The ship that the players are traveling on faces cataclysmic problems, both in jump space and after it precipitates. [*One Crowded Hour* <http://index.rpg.net/display-entry.phtml?mainid=11242>>]

4. ***So You Say You Want a Revolution?*** The characters find themselves in the middle of a rebellion on a normally calm world. Do they side with the oppressed rebels or the lawful government?

5. ***Police Story***. The characters are deputized as police to prove a friend that is accused of murder innocent. Is he actually innocent or guilty? Was he in

the wrong place at the wrong time or framed? A serious, carefully plotted mystery answers these questions.

6. ***Watch Your Back***. When the PCs try to report a crime to Imperium authorities, they find themselves on the run, because the locals are in bed with the very criminals that they were trying to report.

7. ***Assault on Asteroid X***. Having tracked criminals to a system, the players must assault their asteroid base, first fighting in space then on the asteroid itself. But the asteroid contains not just criminals, but also mysteries.

8-9. ***Earth First***. The group is hired to investigate environmental damage being done by a corporation. To succeed they'll not only need to infiltrate the corporation, but also to befriend a more primitive local culture. [*Nomads of the World-Ocean* <http://index.rpg.net/display-entry.phtml?mainid=688>>]

10A. ***I'd Like To Be ...*** Under the sea, something is destroying vehicles and aquatic life alike. With only the questionable protection of a submarine, the players investigate the menace. [*The Thing in the Depths* <http://index.rpg.net/display-entry.phtml?articleid=21125>>]

10B. ***Revolution Redux***. In somewhat of a repeat of #4, the players end up amidst more civil unrest, here with workers fighting against a corporation. The catch this time is that the corporation is clearly playing dirty tricks, even railroading some of the lead protestors to get them out of system. But what can players do against the power of a megacorp?

11. ***Alien***. The players search for a previously unknown alien race that seems to be hiding in the shadows of an Imperium planet.

Conclusion

That's it for the plot hooks from the first half of my *Traveller* campaign. I'll be back with the other half next month.

Zen and the Art of Leaving the Planet.

Or: How to Get Your Scout Ship From the Imperial Navy, Find a Crew, and Get Into Space.

By Peter Arundel

In a classic game of *Traveller*, the only ships available to a party are Scout ships and Free Traders. The scout ship is favoured due to it being, to all intents and purposes, free. This one incentive is probably responsible for more Scout characters than any other factor.

This scenario enables a beginner to the *Traveller* game to be led through the basic mechanics of the game. He or she will get to use a few skills, get to see the Imperial Navy and Marine Corps in action and finally, blast off for excitement, adventure and really wild things. Assuming, of course, that they have a scout character and that they also have a Scout ship as a mustering out benefit.

Beginnings, assumptions and requirements.

This scenario begins as soon as the mustering out process has been completed. It starts on the Solomani rim and assumes that the character is mustered out on a planet that is still under military rule after the Solomani Rim War. This can include Terra or any number of disputed border worlds. If the standard *Traveller* background is not in use, then improvise a world with some form of military government and a freedom fighter/terrorist problem. If you are using *Mega-Traveller*, then the breakdown of the Imperium supplies many opportunities for inserting this scenario into an on-going campaign. The situations described can be used for almost any encounter with officious bureaucracy.

Assuming that the character has just mustered out of the Scout Service and has been discharged on Terra, at the beginning of the MegaTraveller era, then the scenario begins thus:

Terra is under military administration by the Imperial Navy and the Solomani don't like it. Currently, Solomani extremists, sensing weakness after the Emperor's assassination, are getting bolder and have started to directly attack Imperial forces. Government buildings have been bombed and marines on

patrol have been abused by the public, stoned by youths and, in extreme cases, shot at by snipers. Into this unrest, the characters are dropped.

Getting the Scout Ship.

The Scout character or characters are newly discharged on Terra. Having been blessed with a Type-S Scout ship as a mustering out benefit they only have to collect it and the galaxy awaits. However, it is currently berthed at the main Naval base where the Scout Service has arranged for it to be serviced, fuelled, provisioned and made ready for the characters to collect. They just have to get it out of the base.

On arrival at the base the characters will be stopped at the gate by two marines in full combat armour and carrying gauss rifles. (If the characters are in an air-raft, then they will be ordered to ground level 10 miles before the base perimeter. Ground vehicles and ground level grav. vehicles won't be challenged until they reach the gate) One marine will approach while the second covers the party with his weapon.

Marine #1 : UPP 897557 combat armour, gauss rifle
Demeanour: helpful, polite.

Marine #2 : UPP 687554 combat armour, gauss rifle
Demeanour : watchful, polite.

Results : Provided the characters are reasonable, the marines will supply vehicle and personal base passes and instructions to seek out the duty deck officer. They will stress that the instructions must be followed to the letter as the current troubles are making base personnel nervous. Stick to the roads and obey speed limits.

Deck officer. Naval Captain Elson is the Officer of the Day. As deck officer, he is responsible for all craft flying into and out of the base. He is a very busy man.

Captain Elson : UPP 776899 cloth armour (-1), Auto Snub pistol.
Demeanour : Harassed, nervous, snappy.

(Continued on page 10)

Active Measures

Results: Capt. Elson will launch into a tirade against "... those bastard Solomani (or insert your favoured terrorist group here)—especially the snipers!" Getting access to the ship and then getting clearance to leave will take time, patience and persistence. While trying to get some help from Elson, a four ship flight of grav. gunships will arrive and Elson will rush off to see them landed and berthed correctly. The party will be left out on the apron and Elson will not return. If they go looking for him, they will eventually track him down to a hanger where he is supervising the berthing of a patrol cruiser. He will not be pleased to see the party, but will delegate his second-in-command to help them.

2IC, 2nd Lt. Shannon is deputy deck officer. A pleasant young woman in her mid twenties, she will take the party back out to the apron and call in a grav. sled and a squad of marines to take them all over to the ship.

2nd Lt. Shannon : UPP 676888 Cloth Armour (-1),
Auto Snub pistol
Demeanour : Friendly, helpful, amused by Elson's nervousness.

Results : Shannon will be happy to talk. She will tell the party about the Solomani extremists who, sensing blood, are trying to hasten the Imperial presence off the planet. As she says, "With all the problems in the Imperium, we'll be going soon anyway. And none too soon as far as I'm concerned."

On arrival at the ship, which is located on a distant pad in the far southeastern corner of the base, Shannon will hop over the side of the grav. sled and walk towards the ship. As the players start to follow her, she will be shot by a sniper with a laser rifle (assume a hit, just roll 5d damage). The Marines will shoot off in the sled intent on getting the sniper. If Shannon survives unhurt, she will hand over the security codes to the ship. If she's wounded, she will try to help the characters, but will not be able to since she will be drifting in and out of consciousness. Whatever happens, base security will arrive shortly

and *everyone* will be detained for debriefing. Even if the characters get the codes, they will be denied clearance for take off and will be detained just the same.

Interviews of all witnesses will now commence. Of course, the party had nothing to do with the attack on Shannon, but that will not stop the base security chief taking a great interest in their backgrounds. Checks will be run but since these will take time, everyone will be allowed back into the population after their travel documents are confiscated. They will be told *not* to attempt to leave the planet. Other than that, they are free to enjoy the pleasures of Terra—at least until the investigation is over and that will take some time.

Out in the world, the characters will be told to check in at the main naval security office at the spaceport. After that, they will have to check in at least once a day at whichever local office they are closest to. The Imperial Navy wants to keep tabs on them. In three days time, they will be given the O.K. and will be able to pick up the Scout ship and leave the planet. They will have to go through a similar gate/deck officer/ship routine as they went through before although without the sniper this time.

During their three days, the characters are free to do as they please. They can look for cargo, passengers or crew while they wait or they can take a holiday, go sightseeing or just bum around. A few standard random and legal encounters might be appropriate here. Remember, if the police check their papers they will find discrepancies due to documents being held by the navy. What fun as the players try to explain. Let them try Admin, Streetwise or even Bribery to get out. Sensible players will just explain and let the wheels of investigation turn as they will.

Notes: this scenario (as described) was played using Classic *Traveller* rules within the *MegaTraveller* timeline, hence the armour of the marine officers being given as cloth -1 representing a ballistic cloth suit with a hard armour cuirass or a combat environment suit if the Mercenary book is available.

Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 2

Given the situation, the Second Officer, Ilsa Freilander, a short, dusky woman with an oval face and large, rudder-like nose, chose to focus on the eleven days of Transit, and go from one disgruntled passenger to the next, feigning concern with the aplomb of a professional actress, and assuring all that a solution would soon present itself.

On the bridge, scarred First Officer Hertzog and Mr. LeBoucherre sat, using ships charts, sensor data, and the occasional system buoy to determine the *Waffles'* exact location, and thus, the length of time required for a journey Insystem to Nordic Prime.

Looking up from a computer screen, the large chimp admitted, "I'm not much of one for navigating, Milo, but by my math..." he winced, "we look to be forty" and at this point he shrugged, "something days Outsystem."

"I have forty one point one three, Brodie." the First Officer said, though a little hesitantly.

Brodie wiped sweat from his forehead with a rag from a back pocket and chuckled. "You don't sound so sure there either, bub." The large chimpanzee said, smiling. He then picked a piece of fruit from a large bowl sitting between the Nav and Sensor boards while the First Officer flashed the estimated Insystem travel time to the Captain and all department heads.

The First Officer, Milo, watched as Brodie peeled the yellow fruit, a finger absently rubbing along the ugly 14 centimeter scar that ran horizontally just beneath his right cheekbone to just behind his notched ear.

Brodie LeBoucherre set his battered porkpie hat on the table before him before absently taking a bite of the banana he held in his left hand.

Hertzog watched for a few moments, smiling, before chuckling.

Tossing the peel into a small trashcan, and chewing the last bite of banana, Brodie made eye contact with the First Officer, who continued to chuckle.

"Something funny, First Officer Hertzog?" Brodie asked.

Hertzog tried to stifle his obvious amusement, but failed, and went from chuckling to outright laughing.

Brodie rose and took a step toward The Big Chair, where Hertzog was sitting; again asking Hertzog, though more informally, "Is there something funny going on, pal?"

By now Hertzog had started laughing so hard he slapped his knee several times, and tears ran from his eyes; his normally alabaster face with its pencil-thin, mustache a brilliant red.

"No no, Brodie. No!" the First Officer got out. "I'm sorry, Mr. LeBoucherre, but when I was a child, our Meemaw had a little monkey that she kept in a cage—oh, so big." he continued, estimating the dimensions of the cage with hands held wide. "Oh, it was so cute in its diaper—and we would feed the furry little beast bananas!" the First Officer finished, wiping his eyes and, still chuckling, trying to take a deep breath.

"Monkey, huh?" Brodie asked, nodding slightly in disbelief.

"I don't get you, Hertzog. I could eat a dozen oranges at a sitting," (something which Brodie had done on at least one occasion) "and nothing's ever been said. But a banana... why that's different, eh?"

With a last short step, Brodie was leaning close over Hertzog, looking down at him with very little humor in his eyes, though he was smiling now.

Being this close to one of the 'geneered chimpanzees, it was much easier to remember them being at least several times stronger than the average human—or First Officer, for that matter, Hertzog contemplated.

"Now lay off, Hertzog. Ya got me,?" Brodie thumped him hard in the chest with a large index finger for emphasis. The First Officer for his part, remained cool as a cucumber, even while envisioning Brodie pretty easily folding him in half like one of the folding chairs in the Crew Lounge.

"I'll be sure to check with Chef at this oversight, Mr. LeBoucherre. Bananas shall be removed from the menu. After all, we wouldn't want one of our fin-

Raconteurs' Rest

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est Officers succumbing to food allergies.”

“Food allergies? By the teeth of The Prophets, what do food allergies have to do with you being an ass, Milo? I’m fine with bananas. I love bananas! I’m not fine with you!”

Brodie had a very strong impulse to smash Hertzog in the face, but, as two weeks in the brig were bad enough under the best of circumstances, Brodie instead merely “Hrrmphed” and sat back down at his station, putting his hat back on before eating an orange.

Hertzog followed suit. “Good Orange!” he volunteered, somewhat overenthusiastically.

Part 3

Minutes after receiving the estimated travel time Insystem, Captain Fygg got in contact with Nordic’s System Control, and reported an Emergency, as required; expecting a quick response. The far-away voice that was System Control replied, “It will be duly noted in the log book, Captain Fygg. We’ve double-checked our homing beacon and activated the floods out at the landing field.”

The Captain was stunned. “Aside from duly noting our Emergency in your cursed log book,” the Captain growled, “might you be scrambling your Rescue Boats? ...Our Emergency?”

“Yes, you’ve already reported it. Yes, I’ve noted it in the log. We have no boats, Captain. Our facilities consist of a landing field and small terminal building. We’re able to sell you fuel, should you arrive...and snacks.” the voice replied.

“Yes, yes...snacks make everything fine and dandy, don’t they?!” Fygg yelled.

“We’re a Frontier Installation, Captain,” the Controller went on, “a simple lay-over. We have what we need and little else. Hell, to be frank with you Captain, I’d be surprised if we’d warrant a mention in the latest edition of *Crowley’s Charted Space*, or even the *TAS Guidebook*.”

Fygg made a solemn promise to himself not to go anywhere he hadn’t been before, and to tear the relevant pages from both *Crowley’s* and the *Guidebook*,

should this dump have actually merited mention.

“Should you make it in by the 24th”, which was only twelve days off, “we’ll have the Nordic Community Players’ in the terminal performing ‘Oklahoma’. It’s quite a—”

Fygg cut the comm, “We are on our own...” the lanky Captain told his empty suite.

One hour forty seven minutes after travel time had been determined, the Captain called all Officers to a staff meeting in the Crew Lounge.

In the Passenger Lounge on the deck above, members of the Purser’s Department served drinks and salty appetizers to the passengers. Even Doc Billings was on hand, offering passengers who might be too agitated to sleep otherwise, a mild sedative.

As the small line that made up The Waffles Officer’s corps filed into the Crew Lounge, most thought Captain Nordel Fygg would be making his customary “appearance” over the comm, from his stateroom, as usual. But there he was, tall, freshly shaven, and in full dress uniform.

“People, people...Good to see you all.” he said cordially, shaking hands here and there. After a few minutes small talk, he prompted the crew to sit. “Yes, anywhere is fine.” he assured them. Then, “To business, shall we?”

There was the slight smell of ozone and a crackling in the air, and then , there it was. A large, three dimensional image of their ship, the *Chicken and Waffles*, hovering a half meter above the big table’s surface.

“The *Waffles*, here,” Fygg nodded almost imperceptibly, “began her life as one of one hundred and sixty two *Auspicious Venture*-Class Merchanters produced at the Van Ness Shipyards at Luna one hundred and thirteen years ago.” The Captain looked at the assembled, his left index finger raised as if he were about to make some vital point. He made a small circular motion with his finger. “Luna, as you may know, orbits Olde Earth, yes?” he smiled briefly, imagining the drum-roll in his head.

“Weight, dimensions. You can even read the architects’ names on the bronze plaque on the port bulkhead in the cargo bay!” he waved a hand for-

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Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 12)

ward toward the cargo bay. “But the old girl, we know a bit more about her than her manufacturers had chosen to tell. Like each of us, she is flawed, people. And by those flaws might we be saved.”

“Gibraltar.” Fygg said before sitting down. Unlike the Captain, Gibby didn’t rise for his presentation; merely squaring his shoulders and clearing his throat before going on.

“The big girl here runs on a pair of Garabaldi-Singh A2 Fusion reactors. Each unit masses six hundred fifty eight point three metric tons. Together they produce a rated fifteen hundred and sixty Megawatts of energy. In an emergency I can get her up to eighteen seventy two. With design-specified fuel-mass of eighty four metric tons, the A2s are rated to run for 30 Standard Days. With battery power we’d have two more weeks, if needed. That’s 44 Standard Days of Life Support *in toto*.”

Gibby took a large coffee from a battered, old Servebot and took a sip of the dark, bitter stuff. “The last Transit took 11 days, dropping us out with 32 Standard Days left.”

“And that with actual hot food being served for only 11 more Standard Days, before we’ll have to go to rations.” Interjected the Captain’s No.2, Ilsa Freilander, who frowned at the idea of eating any sort of rations.

“However, as Captain Fygg said, the *Waffles* is flawed,” continued the Engineer.. “Instead of eighty four tons, our ship actually has one hundred and twelve metric tons of fuel for the powerplant. This provides 59 Standard Days life support. Though, as Ilsa pointed out, we’ll be on rations soon enough.”

The discussion went round and round and round, with everyone chiming in. Soon it began to feel like the old logic puzzle where the man in the boat has to move the wolf, the sheep and the box of cabbage to the other side of the lake.

One thing that was agreed on was the passengers. Twenty two amongst the 10 Large Staterooms, and seven in Steerage. No one wanted to have to hassle with them; particularly not on a projected eighty one day voyage.

The ever-nervous Doc Billings, who’d been listening via comm from the Passenger Lounge joined in when the passengers’ welfare was brought up; whispering “There are, after all, only two Cyro berths aboard *Waffles*. The most you might hope is to put a family inside—two adults and possibly a pair, or even a trio of children, if they’re small enough. That would still leave you more than twenty passengers to deal with.”

Someone at the table started “Meta—”.

“Metabolics?” Doc Billings’ raspy voice hissed. “You mean those so called Fast Drugs, I’m sure. No. I have only three doses in the Med Bay, and that’s where they stay until needed.” One could almost hear the Doctor’s eyes rolling.

“My thanks for your insights, *Herr Doktor*.” Fygg replied before cutting the doctor out of the loop.

Taking a minute, Captain Fygg quietly removed a silver case from inside his coat. The noise in the Crew Lounge dropped off appreciably as Fygg went through his ritual. Opening the case, Fygg removed a long, elegant smoke; a bit of blue-green foliage sticking from the end of the gold-trimmed, saffron-colored paper.

“Number two.” the Captain nodded. The image of the *Waffles* disappeared, to be replaced by the massive disc of the Nordic system; an image synthesized both from provided charts and *Waffles*’ gathered sensor data. A small green pyramid winked into existence at what looked to be some sixty million kilometers from the Nordic system’s Oort Cloud. Looking close, one could see the pyramid with its identifying label providing both the ship’s registration number and name.

“I have already been in contact with Nordic System Control, and they are little more than a glorified liquor store’s parking lot! I think,” the lean Captain said; the cigarette clutched between his teeth, “that our only alternative to doping our passengers for a trip Insystem which none of us will likely survive anyway, is to go about refueling The *Waffles* out here.” He nodded toward the stern, and the Oort Cloud.

...to be continued...

House Rules and Background

by Peter Arundel

Character generation

Think Hudson and Hicks. Think Dekkard. Do not think Skywalker (though Solo is almost O.K.). Think Sean Connery in *Outlands*. Think of the crew of *Serenity* or, if you like the Cyberpunk genre, then think *Robocop* or *Kusunagi* or even *Benten*, *Gogl* and *Sen-goku*.

I like science fiction. I like SciFi films, TV shows, and RPGs, and the best ones, to my mind at least, are the grubby ones, the ones where starship interiors are grimy places filled with machinery and pipes and planets are dark and hostile or bone dry under a pitiless sun. So, for me, *Firefly* beats *Star Trek*, *Aliens* beats *Star Wars* and *Cyberpunk* (R. Talsorian Games) beats *Traveller*. Sort of.

So, why am I writing an article about *Traveller*? Well, it's because *Traveller* (and at this point I should say that *Traveller*, to me, means Classic *Traveller* and nothing else ...) has some of the best supporting material available to any game system and I am genuinely fond of it. The character generation system is fun in itself, the starship design system, if you move to *High Guard*, is complex enough to be interesting whilst being simple enough to be usable and there is an entire empire of star systems already there for you to travel around—usually whilst indulging in a little speculative trading as you go, thanks to the extensive trading tables so helpfully provided. On the down side, the skills system, although extensive in scope, is seriously underdeveloped and the experience system is basically nonexistent. The solution is to take what you like, rewrite what you don't and, above all, to enjoy it as you do.

The last *Traveller* game I played was set on the Solomani Rim and involved *no* aliens other than animals. This is because most players have difficulty role-playing a human without trying to work out what a Droyne Sport would do in a given situation. Aliens always end up as humans with fur or wings or pointy ears and are often played by those players trying for an edge via an aliens enhanced (over human) physical or mental abilities. It's better to just ban

them—or better still, don't tell your players that they exist within *Traveller*. This works very well with players unfamiliar with the game and science fiction doesn't need aliens. *Firefly* gets by without them as does *Battletech*. Let's face it, humans are diverse enough in outlook to keep any but the most dedicated role-player happy...

There were also *no* psionics. Because I hate them. I hate mind reading characters in films and I hate having to constantly think ahead about how my psionic-wielding players are going to behave. Again, I just ban them. I'm the referee. I can do these things.

Finally, I pegged the maximum Tech Level to 12 for most things. I did this mainly to remove some of the more extreme military equipment from the game whilst still allowing the available tech to be pretty impressive in comparison to 21st century earth.

In this particular game, there was no Imperium, and mankind had spread from Earth and the galaxy was a dangerous place. Like a spaghetti western but with the addition of everyone's favourite villains, The MegaCorporations. Justice and government were highly variable and only sure at a local level. A starship captain or outpost administrator was in sole charge of his vessel or post. In theory all corporate outposts and independent planets were subject to Terran Law. In reality almost anything went in the quest for greater profit. While some planets were high-tech bastions of wealth and privilege many more are poor, underdeveloped backwaters or corporate fiefdoms. Corruption was endemic with nearly everyone out for what he or she could get (I find this is the attitude of most PCs anyway). The galaxy is full of scavengers, mercenaries, bounty hunters and corporate hitmen (and women...)

Characters were generated using the following standard *Traveller* career paths: All options in *Traveller Book 4 (Mercenary)*, *Book 5 (High Guard)*, *Book 6 (Scouts)*, *Basic Traveller* and *Supplement 4 (Citizens of the Imperium)* are available for character generation but characters without the possibility of promotion were all given two skills per term in a similar way to basic Scout characters.

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Doing It My Way

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Skills System changes

The skills system in Classic Traveller is underdeveloped and, in the case of Combat, unrealistic in many ways. The following guidelines may be used if required.

Skill Tasks

As in basic *Traveller*, a character is successful when attempting a task on a roll of 8+ on 2d6. This is fine for tasks that take place instantly, or over a period of a few seconds (such as shooting a gun), but is not really suitable for tasks that take time (such as climbing a cliff, performing surgery, or plotting a course between stars). For these complex tasks a total must be assigned for completion of the task. Tools or equipment may be needed for the operation as specified by the referee. The first roll of a complex task must exceed 8+ otherwise the whole task fails and must be attempted again by that character. Any unmodified roll of 2 after the initial roll causes the task to fail, though the character can go back and start again.

Example: To plot a course to Barnard's Star from the Sirius system the referee decides that the ship's navigator must roll a total of 25. The referee states that a functioning ship's computer, running the Navigation Program is required. The character navigating has the navigation skill at level 2. The first roll turns up a 4 on one die and a 1 on the other, giving a total of 7 (4+1+2=7), and the task fails. Scratching his head, the navigator consults the computer again, rolling 3 and 5. The task begins with the total so far rolled standing at 10 (3+5+2=10). The next roll is 7 (plus the navigator's skill of 2), yielding a total so far of 19. The character need only roll 4+ on 2D to complete the task and set the ship's course. Of course, if he rolls double one, then he makes a mistake, screws up the job so far, and must start all over again.

Combat

Think M41a Pulse Rifle. Think Cobra Assault Cannon. Do not think blasters. Don't even contemplate phasers.

Some people asked why I didn't just lift a combat system out of another RPG and use that instead but I felt compelled to make use of as much *Traveller* material as possible. The system that emerged was adequate but no more.

Hitting a target

A roll of 8+ is required to hit a target. All the normal *Traveller* range modifiers apply, and the **SemiAuto** line is always used if the weapon has one. Ignore the **Armor** modifiers when it comes to the 'to-hit' roll. A character's skill modifier is also applicable. Semi-automatic weapons may fire twice per round; bolt action or other manual repeaters have a ROF of 1. Full auto fire allows a character to fire as many times as the weapons ROF in a round (usually 5). However, each shot after the first applies a -2 DM for the second shot and a further -1 for each subsequent shot due to recoil pushing the weapon off target. Some weapons may be designed to be low recoil and the negative modifier for subsequent shots can be ignored or reduced at the referee's whim. In a similar vein, high recoil weapons can have the modifiers increased. In general, the larger caliber and heavier a projectile, the bigger the recoil penalty should be unless there is some form of mitigation (muzzle brake or similar) built into the weapon.

Example: An SMG (3d damage) fires a burst of five rounds. The first round is unmodified for recoil, the second is at -2, the third at -3 and so on until the last, which suffers a -5 modifier. It can be seen that firing full auto at long range is a pointless exercise.

Damage

There is a major change to standard *Traveller* combat. Armour absorbs or deflects damage—it doesn't affect the chance to hit a target. Weapon damage stays the same for all weapons except the shotgun, which counts each hit as four separate strikes, each doing 1d6 damage—this reflects a shotgun's high damage and low armour penetration potential. When a hit has been scored, the weapons armour modifier, as given in the *Traveller* rules, is applied to the damage. Always use the **SemiAuto** line of the armour modifiers if the weapon has one.

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Doing It My Way

Damage for a rifle against a cloth-armoured individual would now be 3d-2 (3d for a rifle, as usual, with a modifier of -2 for cloth as per the regular Classic *Traveller* armour table)

To find out how much damage results in what type of wound, average the character's STR and DEX, rounding up. If a character takes double this figure in damage then he is killed instantly. Equal or greater damage means he's down and dying. Two-thirds is a serious wound and one-third a minor wound. Round all fractions up.

So, for example, a character with a UPP 777777 would have wound thresholds of 3, 5, 7 and 14 equating to the usual *Traveller* wound thresholds of 1, 2 and 3 characteristics reduced to zero plus an overkill, instant death, vaporised result.

All damage is cumulative.

Armour

Due to the new damage rules, numeric values must now be assigned to armour types. Use the following table as a guide.

Jack	6
Mesh	8
Cloth	8
Ablat	6 (x2 against lasers)
Reflec	12 (x0 against all except lasers)
Combat	10
Battledress	10 plus

The difference between Cloth and Combat doesn't seem much until you remember the modifiers in the *Traveller* Weapon tables. A Rifle, as we have already seen, does 3d-2 against Cloth Armour but it does 3d-4 against Combat Armour. On an average roll, a Rifle will damage a cloth armoured adversary but will leave one in combat armour unscathed. The observant will notice that laser weapons suddenly become very deadly against targets not wearing Reflec, Ablat or Combat armour.

Battledress ratings can vary according to just what battledress is in your game. If it's powered combat armour then leave it as it is. If, however, your powered armour is more like a Landmate (*Appleaseed*) or a Marauder Suit (*Starship Troopers*)

then you'll want to up the protection rating.

Example: Corporal Aziz of the Colonial Marine Corps fires his ACR at a fleeing terrorist. The terrorist is at medium range and evading. Aziz fires a burst of 5 rounds requiring 8+ to hit. Aziz has a skill level of 3. His first shot rolls a 4 plus his skill, 3, minus 2 for evading at medium range, and plus 1 for firing an ACR at medium range with HE rounds for a total of 6. His first round misses. The second rolls 11+3 (skill)-2(evasion)+1(range)-2(recoil)=11. A hit! The third shot misses (roll: 4+3-2+1-3=3), as does the fourth (7+3-2+1-4=5); the fifth (11+3-2+1-5=8) by a small miracle also hits. The terrorist is wearing a ballistic cloth flak jacket (cloth+1 in Classic *Traveller* terms) that stops 8 points of damage. Checking the HE ammo against cloth armour, we find a modifier of -3 which, as it's Cloth+1, becomes -2. Aziz rolls his 4d6 damage and gets 15-2(ACR HE cloth modifier)-8(armour rating for cloth)=5 points of damage. Consulting the Terrorist's UPP, the Referee finds that the terrorist is built like Rambo (UPP A8C) with thresholds of 4/8/11/22; the ACR's HE round has caused a minor wound. The second round that hit rolls only 7 on 4d6 and bounces off the flak jacket even as the terrorist stumbles and falls...

A few thoughts on Traveller weaponry.

The Light Assault Gun is described in Book 4: Mercenary as "essentially a heavy rifle". This made me think of the old Boys Anti-tank Rifle (.55 cal) and Barret Light (.50 cal) weapons, but on a more considered reading of the text I noticed that it only weighs 4.5kg (loaded)—about 10lbs in US non-metric measurement—while being, without a bullpup configuration, a quite handy 900mm long (35.5"-ish). Comparing it with an M1 Garand which Wikipedia puts at 5.3kg and over 1100mm long, we can see that the Traveller LAG isn't an anti-material rifle. Comparing its muzzle velocity and projectile weights with other *Traveller* weapons, we find that it's actually similar to a high velocity, rifled, magazine fed shotgun. In 20th century terms it's closest cousins would be the CAWS project or the Franchi SPAS 15—a comparison made all the more relevant

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Doing It My Way

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with the recent creation of the 12-bore FRAG-12 HE round.

Shotguns with tubular magazines, as described in *Traveller*, are usually reloaded with individual rounds, one at a time rather than with a complete tube of eight rounds. In reality, the *Traveller* shotgun magazine is unlikely to be successful being too long and delicate to be practical.

Gauss rifle rounds as described could not be spin stabilised. Any projectile with a length/width ratio greater than about 3 will not be stable if spun. A

gauss rifle's needle bullet would have to be fin-stabilised. This can cause lots of fun if fired in a vacuum or very thin atmospheres. A spin-stabilised 4mm round would be, about, 12mm long and weigh something less than 2 grammes.

Body pistols do how much damage? In Book 1, damage is listed as 2d on page 17 and 3d in the tables on page 47. Book 6: Scouts, page 14 lists damage as 2d. The Charts and Tables book of the *Traveller* Starter Set lists damage as 3d. . .

Due to the large negative modifiers on the armour penetration tables with the new damage system, I went with 3d.

Up Close and Personal

Norman Nescio

profiled by Jeff Zeitlin

Norman Nescio is employed by a large organization to find out things. His assignments are usually long-term with occasional reports sent back to his controllers, allowing him to establish and maintain an identity suitable for gaining the information desired. He will develop identities that allow him to be inquisitive, or to be personable and move in circles where his target information will be accessible.

He is a master of disguise and impersonation, allowing him to learn most human cultures well enough to convince non-natives that he is a native of the culture he is impersonating (though not good enough to fool a native; he will never attempt that sort of imposture). His skills in this area extend to being able to impersonate women and members of distinctive human minor races, though not some of the physically more extreme variations from the Vilani-Solomai-Zhodani norm. In both his impersonations and his 'natural' appearance, he is unremarkable—physically fit, but not noticeably beyond the norm for the society he is moving in, and most definitely not striking in appearance, either positively or negatively.

His skills are oriented toward maintaining his cover identities and gathering information—he is clumsy with most weapons, but is remarkably com-

petent with computers, and can quickly master the organization of a hardcopy library. He is an astute observer, missing little (though not giving away that he's observing), and forgetting less. He is personable, and will generally create a borderline neutral/favorable impression on most people he comes in contact with.

While he will take on any role that he perceives as being appropriate for acquiring the information he has been sent after, his preferred roles are those of private investigator, researcher, or steward; these roles give him access to a wide range of sources without being unnecessarily prominent in society.

Referee's Notes

If a profile with specific skills is needed, generate what will fit the campaign best, taking into account the above description. Interaction-based skills should be prominent, and suit the particular role Nescio has adopted. Weapon skills should be limited to low skill (level 0 or 1 in Classic *Traveller*) in one or two personal concealable weapons.

There is no reason why this profile could not be changed to describe Norma Nescio, a woman capable of impersonating a man.

It should be noted that Nescio has eidetic memory. If psionics are available, he should have a basic mind-shield, plus a small set of information-gathering psi skills, such as clairvoyance or read mind.

Doing It My Way

Matching the Classic Traveller Tech Tree in GURPS

by Anthony Jackson

Explaining the Problem

GURPS Traveller represents a valiant attempt to convert the *Traveller* setting into the *GURPS* mechanics. Regrettably, that doesn't mean it's perfect.

The *GURPS* tech system was never really designed for a multi-TL setting in which there is regular trade between regions of different TLs. It can be done, but the effects are occasionally odd. For example, electronic devices are usually both half price and half cost after one TL, and 1/4 after two. Given the exchange rates in *Far Trader*, this implies that any sane GTL 10 world will prefer to import GTL 12 products rather than use GTL 10 products. This isn't canonical; most worlds in *Traveller* apparently prefer to mostly use local products. However, in order to make the use of local products rational, the exchange rates can't be anywhere near the *Far Trader* values; simply negating the cost advantage of higher TL implies an exchange rate of 4:1 between 10 and 12, and negating the quality advantage as well implies an exchange rate of somewhere above 10:1.

In many ways, that's realistic for a 2 TL difference; using the World Bank definitions, if 'high income' (developed nations) are TL 7, one can pretty reasonably argue for 'upper middle income' (e.g. Brazil) states at TL 6, 'lower middle income' (e.g. the Philippines) at TL 5, and 'low income' (e.g. most of sub-Saharan Africa) at TL 4-, and the per capita GNP ratio between high income and lower middle income really is around 10:1. However, *Traveller* canon doesn't imply anywhere near that much difference in wealth and power between TTL 15 worlds and TTL 12 worlds. For that matter, I'm not sure if the difference between Regina and Rhyllanor is really equivalent to the difference between 1900 and 2000; I'd think more like 1960 vs 2000.

That would put TTL12-15 as a single tech level in *GURPS*. However, aside from conflicting with the assumptions of *Traveller* players, is this really that bad? There are ways of creating distinctions within a single TL, and in truth, there are many GTL 11+

technologies that are inappropriate for *Traveller*.

What TL is the Imperium, Really?

If you look at available *Traveller* tech vs *GURPS* tech, the maximum TL of the Imperium does not appear to be 12. Running through common equipment types, we find:

Armor and Materials: The best armor in Classic *Traveller* is bonded superdense, with 14× the DR per unit thickness of steel, and about 8× per unit weight. That's equivalent to a mass multiplier of .07, which is similar to GTL 10 advanced metal at .06. Material Tech: 10.

Biotech and Medicine: *Traveller* isn't historically big on biotech; there's little evidence of genetic engineering, so the GTL could be as low as 7. The exception is the Terrans uplifting apes and dolphins, which sounds like GTL 10 or so. *Traveller* medical tech, on the other hand, is pretty good; with the exception of instaskill (GTL 11) most of the wonder drugs in UltraTech look reasonable, giving an overall GTL of about 10. One can argue for GTL 9; *Traveller* drugs tend to have nasty side effects, and biotech is not exactly common.

Computers: Classic *Traveller* computers are quite primitive, at roughly GTL 7. However, CT also had robots; it didn't have AI, but it had advanced near-AI computers and computers could become spontaneously sentient. This sounds like GTL 9.

Drives/Gravitics: CT space drives are largely equivalent to GTL 11 reactionless thrusters; thruster plates were later set at TL11. CT contragrav is more like a thruster plate variant than the amazing performance GTL12 contragravity, so the average GTL is probably 11. GTL11 includes some force field tech that's vaguely gravity-related (deflectors, force weapons) but inappropriate for *Traveller*.

Electronics and Stealth: *Traveller* doesn't have intruder chameleon or holobelts, and doesn't really have anything quite like a multiscanner, though neural activity sensors and densitometers have some similarity. On the other hand, it does have instant chameleon, various forms of stealth, pretty good personal sensors, and the like. It doesn't have neutrino

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Doing It My Way

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comms, though it has meson comms which are similar, if larger. This sounds most similar to GTL9.

Exotics: Black globes are a primitive and poorly understood force field; since a normal spaceship force field is GTL11, this sounds like a TL 10 prototype of a TL 11 system. Nuclear Dampers are GTL15, putting them well outside the range of any other *Traveller* tech, but *Traveller* dampers are quite large. Meson weapons and screens are a *Traveller*-specific oddity with no obvious GTL, but the GT rules for them are not obviously bad.

Power: Energy densities in Classic *Traveller* were on the order of 250 megawatts per dton; by *Fire, Fusion, and Steel* this dropped to around 80 megawatts per dton. Including fuel volume, the actual energy density is on the order of 40 megawatts per dton, and around 2 megawatts per ton mass. GTL10 fusion is 40 megawatts per dton (and has no fuel requirement), 10 megawatts per ton mass, which seems to be in the same ballpark at least. GTL11 has antimatter, which is explicitly beyond Imperial tech, but not that far, so GTL10 is probably correct.

Weapons: Meson weapons and fusion weapons have no exact equivalent in *GURPS* (the *GURPS* fusion gun is a gravitic device which is not exactly equivalent to the *Traveller* weapon), though the standard GT assumption that a fusion gun is a compact plasma weapon is somewhat plausible. All other weapons in *Traveller* are available by GTL 10 (X-ray lasers), and there are GTL 10-11 weapons (e.g., paralysis beams and force blades) that are not canon for *Traveller*. Once again, GTL10 seems about right.

Overall, it looks like the maximum GTL of the Imperium is about 10, rising to about 11 in gravitics, and down around 9 in electronics and biotech.

Applying Tech Level to Prices

As discussed above, a difference of one *GURPS* TL makes a lot of difference in value. This can be handled by exchange rates, but produces a few weird effects, and is confusing. My solution is fairly simple: list all prices in Imperial credits, which are considered to be prices on the interstellar market. For GTL10 equipment, use the list cost; for lower tech

equipment (note: this means the item is actually built to lower-tech specs), multiply cost by 0.3 for GTL9 equipment, 0.1 for GTL8 equipment, and 0.05 for GTL7 or lower equipment. Thus, for example, an ACR (GTL9, \$1,274) is actually Cr 380, while a gauss rifle (GTL10, \$3,029) remains at Cr 3,029.

These prices are in Imperial Credits, which is usually workable enough. However, on a world with relatively low trade, many imported items may be hard to find, or at a high markup; on a world that wants more trade, the buying power of Imperial Credits may be increased (and may be rather difficult to obtain). The degree to which this is true is up to the referee, though in general the effects should be more visible on worlds that are low population or low tech. Worlds with low grade starports will usually have limited supplies of CrI, but may not be very interested in acquiring more.

For worlds in the interstellar community, per capita production may be estimated per the table below. Note that one CrI should be interpreted as around \$20 in modern currency, making a TL 7 world similar to a modern western state, and a TL 15 world immensely rich by modern standards.

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Per Capita Production by Tech Level		
Traveller TL	GURPS TL	Imperial Credits
0	1-3	25
1	4	50
2	5	100
3	5	150
4	5	200
5	6	300
6	6	500
7	7	1000
8	8	2000
9	9	3000
10(A)	9	4000
11(B)	9	6000
12(C)	10	8000
13(D)	10	11000
14(E)	10	15000
15(F)	10	20000
16(G)	11	30000

Doing It My Way

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What Goods are Available at What TL

While *Traveller* TLs from 12 to 15 are fundamentally the same TL in *GURPS*, there is some distinction in *Traveller*. This is handled by limiting which GTL 10 technologies are actually available. The normal rules are as follows:

At TTL 16, all GTL 10 options are available; a reasonable subset of GTL 11 equipment is available at 4x cost.

At TTL 15, all GTL 10 options are available. GTL11 regular and super thrusters are available. Fusion power uses GTL10 stats, but is double cost (\$100/lb). Prototype GTL 11 devices may exist (as per TTL 16), but are not on the general market, and generally cannot be purchased.

At TTL 14, power plant size increases by 50%, cost is multiplied by .75 (\$50/lb). Meson communicators are unavailable, meson weapons are limited to 100T weapon bays. Genius computers are not available. Max jump is 5, max G-comp is 5.

At TTL 13, advanced armor and structural materials are unavailable; personal armor should be limited to TL 9 equipment. Electronic devices must be purchased 'cheap', with doubled size and half cost; many other components should also be cheap. Max jump is 4, max G-comp is 4. Fusion weapons are only available as large weapons (6,400 kilojoules and above).

At TTL 12, X-ray lasers are unavailable, max jump is 3, max G-comp is 3. Power plant size is doubled, cost is halved (\$25/lb). Meson guns are only available as spinal mounts.

At TTL 11, most equipment is only available with GTL9 stats (but use the normal 30% cost modifier for GTL9 equipment). GTL11 regular, but not super,

thrusters remain available. Fusion plants with TTL12 stats remain available through TTL 9. Max jump is 2, max G-comp is 2.

At TTL 10, thrusters are no longer available, but contragravity is.

At TTL 9, advanced GTL9 materials are no longer available; personal armor should use GTL8 stats, at the normal 10% of cost. Plasma weapons are no longer available.

Specialized Traveller Tech

Contragravity (TTL9): Contragravity is the lower-tech equivalent to reactionless thrusters; a CG drive has twice the thrust of an equivalent reactionless drive, but is limited to a total thrust of 200% of the local gravitational field. Available as regular thrusters at TTL9, super thrusters at TTL12.

Meson Guns (TTL11): Meson weapons have twice the cost of a particle beam of the same TL, and are otherwise identical.

Meson Screens (TTL12): Meson screens are force field variants that protect from meson weapons. Weight is $(DR \times \text{area}) / 10,000,000$ tons, price is \$2 million/ton, power consumption is 40 megawatts/ton. Maximum DR is 10,000 at TTL 12, $20,000 \times (TTL - 12)$ at higher TLs. Available 'cheap' at TTL13-.

Nuclear Dampers (TTL12): Per mile of radius, 10 tons, 2 dtons, \$2 million, 800 MW. Maximum radius is 1 mile at TTL12, $3 \times (TTL - 12)$ at higher TLs. Available 'cheap' at TTL13-. May be very small if desired; a sphere with a diameter of 1' is 1 lb, \$100, 80 kW.

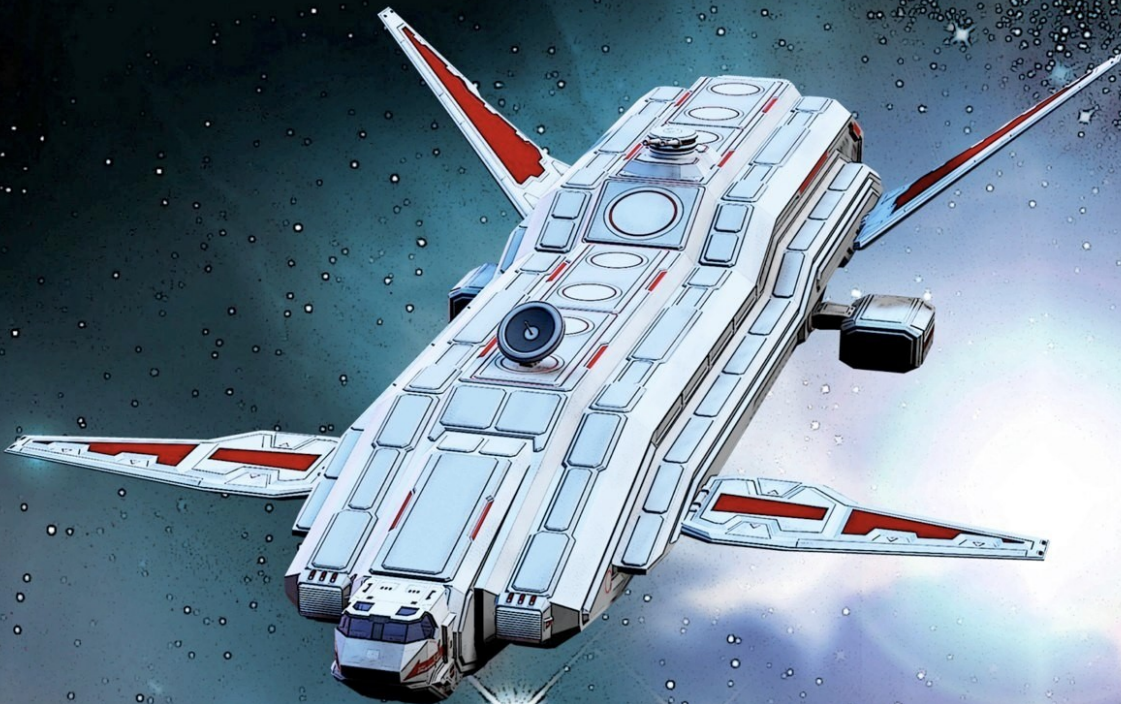
Neural Activity Sensors (TTL13): Treat as a GTL9 bioscanner at TTL13, GTL10 at TTL15.

Gravitic Scanner (TTL12): Detects active gravitics; use the stats of a radscanner, the effects of a gravscanner. Like most electronics, must be 'cheap' until TTL14.

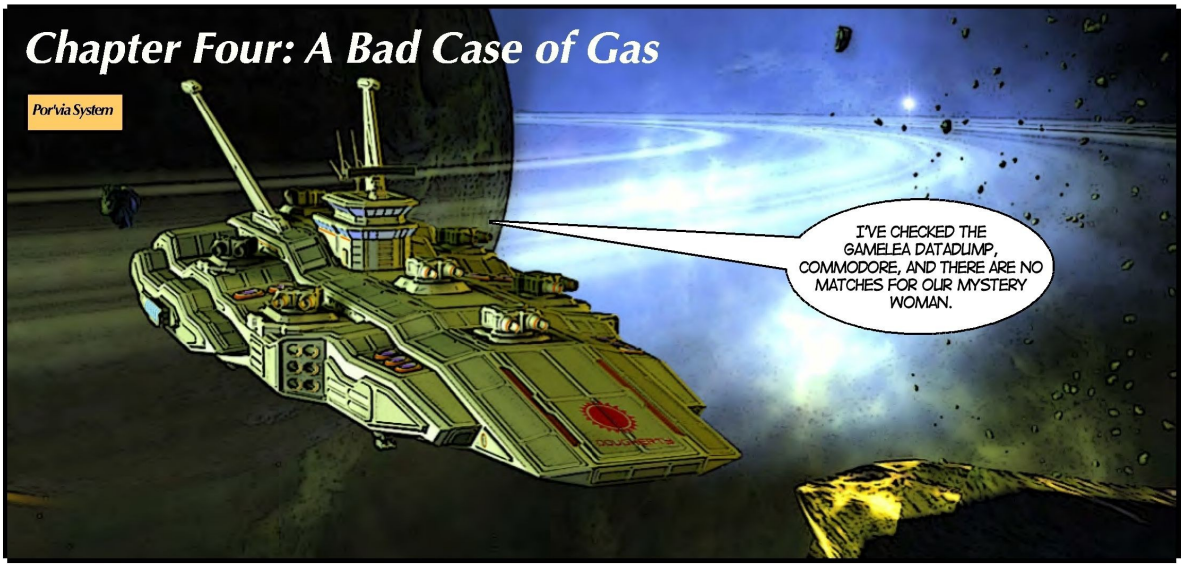
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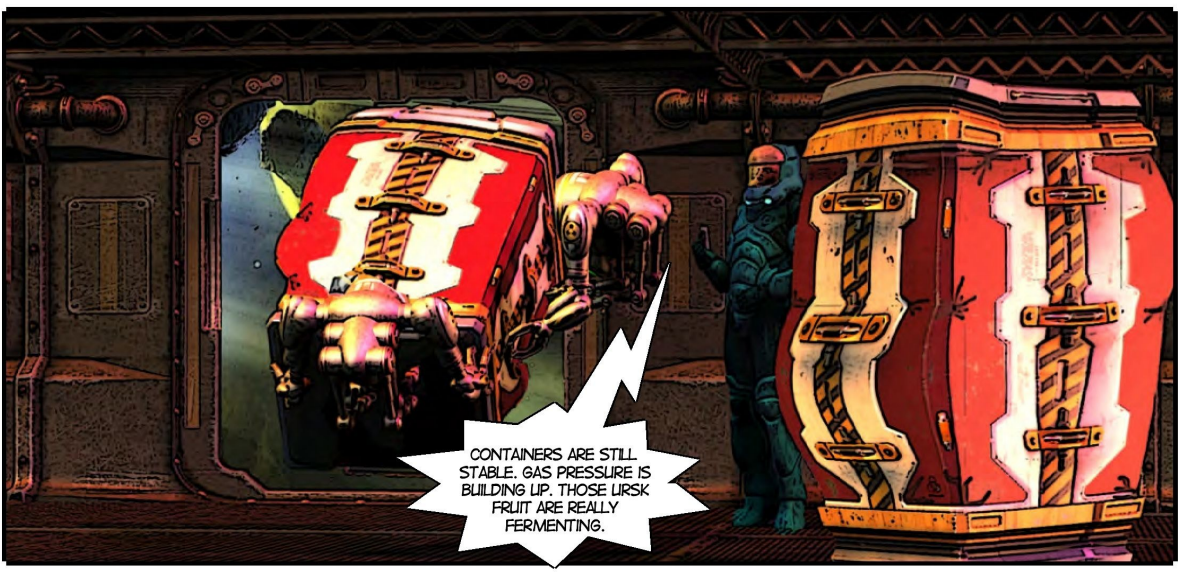
Chapter Four Part One



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



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

“Spoilers” are discouraged, but we recognize that sometimes they're unavoidable.

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

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If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” Traveller rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond Traveller, we'll accept and hold the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

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What needs to be in the submission?

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

What format should I submit it in?

That depends, in part, on what you're submitting. In general:

Text should be submitted in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF), Microsoft Word 2003 format (DOC), OpenOffice Writer format (ODT), or plain text (TXT). Most word processors will support one of those; if yours seems not to, please write to us for assistance. Please avoid PDF if at all possible; it is difficult to extract your submission from the PDF to insert it into our magazine.

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

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

News About Traveller

The Latest From Far Future Enterprises

Sat, 26 Mar 2011

- A Traveller MMORPG for iPhone and iPad, IngZ announced their iPhone MMORPG for Traveller and they plan to release it this summer. There's more at <http://www.traveller-ar.com>, including the chance to participate in their beta. It's for the iPhone, but they plan to expand to Android later this year.
- Moving toward final files is Traveller5: the ultimate Traveller role-playing system. With your CDROM comes access to the Secret Forums. <http://www.farfuture.net/cdroms.html>
- Matt Carson wrote the final installment of the New Era Trilogy: *The Backwards Mask*. It's available on Kindle, Nook, and DriveThruRPG. This series is a strange situation: the never-published manuscript for the third book in the series was lost so Marc and Matt crafted the plot the book and Matt wrote it. *Then*, Marc discovered the lost manuscript. So this is a trilogy with TWO endings. The entire trilogy (quadrology?) is available at DriveThruRPG. http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product_info.php?products_id=88914&affiliate_id=4209
- FFE has had a CDROM filled with the issues of JTAS *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* for some time, but there are those of you who want to get the individual issues as downloads, so FFE recently made all 24 issues available at DriveThruRPG. There's an index of all of the 24 JTAS issues at http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product_info.php?products_id=89614&affiliate_id=4209
- Pete Rogan's novel for 2300AD is up at DriveThruRPG. *Mission: La Glaciere* pits 11 marines against a boatload of Kafers. http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product_info.php?products_id=83855&affiliate_id=4209 (and he's working on the next 2300AD novel: *Gnomes of Lumiere d'Aube*. Intrigue, danger, a secret worth an entire planet—and it all began with a bunch of war orphans hiding in a seedy hotel?)
- NEW for Dark Conspiracy (from 3 Hombres Games). DETOUR is for use with Dark Conspiracy 1st and 2nd Editions. http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product_info.php?products_id=88741&affiliate_id=4209
- RPGRealms has recently opened up beta testing on the newest version of GRiP allowing you to play not only Traveller online with your friends, not just any role-playing games, but now board games and card games as well, including Imperium! <http://www.RPGRealms.com>
- Also available at the RPGRealms, the last of the Traveller20 stocks are available in the online store, everything 10% off or more, including numerous print editions of the original Judges Guild Traveller material, and now individual PDFs of every JG Traveller adventure and supplement published! <http://www.rpgrealms.com/catalog>
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Lone Star at Citizens of the Imperium: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>
Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.

