

# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



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Jeff Zeitlin

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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



We've noticed some sections of our magazine and website that are lacking material, and so this month, Your Humble Editor is going to use his half-page of bully-pulpit to exhort his readers to consider filling those sections.

First, there's Less Dangerous Game. It's been said that humans—or, in the Traveller context, sophonts—are the most dangerous game to hunt, so, since animals, being non-sophont, are thus less dangerous, we chose that name for the section on animals. Sadly, though, it's been languishing, and we'd like your help filling it, with animals that Travellers may encounter—everything from domesticated assistive and enforcement animals to insectoid colonies that can trap a man and strip him to bone in minutes, to elephant-sized lizardoids that run and hide if you say "boo" to them to aquatic leviathans that just might pull your ship's launch down, thinking it might be lunch... anything and everything. Any format will do; we want descriptive information, including appearance, habitat, diet, behavior, and so on; we also want the stats that a referee would need to actually set up and adjudicate an

encounter with them.

The Shipyard has also been languishing somewhat. We recognize that it badly needs reorganization (and pruning, quite honestly; there are a lot of ships that are nothing but stat blocks), and we're looking into it, but for now, just consider sending us ships of all types—military or civilian, it doesn't matter. What does matter is that you send not just a "stat sheet" or "design worksheet", but that you include descriptive text to tell the reader what distinguishes *your* design from all the other similar designs, whether good or bad. If you have them or can create them, pictures or deckplans are very big plusses.

Finally, In A Store Near You has some subsections that could use some help, and the main section, with individual goods not belonging to any of the subsections, could also stand some new entries. The subsections in question are The Promenade, which is for describing the stores themselves, and Handle With Care, which is for any sort of item that's "inherently" hazardous. For both sections, focus on good descriptive text; for Handle With Care, it's also a good idea to include cost, mass, and bulk so that it can be used as cargo in a campaign.

# Twilight Sector Campaign Setting Sourcebook—Second Edition

Reviewed by Richard Hazlewood

*Twilight Sector Campaign Setting Sourcebook 2ed.*

Michael J. Cross and Matthew Hope

Terra/Sol Games: <http://www.terrasolgames.com>

129pp, softcover

US\$19.99

I reviewed the original edition of this Traveller OGL product when it first came out. Now that the second edition of their setting has been released, I was anxious to go back and see what they had done with the second edition. My first impression was “They Listened To Me!”

*[Editor's Note: Richard's original review appeared in the January 2010 issue of our magazine.]*

Rather than just review the changes to this product, I am going to redo my review completely. The Twilight Sector is a setting for use with the Traveller rules published by Mongoose Publishing. This setting has a very Transhuman feel. Characters can be Mainline Humans, Scientifically Induced Mutants (SIMS), Natural Mutants (NM), Uplifted Animals or possibly Artificial Intelligences (AI). The writers use the Alien Traits presented in the TMB as a baseline for developing their mutations, which I feel works very well and is quite inspired. Mainline humans can live up to 300 years of age. There is a nice discussion of how to develop and play one of these Centennials. This information was added with the second addition and is well done.

The history is interesting and seems to logically lead to the setting as presented; the current year is 2991. There is a nice map of the entire setting showing all the major polities out to the edge of known space. There doesn't seem to be any regions on the map that are not controlled by one of the great powers. Even the OTU had regions with a lot of independent worlds. This setting doesn't seem to have such an area, although many of the regional powers are loose confederations or unions that have a lot of variation within their membership.



There are no aliens in the setting, although alien ruins have been found. This leaves things open to the Referee or to future development by Terra/Sol Games. From the hints given in the book it looks like the writers have something in mind.

The Twilight Sector itself is actually a subsector. Only six of the worlds are mapped and detailed. The rest of the map is blank; not even stars are shown. The second edition of the rules identifies regions of the sector to be developed later by Terra/Sol games. The detail of the worlds was very good, several plot hooks are available in every system and there are nice world maps and system maps. But again, while this is the edge of the explored, none of the unexplored is even shown. Referees are free to develop new systems for exploration, but Terra/Sol has plans for about 1/3 of the sector.

The setting also uses a variation of the Jump Drive called the Transluminal Drive which treats the jump number as speed rather than range and it also uses FTL radio that travels at the same speed as the

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Critics' Corner

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ships. This is different and interesting, but no other explanation is given about ship design and no sample ships are included. There is some discussion about how Jump-8 is possible, but since nothing in the TMB rules allow more than a rating of 6, it leaves a hole in designing ships for the setting. Future products showing ship designs are expected. Throughout the text there is mention of city-sized ships called Dreadnaughts. No information is actually provided about them, such as where they go (or don't go), how many other ships they can carry, how big they actually are in tons. While this leaves a lot of room for the Referee to develop these behemoths, I hope that future products explore them or at least give us some more details. I would imagine a multi-megaton ship arriving at your planet would have a very significant affect on the economy.

The primary world in the Twilight Sector is Terra/Sol, an exact duplicate of Earth, down to the shape of the continents. Obviously this is one of the big mysteries of the setting. Terra/Sol represents a

nice alternate to Earth: alternate countries (Aztec Empire, Republic of the Plains etc). Countries in the North American continent are described along with a description of their borders. No geopolitical map of Terra/Sol is provided however and countries outside of North America are hinted at, but not described.

The artwork is very good overall. There some color pictures, shaded pictures and line drawings; a nice variety of artwork. There are only a few obvious typos, and none that really confused you. Several of the tables were poorly formatted in the original version and this has been cleaned up in the second edition.

While my original review was very mixed, I really like what was done with this revised edition. All of the areas that I felt were missing have at least been addressed and what was there to begin with was very good. Originally, I gave this book a 3 out of 5 star rating, however, I feel this second edition deserves a solid 5 out of 5 stars. For \$12 (PDF), it is well worth the price.

Rating: 5 out of 5 Stars

## Active Measures

### Dismal Luck

by Peter Arundel

or "If it sounds too good to be true it probably is".

**Location:** Dismal, Terra subsector, Solomani Rim

**Patron:** Rich Merchant

**Remuneration:** Standard crew rates plus as much swag as the party can salvage

**Required equipment:** A good scout / survey ship(s) with at least jump 2

### What does every Traveller group want?

A simple question to which the answer is usually, "The *Millennium Falcon*". Yes, deep down no matter what career path they chose, they want to be Han Solo. They want a ship capable of outrunning not just the Local Bulk Cruisers but also the Big Correllian Ships. Basically, a Free Trader or Type-S just doesn't really light their collective lemons. What we have here is a big carrot to dangle: the hope of a ship

## Getting Off The Ground

that will be faster than anything that it can't outfight and more powerful than anything that can catch it.

### The Job

Julius Rhodan, an executive of Ling Standard Products, requires a crew to hunt down his missing tanker, the *Bedazzled Apple* which has not returned from a mission to Dismal.

The *Apple* was lifting a load of unrefined petrochemicals from a mining base in the equatorial desert belt but it hasn't been heard from in over four months and he fears that it may have crashed somewhere in the desert.

Go forth and find it and he'll make you reasonably rich men.

### Background search and Rumours

A basic library search on Dismal will reveal that it is an arid world, mostly desert with small temperate regions near the poles with tropical savannah giv-

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## Active Measures

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ing way to a large equatorial desert belt. The official population is less than 1000 and is mainly made up of oil workers, engineers and geo-survey working for the various companies who share the exploitation rights.

A search on the history of Dismal won't reveal much of note. The planet isn't really settled. Has no real infrastructure or economy. The petrochemical reserves are large but not profitable enough for a large corporation to bother exploiting. During the Solomani Rim war, Dismal was a backwater world and was ignored by both sides, with the exception of one small skirmish between an imperial cruiser attempting to refuel at the local gas giant and what was described as a small fleet of Solomani pirates. The Solomani officially denied having any ships in the system and hailed the imperial report as nothing but propaganda. Should the Characters dig deeper, the cruiser's log is available as a historical document which can be checked.

### The Twist

Actually, what Rhodan will do is arrange to steal their ship while the characters flounder around in the desert—either whole if they are dumb enough to leave their ship access codes with the starport “administrator” or as a collection of spare parts if they don't. Rhodan is not affiliated in any way with Ling Standard Products and, although the *Bedazzled Apple* does exist and is operated by Ling Standard, she has never visited the Terra Subsector. Rhodan himself will not touch the characters or their ship but his agents on Dismal do everything short of murder to get hold of the character's ship. Should the characters ever get back home, they will find Rhodan has disappeared and that Ling Standard have never heard of him. Of course anyone who makes a habit of nicking people's ships will leave some sort of trail and determined characters will probably try to pick it up but such investigations are outside the scope of this scenario.

Having got fed up of floundering around the desert looking for the *Apple*, the characters will find

their ship gone. If questioned, Bretodeaux, the starport administrator, will say that the ship left three days earlier in the middle of the night and, since there isn't 24 hour cover on site, he didn't see who took it. He just assumed the characters had returned and left. He will be quite convincing—after all, Rhodan is paying him to be convincing!

### The Location; Scotlane Station

Dismal doesn't have a starport as such. Scotlane station is as close as it gets. The cracked concrete apron is surrounded by a few prefabricated buildings, tents and endless sand. The only permanent building is the one containing the homing beacon and sensor mast—a solidly built lump of concrete with a reinforced steel door—which also holds the planets only reliable power source, a small fusion reactor leased from the Terran company who also hold the oil exploitation rights. They also provide a small (four person) team to service and monitor the facility. Oil storage tanks and associated pumping systems are located a few kilometers from the station and they are linked to remote oil wells by pipelines. There are a few employees of the oil company who maintain the wells, pumps and pipelines and they have a company run bar and basic leisure facility in a large hangar like building close to the oil storage tanks. A battered old Type A Free Trader serves as a fuel shuttle making runs to the local gas giant. It currently sits forlornly on the apron, dripping fuel and oil. The owner/operator is a former merchant who got stranded here six years previously when his jump drive failed. He had to sell the drive for parts to keep body and soul together and he now makes a meager living supplying fuel to ships that can't skim their own or refine their own. He wants to leave but doesn't want to leave his ship.

### Local Conditions

An orbital sweep will reveal few things of interest besides the oil wells and refineries around Scotlane.

The local weather in the wide, equatorial desert belt varies from burning sun to abrasive sandstorms—usually on the same day. Flying an air-raft in such

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## Active Measures

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conditions is risky in the extreme and anyone who has spent time on Dismal will advise strongly against trying to do so.

The narrow northern and southern temperate zones are easy to cross being similar to earth conditions in northern Europe: mostly gently rolling hills and plains. There are no true trees or grass on Dismal but there are horsetails and fern forests teaming with small animals.

### What is *not* apparent

In a pleasant valley, overlooking what is probably the largest body of open water anywhere on Dismal there is a hidden Solomani base. It was created as part of the Phoenix Project to house a small ship capable of running any imperial blockade around a rebelling Solomani world.

### Elements at the old base

**Two cargo robots**, as outlined in the *Robots* supplement

**Four auto-sentry units**. These have been sitting out in the dust for over 40 years. They will probably not work (roll 12 on two differently-colored dice for full function, 11 for partial function: black 6 gun fires, blue 6 gun moves) but they are controlled from the central computer of the *Slipstream* via cable power and data links. Each has a laser rifle capable of firing at 400 pulses per minute (+2 to hit, auto fire - two bursts per turn at two separate targets if desired. If two bursts are fired a pause of one turn is required for the system's capacitors to recharge).

### The *Slipstream*

In the base is the abandoned Solomani Blockade runner "Slipstream". She's a TL13, 300 ton Airframe configured vessel designed for slipping small shipments of valuable cargos onto worlds that are moderately policed with Imperial patrol cruisers, close escorts and similar. She can outrun a patrol cruiser and outfight any small craft that might pop up. System defence boats will make mincemeat of her but they cannot follow her in an atmosphere since the airframe configuration makes her far too

fast and agile.

Unfortunately, since she has been sitting in a cave for the thick end of 120 years she is not in particularly good shape. Her wheeled undercarriage has partially collapsed and all ten tyres are flat and perished beyond saving. Her fusion power plant has multiple faults including leaks in the coolant system, magnetic bottle coils that are corroded and inoperative, seized fuel pumps (which if repaired will just show up the fact that the fuel transfer pipework is leaking like a sieve), jump drive piles that have collapsed and a computer that is dead. If, by a miracle it's repaired, then it will become apparent that the flight control software is corrupted. In other words, no matter how hard the players work to repair her there should always seem to be something still to do. She is a Big Carrot and the players must work hard to get her. The problems will be great since the players will be Imperial Citizens trained and familiar with Imperial technology trying to put together a Solomani ship built using technology that may, or may not, be compatible with what they're familiar with. They may need to get expert help to re-write computer software or to replace Solomani drives or computers with ones of Imperial manufacture. Keeping her existence a secret when you have to hire strangers with the required skills might prove difficult (although most of my players wouldn't have any qualms about 'offing' any mechanic, software expert or engineer that they had no more use for . . .).

Of course they may get fed up with the whole thing and either break her up for spares or try to sell her as a complete ship on the open market. It may be that she's worth more to a private collector or a museum—possibly on the other side of the Imperial / Solomani border.

### Ecology

Dismal is populated by many different species of animal. Most are similar to earth reptiles, being scaled and cold-blooded.

The desert is home to some nasty critters. Sand Snipers are a burrowing, multi-armed ambush predator quite capable of taking an adult human though they prefer the Dismal antelope analogues.

## Active Measures

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The arid steppe areas are home to herds of grazers similar to bison but reptilian. They are fairly docile but prone to panic and stampede if startled but they do make good eating. They are preyed upon by pack hunters (chasers) and these are best avoided when hungry.

Temperate and tropical zones team with life though very little is significant enough to trouble humans. Use any encounter you like—nothing will attack but many are quite tasty. Flyers are rare and none are larger than the average thrush.

Plant life is quite primitive compared to earth. There is no grass or flowering plants though many species of fern take their place. Plants similar to horsetails and tree ferns are the tallest plants and they form vast forests in the temperate and tropical areas.

### Scotlane Personalities

**Administrator Bretodeaux**, 654764 age 54  
Former imperial bureaucrat (sacked for embezzlement - served five years of a nine year sentence)  
Admin 2, bribery 2, forgery 1, liaison 1, streetwise 0, revolver 0  
Demeanour: Oily

**Ex-Merchant Geraint McIntyre**, 565987 age 67  
Pilot and sole owner of the *Amber Star* a semi-crippled Type-A now used as a fuel shuttle.  
Pilot 2, Admin 1, Broker 3, Navigation 2, Engineering 1, Steward 1, Body Pistol 1.  
Demeanour: Depressed, drunk

### Starport "security"

Eight thugs—two dishonourable discharge from the Marines, one Rogue, one ex army, four Other, and one Scout. All wear flak jackets if they are expecting trouble.

**Ex-Marine** 876555  
Revolver 1, Cutlass 3  
Demeanour: Thuggish

**Ex-Marine** 899466  
Revolver 2, SMG 1  
Demeanour: Yes-man to the other ex-Marine

**Ex-Army** 767883  
Rifle 1, SMG 1, dagger 2  
Demeanour: Surly

**Ex-Other** 98A367  
Revolver 0  
Demeanour: Stupid—tends to do whatever the first ex-Marine does

**Ex-Other** 854844  
Shotgun 0, Bribery 1  
Demeanour: Cowardly

**Ex-Other** 3 865661  
Shotgun 1  
Demeanour: Sly

**Ex-Other** 775933  
Assault rifle 0, Bayonet 1  
Demeanour: Thuggish

**Ex-Scout** 895789  
Laser Carbine 2 (this weapon has only four shots - and no way to recharge the power-pack except the power-plant of the fuel shuttle - and McIntyre hates this former scout and will not allow him to do so!)  
Demeanour: Cautious

**Ex-Rogue** 5A7973  
SMG 1, Streetwise 2, Forgery 1,  
The Rogue is a special case. He wants off the planet and will gladly turn against his former colleagues and employer if it'll get him off planet. He also runs the outfitters and leases out ATV's to prospectors and adventurers

## 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](mailto: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.



## Up Close and Personal

### Trey Kowalksie

profiled by Sam Swindell

“Trader Trey” Kowalskie 584AB7 Age 48  
Merchant 4th Officer (Free Traders)

Liaison-4, Streetwise - 3, Dagger-3, Steward-2, Legal-2,  
Carousing-2, Ship’s Boat-2, Trader-1, Forgery-1, Broker-1,  
Brawling-1, Zero-G Cbt-1, Gambling-2, Laser Carbine-0,  
Shotgun-0

Laser Carbine, Dress Dagger, Dagger, 3 Glass Daggers,  
CivStd, Low Psgx2, TL-13 1000-power (Medium Range)  
Radio, TL-13 Earpiece short-range, TL11 5000-power  
radio, Shotgun w/ 4 mags bullets, 1 mag HEAP, 1 mag  
Tranq, Cr 196,500

“Trader Trey” is a small, slouched, garrulous man with a piercing twinkle in his eye. He has worked for 30 long years on the free traders of the Spinward Marches, and it seems that he knows everybody, and everything. He is as at ease in a liner’s ballroom as in a startown’s most dangerous barroom.

Trey will, if need be, get his hands dirty actually “doing something,” but this is not his style. He might book as a steward to make a passage or two and keep in circulation, but his real skill is the linking up of needs to solutions, gaining access to the inaccessible market, tapping the black market, and dealing with lowlife. He expects to help others make money, and to be treated well, in the earthly pleasures, while he is doing it. He may bring a shady “friend” or two along, but will stick them in Middle or Low passage on his own 0.10Cr, unless they are fit company for the party. He has a weakness for gambling, drinking, and seeking “friends in low places.” He has made

and lost a few fortunes, and takes more interest in helping others make money than making it himself. He has seen enough of his friends go away for lengthy prison terms or take a shotgun in the back for breaking the rules, so he will either very subtly bend or avoid them or have others skirt or break them rather than putting himself in harm’s way. Trey always carries a “glass” (advanced ceramic, actually) dagger close to his skin, even when wearing his “dress dagger” aboard, or his very worn, very sharp dagger more openly in low places. He usually has at least his earpiece radio, and will often make sure he has a “wheelman” with another radio and some deadly hardware (including his own shotgun) close by in potentially sticky places. He usually keeps a couple of low passages to help out the desperate, along with about Cr 50,000 in Cr 100 to Cr 1,000 notes, to make the quick deal; he will not bribe officials directly, but is not above getting others to do so indirectly.

No investigator will ever get Trey on tape bribing or directing a bribe, however. He will go to one of his more discrete contacts, though, and ask them to “hire a consultant to study and facilitate the transaction,” and give them the wad of credits, while making sure someone else has given them the name of the right person to approach. Trey will rarely let his contacts get burned in such transactions, as he has usually done his homework; but when someone does blow the whistle, he is distanced himself enough from the crime that he is not directly implicated. His laser carbine is strictly a shipboard affair, and that for desperate situations; he can hold his own if boarded, but detests being in such scrapes.

### Fifth Imperium

Shannon Appelcline

At the time this issue of *Freelance Traveller* “went to press”, Shannon had not posted a new column to the rpg.net site. Fifth Imperium will return in the issue for the month following the next column posted.

### 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](mailto:tech@freelancetraveller.com). We apologize for the continued delay in restoring this service.

## d'Orander's FRI

by Ken Murphy

Found in many Type A, B or C starports, “d’Orander’s FRI” is a chain of smallish restaurants opened by former Jai-Alai great Torrey Luis d’Orander, and specializing in the humble potato. Some two dozen types are kept in stock, often supplemented by local varieties. Yams, sweet potatoes, and plantains are also included.

The vegetables are cut, fried, and served in several different fashions, and, if desired, with a bewildering number of different sauces. Baked potatoes, touted as more health-conscious, are served as well.

The French Fries are d’Orander’s ultimate specialization, and are said to be soaked in a proprietary flavor-enhancing mix, producing what are often called the finest fries in Human Space.

The restaurant also serves several dozen different entrees, each offered with some type of potato. One

of the favorites is Koshari, a fast, inexpensive, meatless dish of rice, brown lentils, chickpeas, macaroni, and a topping of garlic, vinegar and a spicy tomato sauce. Fried onions are usually added as a garnish, and a bowl is commonly served with flat bread.

The only drinks served in d’Orander’s are water, Trevor’s Port, a flavorful little bottle of beer, pomegranate juice, and the ubiquitous Earth Cola.

Dessert items, not very surprisingly, include a number of deep fried items, from individual fruit pies and turnovers, to candy bars. The fried ice cream and the fresh fruit platter are quite popular.

The restaurant is decorated in dark woods with dark red walls and white-tiled floors. Each restaurant’s wall art includes display cases holding jerseys, helmets, xistera, and other Jai-Alai gear. The walls are dotted with dozens of both 2D and 3D images of players in action, including d’Orander at his best. On the wall of the hall leading to the restrooms is a garishly-framed, ancient print of dogs playing cards.

## Critics’ Corner

### Hyperlite: The Sirius Treaty

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Hyperlite: The Sirius Treaty, UNE Edition. Tim Bancroft.

Sceaptune Games <http://www.sceaptunegames.co.uk>

144pp, paperback

£18.00/\$27.00/€24.00

eBook/PDF

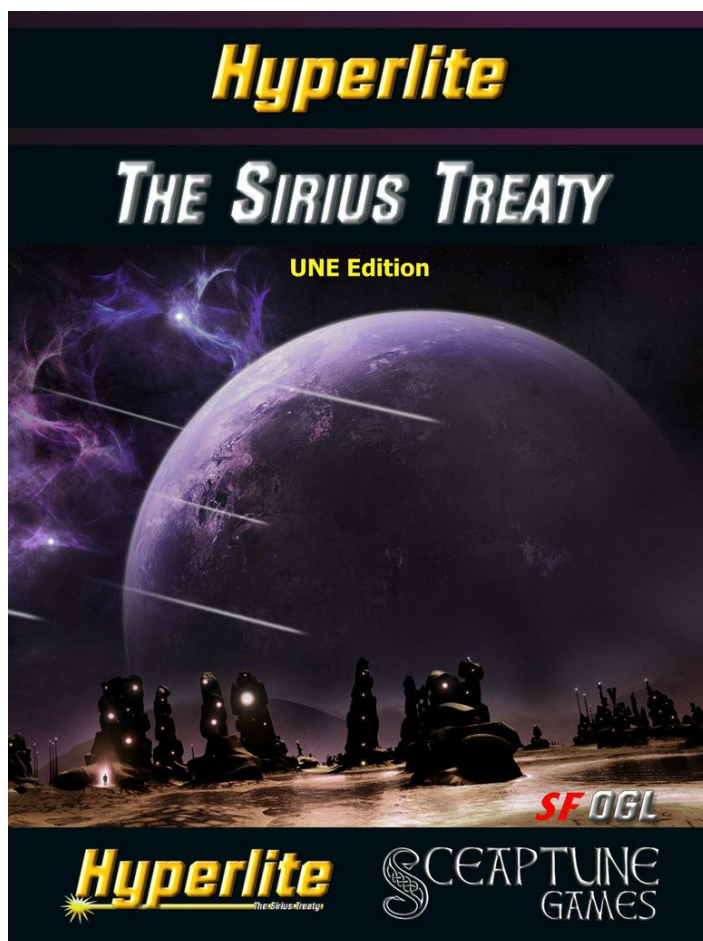
£9.70/\$15.00.

Sceaptune Games targets Traveller players with a standalone game and setting that potentially as intriguing and as rich as any released for Traveller.

#### On the Shelf

The cover of Hyperlite: The Sirius Treaty is dominated by a planetary scene suggestive of an alien settlement of a satellite in close orbit around a world, which dominates the sky of the settlement. “Hyperlite” and “The Sirius Treaty” appear above the picture, colored to give the letters a 3D appearance; below the picture, a similar line logo appears to the left, and Sceaptune Games’s logo to the right.

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### Initial Impressions

The book is organized reasonably, and not difficult to read, although the use of a large x-height sans-serif font as the body-text font calls for a greater line height than was actually used. A serif font with a slightly smaller x-height would have been a better choice. Liberal use of block notes, sidebars, tables and the occasional illustration keeps the text from being a grey wall.

### On Closer Inspection

The book includes both rules and setting information, but while they're intermixed to some extent, it's not difficult to separate them out, so that one could use the rules without the setting or vice versa. The introductory matter (8 pages) gives a broad overview of what an RPG is and what the Hyperlite setting is, without being a complete "infodump". The conventional usages of Hyperlite are outlined so that the first-time reader doesn't immediately get lost in jargon.

Hyperlite's terminology does not match Traveller's; in most cases, the experienced Traveller player or referee will find that the change is gratuitous, and mental substitution of Traveller terminology will be almost automatic.

Sceaptune states that Hyperlite "... uses SF OGL, a system based on Traveller, an Open Gaming License (OGL) Roleplaying Game (RPG) specifically built to support science fiction. ...", but neither includes a copy of the "SF OGL" nor information allowing the reader to find it, and also does not note what content is OGL content and what is product identity and thus protected. Both of these may have ramifications for Hyperlite's long-term survival.

The introductory material is followed by 13 pages giving a closer look at the setting. Hyperlite is less focussed than Traveller on spaceships and interstellar war or trade, and more on planetary adventures at relatively low levels of technology. This section explains why, and does so in a coherent manner.

The following section is character generation (35 pages); this will be quite familiar to players of Mon-goose Traveller, though there are some innovations—most notably, the default term length is only three years instead of four, and not all careers use the same three-year term length. Another innovation is that all characters finish their career generation with a two-year term in a setting-specific career, and enter play not as retired free agents, but as members of a special force on assignment. Many of the careers will be familiar as well, though under different names.

The task system follows, explaining in twelve pages how to resolve tasks, the different kinds of tasks that exist, and the sources of favorable and unfavorable DMs. This section also has a list of skills, and discusses the concepts of familiarity, assists, and task chains.

As mentioned, Hyperlite is more focussed than Traveller on planetary adventure. The next five pages discuss environmental hazards, such as poisons or diseases, local weather conditions, fatigue, injury and the recovery therefrom, and, oddly enough, interrogation by "Invigilators", enforcers of the title treaty.

Eight pages of explanations of combat follow. This is strictly personal/tactical combat; neither group/strategic combat nor ship combat is covered. As written, a combat scene can be complex, but the author explicitly recommends discarding rules to suit your own style and desires for complexity.

A section on campaigns follows, with two pages of basic descriptions of campaign types and equipment, two pages of equipment overviews, and four pages on how to create campaigns in line with the author's vision for Hyperlite. This is followed by a four-page scenario, and a planetary map. The map looks like a "photographic topological" map, and does not have any sort of grid or key on it, but clearly matches the standard Traveller icosahedral world map. There are sufficient visual clues that, between the map and the description, a person skilled at using graphics packages such as gimp could merge this with the Traveller map form if it was deemed necessary or desirable.

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

Following the campaign section is a deeper treatment of equipment and technology, covering in twenty-four pages an overview of tech levels in Hyperlite (which are a reasonable match to Traveller tech levels within the covered range), armor, augments and implants, communications and sensors, drugs and medicines, survival gear and supplies, trade goods, travel and transport, and weapons.

Many people feel that SF and Space Opera aren't complete without aliens, whether hostile, friendly, or indifferent; Hyperlite caters to that with eight pages giving a basic description of six alien starfaring species. For the most part, the longest-established mainstream clichés of SF aliens have been avoided; while portrayed in a way that makes them at least somewhat understandable to humans, they manage to be interesting as well, rather than being summed up as “ho-hum, another insectoid hive mind” or “another bunch of samurai cats in space” or so on.

Finally, nine pages are allocated to world creation, including both sophonts and animals. The system generates world profiles that look like Traveller's, but the process has been modified to eliminate the extremes and increase the number of (broadly speaking) Earth-like worlds.

### But Is It Traveller?

One might choose to argue either side of the question. It is a self-contained game, not requiring ownership of the core rules of any previous version of Traveller, nor the SRD for any extant game system. It does not use any of the existing Traveller settings, and supplements from either Traveller or Hyperlite would require conversion to use with the other. On the other hand, it would be easier to convert between Hyperlite and any of the Classic-Traveller-derived rulesets (Classic Traveller, Mega-Traveller, T4, or Mongoose Traveller) than between Hyperlite or Traveller and any other science-fiction/space-opera game system, and the Hyperlite ‘default setting’ feels as much like Traveller as many books (e.g., *Vatta's War* or *Honor Harrington*), TV shows (e.g., *Babylon-5*, *StarGate*, or *Firefly*), and movies

(e.g., *Serenity*) do—and more like what old Traveller hands would think of as “Traveller” than such officially sanctioned/licensed Traveller settings as Hammer's *Slammers*, *Judge Dredd*, or *Strontium Dog*.

Under the circumstances, I'd say that Hyperlite is Traveller, both as a player/referee and in my capacity of editor of *Freelance Traveller*—that's why, effective with this issue, reviews of Hyperlite and future Hyperlite products are no longer filed under “Other People's Toys”, and *Freelance Traveller* will happily accept articles of all types—including fiction—that is inspired by Hyperlite, in addition to our long-standing acceptance of Traveller material for any other version or setting of Traveller.

### Conclusion

The focus of Hyperlite and of most “stock” Traveller settings are somewhat different, but the differences act to make the two products potentially synergistic rather than duplicative or antagonistic. In its current state, Hyperlite may not be for everyone—there's only limited information and opportunity for those who would prefer mercantile campaigns, for example—but there's still plenty to appeal to the Traveller target market. There's no reason to avoid buying this product; even if the Hyperlite setting doesn't appeal, it's still a particularly rich lode waiting to be mined for your Traveller campaign.

## News About Traveller

### Recent Traveller Announcements and Findings

May, 2011

- **Wildfire** has released the PDF of *Cthonian Stars*, a horror setting/supplement for *Traveller*.
- **Mongoose** has released *The Third Imperium: Starports, LBB9: Library Data, and Supplement 10: Merchants and Cruisers* for *Traveller*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Quick Worlds 9: Tlix* and *21 Plots* for *Traveller*.
- **Planetary Assault Group**, with Marc Miller's sanction, is seeking submissions for a revival of *Challenge* magazine.

## The Plann in Hyperlite

by Tim Bancroft, Hyperlite Designer

*Editor's Note: An expanded version of this article is expected to be included in a Plann supplement for Hyperlite that is currently expected to be released during the summer of 2011.*

Though physically similar to humans, the Plann are probably one of the most difficult species to play or to run as a Games Master. They are co-signees of the Sirius Treaty, so on a par with humanity, but it is believed Plann have had foldspace technology for between 300 to 400 years, compared with humanity's mere century or so. Though their technology is roughly on a par with humanity, but culturally leaning towards less use of personal augments, their society and way of thinking is truly alien to the human mind – no matter from what culture or planet the human may come.

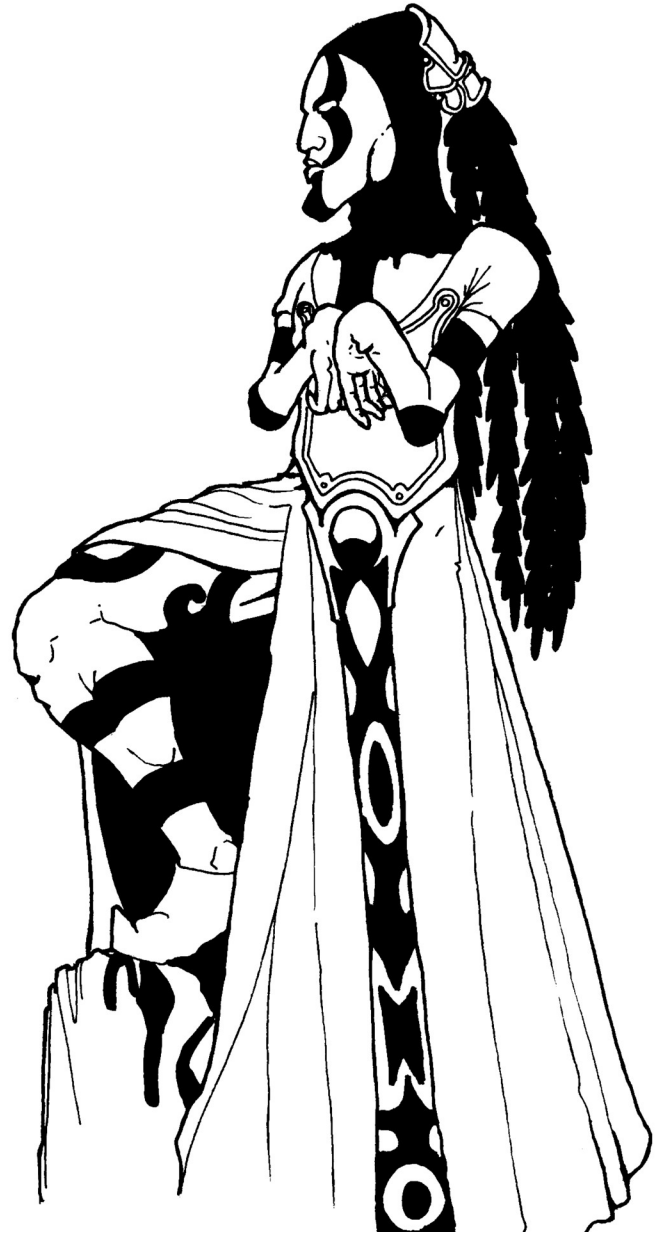
This brief article gives some insights as to how this impacts on the Plann in Hyperlite. It is intended to give Games Masters and knowledgeable Player Characters hints on what to expect or how to run a Plann colony or field force.

### Physical Description

Physically, the Plann resemble lithe, leggy humans with angular faces and slightly protruding jaws. Their legs are longer and their arms shorter and more slender than is normal for a human, giving them a slightly misshapen (to human eyes) structure. They are mammalian, but their internal organs show possible signs of longer evolutionary development than humans, having few of the redundant organs still present in humans.

Their home planet is somewhat warmer than Earth, so clothing is less likely to be worn, but on temperate planets they feel the cold more acute than the other Sirius Treaty races. As a result, the Plann tend to colonise warmer planets, other planets typically receiving little more than research or manufacturing stations.

Their preferred dress is loose, brightly dyed sarong, with women wearing a small, light jacket that only just covers their breasts. On their torso and face they apply bold body paint and intricate tattoos, the



tattoos indicating their family or planetary background. The paint on their faces is not formal, but tends to be patterned in a fashion subconsciously agreed upon by those amongst whom they spend the most time. As a result, it can be used as an indication of job role and even unit number or corporation, though it takes an extensive database to log the constantly changing patterns.

Though the sarong is their preferred dress, like humans they adapt their clothing to the climate or specialised function. They have battle armour, for example, and even more formal and heavier sarong and

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jackets for military uniforms.

## Characteristics

As stated in the core rulebook, Plann have the following characteristic adjustments: Str -2, Dex +2, End -1. Their long limbs in relation to body mass gives them a very fast move of 8.

Though originally having a lifespan slightly less than human, their own genetic engineering has also given them a much improved longevity and physical health; they do not have to start taking aging rolls until age 50 and first subtract 10 from their age before calculating any DMs. This means that Plann field operatives tend to be somewhat more experienced than their 'Tsai, human, Atklik or Vayar counterparts.

Their version of the liphecyte augment is given only to off-world field operatives and gives them the same bonuses as humans: +1 End to resist new diseases or poisons and +1 DM to their daily, natural healing checks.

They have no other automatic adjustments or modifications due to their species.

## Dealing with the Plann

Their thought processes catch those humans who first meet them by surprise, no matter how much training the contact agent may have. The Plann will never give a definitive answer to a direct question until they have confirmed it and come to a consensus amongst their peer operations group. At times the question has to be escalated to the next tier of peers and a consensus agreed to there. And if they cannot come to an agreement, the question is escalated even further. Eventually it might reach the round table of the Plan High Council – and if they cannot reach a decision, the answer to the question will be delayed until such time as further data, information or influence impinges upon the question, helping shape it into something to which a new deliberation can be applied.

Once a decision is reached, however, and a solution decided upon, the Plann regard it as truth, a perception from which nothing shakes them. The deci-

sion and solution has been created by, contributed to and agreed to by all Plann involved, so there are no dissenters. This makes arguing with the Plann over a contested situation extremely difficult, if not impossible, possession of a world found by the Plann being an extreme example: if the Plann have registered it with the Invigilators – and their processes in this area are much faster than humans – then they regard it as their own world, even if another species had discovered it first but had not formerly claimed it.

## Technological Development

This deliberate, consensus-ridden, decision-making means their technological and social development times are somewhere between 3-4 times lower than humans: their bronze age, for example, transitioned into the early iron age round about 6,000BC by human reckoning. Though they are a far older species than humanity, with written records going back far further in time to between 12,000 to 20,000 BC, it is likely that humanity will exceed their technological development pace and be the equivalent of 200 years ahead of the Plann in a mere half a century.

This, of course, is cause for a great deal of apprehension amongst the Plann. It is most likely the cause of the fear that ignited the Plann's reaction against humanity rather than the aggressors who cause them most damage through their random acts of violent acquisition: the 'Tsai.

## Technology

As mentioned in the core book, the Plann approach to solutions means the items they manufacture are extremely safe, highly reliable and multiple-system redundant. Their need for communications with peers means that many devices have additional communications capabilities, even if it would otherwise be expected to not require such capabilities.

These two driving forces result in bulky items, even their equivalent of human hand-held items being heavier than expected, sometimes even requiring shoulder straps. Their resilience, however, is much respected amongst those UNE troopers who have trained with (or faced) the Plann.

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Every Plann has their own palm computer which has built-in screen projector, merely needing a flat surface, and which can receive commands from the owner's comms interface as well as through a fall-back, sensor-based keyboard input (again, merely needing a surface onto which the Plann data-entry keyboard is projected). Such handcomps have built-in encyclopaedias and reference books, and can also take up to 10 memory crystals, most of which are user manuals for other equipment they carry.

Thorough training is provided whenever a Plann is given a new piece of equipment. Every facet of functionality is explored and their user manuals tend to cover every eventuality, though are rather long. To cope with this, many Plann are given crystal-based library jack augments early in their careers, perhaps even before 30, and use the crystal memory plugs directly rather than in hand-held computers.

## Augments

Though they generally dislike augments, the Plann have their own equivalent of subcutaneous comms, though it does not have the organising functions of humans (only having an address book facility) but instead has additional communication security. Coupled with their version of the lipheocyte implant, referred to as the Field Medic Augment (FMA) given to those in risky occupations, it also has a slightly increased range (up to 50m).

The FMA is a simpler implant than the human lipheocyte augment, the Plann having already applied some genetic engineering to themselves about 400 years ago. This ongoing amendment to their own genetic code boosts their immune system and removes inherited markers to resist and cope with known poisons and diseases.

They do not have Neural Jacks or Neural Comms, considering the risk of compromisation and viral attacks too great compared with the benefits. They regard the human use of such as a positively dangerous augment and mistrust those they know to have such implants. Their own equivalent of AI Assistants and library jacks are relatively commonplace

and most likely to be found in scientists, researchers and in all Protected World explorers (their equivalent of the UNEST-SF).

Though they can wear subdermal and supradermal armour, their natural lack of strength limits how much can be applied within slowing them in some way. Each second stage level of such armour they have implanted (subdermal-3 or supradermal-4 or -6) gives a -1 DM to Dex.

## Society

At every level of Plann society, their governance, leadership and managerial approach is governed by a agreement of peers and the election of one to act as a communication focus (a tier-leader) to whom the others in the peer group absolve/abrogate some of their authority.

This, effectively, means that the more rigorous or extreme examples of training, leadership, exploitation or exploration are almost unimaginable amongst the Plann. For such to be implemented, every member of the lowest level group would have to agree to its implementation. Whilst they accept the wisdom of those who have undergone similar experiences in the past, and who may have laid down processes and protocols, each protocol, process and regimen is subject to review by each new Plann who examines it.

From a human perspective, this produces an extremely complex society. It appears to be radically post-modern in its regard for an individual's rights and input into self-determination. However, this is sharply restrained by the need for each individual to ensure that others in the peer group appreciate, agree with and support their actions. This creates a system of checks and balances in which extreme or destructive behaviour is highly unlikely or even removed completely.

Such a system does not produce the flair, imagination and genius that is the product of the successful human societies. Neither does it produce the highly motivated, skilled and driven groups such as may be experienced amongst humanity or the 'Tsai. What it does produce is highly competent administrative and response protocols that ensure an individual is not

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disadvantaged by any other or by another group; where a procedure is implemented it is well thought-out, with exceptions catered for, and is carried out by individuals who are concerned about their impact on those with whom they interact from other groups as on themselves.

A human typically struggles to cope with the levels of interaction and these natural checks and balances. Even top diplomats are known to be highly frustrated by the slow pace of Plann negotiations and the need for constant consultation. In reverse, the Plann find it incredible that an individual human can be given so much power to make decisions.

## Cultural Advantages

If they are so slow, how come they even evolved? It is because the process has extremely strong advantages: once a decision has been reached, everyone is behind it and snags have been ironed out before they occur; war between the various Plann clans, tribes, countries and early federal structures was considered highly unprofitable so rarely occurred.

The constant peer review and interaction builds strong family bonds and a highly supportive extended family. A Plann merely has to air an issue to find keen, patient listeners interested in finding all aspects of the problem before any physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual support is given.

In production and business matters, the following implementation invariably runs smoothly and very quickly as all the facets of the problem and any risk elements will have been identified up front. Furthermore, those participating in the build or implementation are fully aware of all aspects of the plan, so are aware of the impact of both what they do and if any, rare, unforeseen circumstances occur.

This normally leads to the production of consistently high-quality goods, the maximum available given the manufacturing resources and processes available. In government, it leads to the implementation of policies and laws that have considered virtually all the exceptions and special cases and a legal

framework that can deal with any extreme cases with ease. The Plann health-care and social benefits system is the best amongst the Sirius Treaty races. Because of their considered and up-front, preventative and anticipatory approach, it is considerably less expensive to run: preventative medicine is high on their agenda, and fiscal policies are carefully assessed for their impact on Plann society.

Colony set-up is also highly efficient. The process is well-established and, whilst it may take a time to analyse a given planet and come up with what's needed, once on-planet the establishment of a solid infrastructure is extraordinarily rapid, like other process-based activities. Whilst each colony may not use the latest technology, as it invariably will be in the process of assessment for its usage impact, all the necessary items and materials will be available for the new colonists.

## Military

To the Plann, a sergeant is merely one who the others in the peer group acknowledge is the best person to train them. If they do not like or understand his approaches, they will revoke his status as 'foremost' in the group and elect or choose another specialist in his place. Indeed, it may be that a Plann group has several 'foremost' members, each of which are subject-area experts, and so leaders, in their own expertise only. Decisions, as a whole, are made and agreed to by the group, only the speed required from battlefield decision having much effect on the group decision-making process. Even those decisions are subject to review 'on the ground' by the troops issued with what humans may call 'orders' but which the Plann regard as 'subject-area-expert recommendations'.

Invariably, when considering military needs, it results in an incredibly strong defensive position that deals with almost all contingencies. A Plann defensive set-up that has been given time to bed in is al-

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\* At such lengths the cable is more likely to be subject to physical damage and interference, so the Plann tend to utilise slightly stronger, heavier cable (though still incredibly fine by 21st century standards).



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ways the most effective it can be given the materials and resource available. In contrast, whilst their offensive battle plans may consider every possible move the defenders may make, such plans take so long to put together that their opponents have, occasionally, moved on. Furthermore, they can be caught in apparent indecision if they have not been given time to consider all aspects of their defense.

In the field they tend to rely on standing orders and battle manuals far more than the other four Sirius Treaty species. This means they are far more reliant on communications than the others, new situations in the field calling for constant negotiation and re-evaluation. Whilst a chain of command helps alleviate some of these problems, an officer or sergeant would not believe in going forward with a new plan or approach until he had the buy in or acquiescence of all members of his squad or troop.

This makes them much more inflexible than other forces. They have learnt to overcome this inflexibility through other means, most typically through weight of numbers or thorough training, though other, clear, tactical or strategical advantages

are considered as a matter of course. But even when confident of victory through such means, they can be put off their stride by some out-of-the-box initiative from the individualist free thinking and initiatives typical of the Vayar, 'Tsai or humanity.

They are, however, the least warlike of the Sirius Treaty species: war is inevitably costly and should only be carried out against those who provide a real threat to the survival of an individual colony or even the Plann as a species.

## Tactics

The Plann tend to focus on multiple-arm, long range light infantry tactics on whichever Tech Level they are forced to operate. Their field troops tend to be combat armour equipped, most troops having a lightweight flamer (a broad area beam weapon) for close combat, rarely resorting to actual hand to hand combat. Even on protected worlds their favoured close combat weapon is the spear, able to keep an opponent at a distance, though all troops are equipped with a light, long-bladed, machete-like dagger.

Their low strength means most Plann favour energy weapons. Gauss weapons are used on light support vehicles

The Plann battle dress armoured infantry are designed for co-ordinated arms work and as mobile communication units rather than stand-alone, heavy or assault infantry tactics. Indeed, their suits were only more widely issued after contact with human Star Marines and, though not as heavy as the human battle dress, they are still a highly effective suit of armour.

The array of communications gear built into their advanced battle armour is extensive, each suit capable of being a mobile command and co-ordination station. Communication facilities on-board range from lasers to masers; flashlight in visible, IR and UV bands; radio comms on multiple EM frequencies, amplitudes and encoding; and complex encryption/decryption capabilities are standard. Even their direct, static, suit-to-suit, microfibre links are longer than humans, typically up to 200m\* rather than the

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simple 50m finewire used by the heavier suits of armour. To handle this the suit comes equipped with a dedicated AI Assistant (Comms-3).

Before using such armour, the Plann 'marines' are given substantial training. Due to its ability to act as a mobile command centre, most commanders in a detached Plann infantry force wear these suits of armour, even though the rest of their troops might only have combat armour.

## Field Operative Training

In addition to the FMA, all Plann field operatives are given basic Medic and/or Survival training in a mandatory hostile environment survival course. For character generation purposes, this ages them by 6 months if level 0 is taken in both skills, 1 year if rank 0 and rank 1 is taken, such as Medic-1 and Survival-0, or 2 years if both are taken at rank 1 (Medic-1/Survival-1). Most Field Operatives who expect to be in combat or be highly active on the early stages of Protected World exploitation take the extended survivability course and have rank 1 in both skills.

Luckily for the UNEST-SF, such thorough training tends to limit the number of Plann deployable at any one time in the field.

## Sample Plann

The core Hyperlite rules provide statistic blocks for Plann Protected World Operatives. The following are provided for Plann in other situations, including a Plann combateer template able to be tailored to a wide variety of situations.

'In the Street'

Plann, USP 596777, AP 0, Move 8, Age 24+

**Basic:** Comms-0, Computers-0, Drive (wheeled)-0, Medic-0, Persuade-1, Ranged (Pulse)-0, Pilot/ Mechanic/ Engineer/ Remote Ops/ Trade (suitable)-2, Trade-related Science-1. Those operating in zero-G all have Null-G-1.

**Implants:** Plann subcut comms; after age 30 typically have library jack-1 (trade-associated chip); after age 40 many have an AI Assistant specialising in their trade or occupation.

## Law Enforcement Officer

These are fairly rare, most Plann strongly feeling the peer pressure to conform so being highly law-abiding, even as far as keeping to the speed limits on empty roads. The LEOs who do exist track inter-corporate rivalry, those few Plann whose mental genetic markings suggest a throwback to more violent times, and off-worlders.

Plann, USP 596777, AP 0, Move 8, Age 26+

**Basic:** Comms-1, Computers-1, Drive (wheeled)-1, Medic-1, Melee (Unarmed)-0, Persuade-1, Ranged (Pulse)-1, Recon or Remote-Operations -2, Trade (Police)-2, Social Science (Psychology)-1. Those operating in zero-G all have Null-G-1.

**Implants:** Plann subcut comms; after age 30 typically have library jack-1 (trade-associated chip); after age 40 many have an AI Assistant specialising in their trade or occupation.

**Weapons:** Stunner TL 10 +2 3d6+3 (P-1;C+0;S+0;M+0;L-4; 5-shot magazine; spare magazines); Stun grenades

**Other Equipment:** Small, remote drones or watchbots [transmit targeting/scouting information: camouflaged with chameleon/sensorsmart coating; pulsed ground-orbit secure comms; scopes; range-finders; F/F transponder/scanner; built-in self-destruct; semi-autonomous AI (Recon-2, Comms-2, Drive (wheeled or tracked)-1); Move 6].

## Combateer template

These Plann are for use on TL 9 or 10 worlds. Note that rookies are likely to have the basic skills plus on in their specialist are at rank-0, but Plann ensure that all their field soldiers have undergone two to three years of intensive, basic training. Most Plann tend to be more highly skilled than their human counterparts, but older.

Plann, USP 596777, AP 12, Move 8, Age 22+

**Basic:** Athletics-0, Battle Armour-0, Comms-1, Medic-0/-1, Melee (Unarmed)-0, Ranged (Pulse)-1, Survival-1/-0, Tactics (Hi-tech)-1. The more experienced would have two \* Science or similarly relevant skills, two Familiarities at rank 1 or 2.

**Implants:** FMA; Plann subcut comms; library jack-1

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## Kurishdam

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(local library).

**Weapons:** Extended Power Beam Rifle TL 10 (if infantry) +3 5d6 (S-1;M+0;L+0;VL-1;D-3; E-6; 30 shots/power pack; simple bipod); Unarmed +1 1d3; Light Flamer +2 4d6A2 (C-1; S+0;M+0;L-1;VL-3) Combat armour TL 10 (AP 12) [IR/UV tracking, integrated battlefield comms/co-ordination and F/F transponders]

**Cavalry:** Mechanic-1, Drive (relevant)-1/-2; Artillery (Turret)-2/-1, Recon-1; Aerial Cavalry have Pilot (Small)-2 in place of Drive().

**Engineers:** Mechanics-2, Engineer (Power or Electronics)-1, Remote Operations-1, Explosives-1 Infantry: Ranged (Beam)-2, Recon-1, possibly Stealth-1

**Field Support:** Artillery (Field), Ranged (Heavy), Sensors or Comms-2; Drive (tracked or wheeled)-1 Commanders: As above plus Computers-1, Persuade -1 and Tactics (Hi-Tech)-2. AP is typically 15 [subdermal-1 and supradermal-2]. See Advanced Heavy Infantry.

Advanced Heavy Infantry/Commander

Used only on TL 9 and 10 worlds, typically only when the terrain is extremely hostile to their cavalry and artillery regiments or when no aerial support is possible. Most Plann Heavy Infantry have either subdermal-1 or supradermal-2 augments in addition to their battle dress. The Battle Dress gives the equivalent of Str 12 and +2 to End.

Plann, USP C98777, AP 19/20, Move 10, Age 24+  
**Basic:** Athletics-0, Battle Armour-1, Comms-1 (Comms-3 from suit AI), Medic-1, Melee (Unarmed) -0, Ranged (Pulse)-1, (Beam)-2, Recon-1, Survival-0, Tactics (Hi-tech)-1 (rank-2 for commander). The more experienced would have two \* Science or similarly relevant skills, two Familiarities at rank 1 or 2, Stealth-1 and improvements in their Comms, Recon and Tactics(Hi-Tech) skills.

**Implants:** FMA; Plann subcut comms; library jack-1 (local library).

**Weapons:** Beam Rifle +4 6d6 (S+0;M+0;L+0;VL+0;D-2; E-4; HX-6; 30 shots/armour-mounted power pack); Unarmed +2 1d3+2; Light Flamer +3 4d6A2 (C-1; S+0;M+0;L-1;VL-3; suit powered, lasts as long as suit); Smoke/Aerosol/Stun/Anti-personnel grenades as appropriate, but launcher not standard

**Battle Armour** TL 10 (AP 18) [IR/UV tracking, integrated battlefield comms/co-ordination and F/F transponder/scanner, advanced comms setup and battlefield co-ordination facilities, built-in 48-hour PSU, chameleon coating, sensorsmart; basic +1 targeting, scopes reduce range penalties]

**Other Equipment:** Miniaturised comms transponders/forwarders; 3\*Remote targeting watch-bots [remains in hidden location and transmit targeting/scouting information: camouflaged with chameleon/sensorsmart coating; pulsed ground-orbit secure comms; scopes; range-finders; F/F transponder/scanner; built-in self-destruct; semi-autonomous AI (Recon-2, Comms-2, Tactics (Hi-tech)-1)].

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## Flitho 314

by Jim Kundert

On the starport concourse, the PCs are approached by a common sight in the region, Captain Howard Antege of the *Howard's Star*, a knockabout Free Trader. Known for his usually harmless schemes to make a little extra money. His reputation for success is mixed, but occasionally quite lucrative. As it turns out, he want the PCs assistance in "acquiring" a piece of artwork, an abstract work by a known eccentric who names his works serially. The artist, Anderabin Flitho, has produced hundreds of one-off works which typically fetch a decent price in certain circles. The piece that is the target of Captain Antege's scheme is "Flitho 314", currently, he says, hanging on display at a nightclub in startown called "Guages" that caters to the liner and big freighter crews that stop in this system. Captain Antege is willing to pay the PCs to assist in stealing the work of art, as he says it was "misplaced" by the shippers on its way to a buyer, and turned up here. The startown authorities, such as they are, are unwilling to help, so the Captain is turning to clandestine aid to return the work to its rightful owner.

Possible directions to take this scenario:

1. The job is as described, though the nightclub owner paid a great deal to the original thief to acquire Flitho 314, and have some out-system security systems in place to prevent its removal.
2. As above, but Captain Antege has been paid by the owners of Guages to test the system, not actually steal the artwork.
3. As #1, but the nightclub will break out into a huge barroom brawl shortly after the PCs arrive, bringing Startown Cops in from all directions.
4. The owners of Guages are the legitimate owners of Flitho 314. The Captain's contact was the #2 bidder who is more than a little unhappy about losing.
5. When the PCs arrive ready for theft (regardless of preparatory visits), they will find Flitho 314 already gone; Captain Antege will also be nowhere to be found. Fading into startown and forgetting about it all seems like a good idea.
6. As #5, but an anonymous tip will implicate the PCs. Fast talking will be required if they ever want to stop in this port again.

## In A Store Near You

## The Showroom

### Murphy-Class Police Grav Bike

Designed by Ewan Quibell

The Murphy Class Police Grav Bike is produced by Christchurch Corporation on Home, and was designed specifically for the Home Police force. The two radios and computers combined with the head up display allow a significant amount of information to be displayed on the bike's windscreen for the driver as well as to be transmitted in real time back to HQ while still allowing the driver to communicate with colleges.

The high performance combined with the inertial compensation means that the police can perform impressive driving manoeuvres while in pursuit of suspects or criminals.

CraftID: Murphy Class Grav Bike, TL10, Cr 339,534  
Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.25, Conf=4SL, Armor=4E  
Loaded=2.196 tons, Unloaded=1.637 tons  
Power: 1/2, Fuel Cell x3=0.27 Mw, Duration=8/24  
Loco: 1/2, Low Pw Hi Grav=4 tons, MaxAcel=1.82 G  
NOE=140 kph, Cruise=750 kph, Top=1000 kph,  
Comm: Radio=Regional (500 km) x2  
Sensors: Headlights x2, Video Recorder x2,  
Act EMS=Dist (5 km), Pass EMS=VDist (50 km),  
ActObjScan=Form, PassObjScan=Form, ActObjPin=Form  
Off:

	Pen/ Ammo	Attn Dmg	Max Range	Auto Dngr Tgts Spc	Sig	ROF
7mm Gatling Gun-8	5,000		Dist(5)	0 0	M	1500

Def: +2  
Control: Comp=0 x2, HUD  
Accom: Crew=1 (Driver), Seats=Cramped x2, Inertial Compensators  
Other: Fuel=0.2304 kl, Cargo=0.559 kl, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Moderate

### Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

#### Part 5

In the cargo bay, Thom Vasquez, covered in the drying gore of others and safe for at least the next several hours in a pressure suit, felt queasy and frustrated at not being able to remove his suit's large, bubble helmet and stand under the hazmat shower for an hour or so.

Thom wanted out, and knew that if Ilsa—rather, Second Officer Freilander—were conscious, she'd want out too. But a blast door blocked any exit from the cargo bay, and would remain closed so long as there remained a difference in pressure between the holed cargo bay (now in vacuum) and the rest of the ship.

The simple answer was to patch the holes, and Thom knew right where the hull patches were kept—in portside Emergency lockers number eight. The problem was that a double pallet of large, heavy boxes of supplies bound for Nordic Prime was currently blocking any access, having been pushed too close to the portside bulkhead in the last-minute rush that always seemed to happen right before take-off.

Thom lay the laser back on the deck, got up and went over to the offending pallets, ready to grab the control yoke on the Pallet Master beneath, and simply maneuver the freight out of the way. He reached for the yoke, only to find it neatly sheared off about 40cm down the control column. One of the rail gun's slugs had obviously gremlinned the pallet mover earlier.

Deciding he was going to have to get to the separate boxes and move them by hand, Vasquez grabbed a cutter from a nearby shelf and went to work on the high tensile, duraweave cocoon that was wrapped around the loaded pallet, and meant to hold shipments together and provide some protection against rough handling.

With several vicious strokes the cutter managed to coax open part of the protective shroud. *This*, Thom thought, looking at the large stack of boxes beneath, *is going to take some time*.

The passengers were up and moving. Those on the Passenger Deck had turned out of their state-

rooms at the first blaring of the Hull Breach klaxon, and, following the signs, had gone down the indicated corridor before descending the ladder to the Boat Deck. Those in Steerage near the cargo bay had taken a more circuitous route which ultimately brought them to the Boat Deck as well; all and sundry assuming it was time to abandon ship.

Standing in the middle of the milling, screaming mob, the heavy needler providing him with a good two meters distance between himself and any of the crowd, stood a small fellow in a sharp, white purser's uniform. Quentin Isaacs was bright red, like a tomato, from out-screaming the passengers. A trio of bodies lay nearby.

"I told you animals that the boats go nowhere less than the Captain says so! And the Captain has not said a thing!" the little guy continued screaming at the top of his lungs.

"So like I said, stand the fuck down and return to your quarters! NOW!"

Isaccs stared-down a large blond passenger, an athletic type with one of those furry handlebar mustaches, who looked like he might be contemplating some sort of move. The blond suddenly sprang. The needler flashed in quick succession and the fourth body hit the deck like a poleaxed mule.

Quentin began his speech all over again, yelling "In accordance with Merchant Code four three seven six point two two three point five six point seven A, your presence in an unauthorized section of this vessel may interrupt the crew's normal duties or lead to inadvertent injury of yourself or others. You are all hereby ordered to return to your quarters immediately!"

This time the crowd broke, and most, being slightly reasonable and very scared, made for the ladder off the Boat Deck. However, a trio of young toughs from Steerage swarmed Quentin, egged on by a shrew of a woman who was traveling with them.

The needler flashed, and one of the three went down in midstep; crumpling on the deck.

The tough in the lead slammed into Quentin, arms wrapping around the purser's chest as they smashed into the wall opposite the ladder; "Oof"ing the air from their lungs and sending both in a tangled heap to the floor. The tough changed his hold, and closed his hands around Quentin's throat; choking

## Raconteurs' Rest

the life from him. The third tough hung back, unsure of just what to do, and watched for a clear opening.

With an effort that made him feel like he was moving underwater, Issacs aimed the butt of the needler at the tough's left temple, and swung, putting all of his watery strength behind it. The man's grip on his throat loosened just enough for Quentin to take a large gasping breath. In the next second the hands were back around his throat, and a knee was pressed into his chest. He fired the needler wildly, catching his attacker in the face and neck.

Crawling from under the dead weight, Quentin shot the hanger-back down like a dog.

As he approached the woman, she cried and pleaded for her life.

A few minutes later, sitting against the wall, bodies everywhere, Mr. Isaccs contacted the Doctor.

"What are you doing down there, Isaccs? These passengers are in an absolute tizzy, I'll have you know! A tizzy!" Doctor Billings yelled, rattled by the whole experience; then, adjusting his tone, continued "I've had to sedate every one of them. Several of whom I'd already sedated earlier in the evening!"

"The mob simply got out of hand, Doctor." Quentin replied. "There are several bodies requiring your attention down here, and I'm not feeling so good myself."

"Bodies?" Billings asked, stunned.

...to be continued...

## In A Store Near You

### "Old Newshound"

by Ken Murphy

As is fairly well-known, journalists on assignment, ever living on the cheap out of necessity, generally have a habit of sticking with the most effective yet economical (i.e., cheapest) of whiskies obtainable in any one of the thousands of "watering holes" across the 3I.

Infamous Moran journalist Akidda Laagilr's celebrated travel logs (which were routinely seen on 'Tri-V', or read in the pages of *The Imperial Explorer* for decades), whatever the original's label might have called it to the contrary, *always* referred to the cheapest drink available as "Old Newshound".

Over time, several different officially-marketed versions of "Old Newshound" made their appearance; with most marching off into obscurity.

The most popular, a slightly-thicker, honeyed, heavily spiced version produced by the Nguyen-Baurhaus Corporation, was a favorite with journalists and surprisingly popular among Vargr.

In an attempt to hearken back to the halcyon days of Old Earth's ancient 'noir' period, the large 1.5 litre, square-cut, smoky-green bottle's label has a black-and-white image of a 'hardboiled' Vargr in an ancient-period trenchcoat and hat, leaning against a lamp post; micro-elements in the label causing the 'Old Newshound' name to flicker off and on at odd intervals when the bottle is opened.

## Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

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

We also occasionally run "Topical Talks" in the IRC channels; we'd like to know what topics you're interested in, and when are the best times for us to run them so that you can participate. We have participants from all over the world, so we'll want to try to accommodate the most people when scheduling a chat. Please write to us at our usual feedback address, [feedback@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:feedback@freelancetraveller.com) and let us know what will make the chats work best for you!

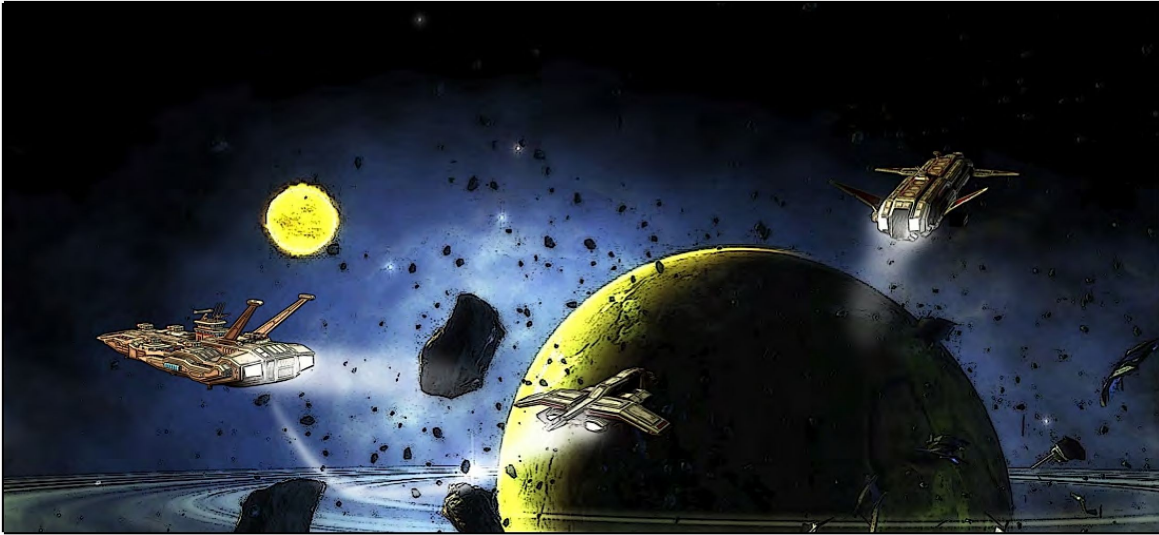
# *The Burrowwolf*

ADVENTURES IN THE BORDER WORLDS

## Chapter Five Part One



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





# Multimedia Gallery





... to be continued ...

## Submission Guidelines

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

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

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

What about ...

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

...Hyperlite?

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

... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” or sup-

ported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

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

What format should I submit it in?

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

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

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

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

How do I get it to you?

Email it to us at our submissions address, [submissions@freelancetraveller.com](mailto: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”.

