

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



I am constantly amazed at the level of creativity of the *Traveller* community. Hardly a day goes by without one forum or another having a new or updated thread with a starship, NPC, tool, weapon, campaign area, world, et cetera at center stage. While certain names or handles do tend to appear more often than others, it's not unusual to see new names attached to some of these shared efforts. I applaud these efforts, and urge that they continue.

I do note, however, that many of these efforts are best described as ‘incomplete’. Often, all that the creator posts is the final product, with little or no discussion about how it can be fit into a campaign, or what problem it was intended to solve. This is less important with ‘local color’ items, such as discussions of customs, or incidental purchases (such as things like Major Strong’s Iron Rations, which appeared last issue)—but for starships, weapons, animals, and so on, it can become important. The sort of

additional background information that comes in such discussion is what distinguishes *your* carnivore-chaser from all the other carnivore-chasers out there, or allows a party of PCs to evaluate whether *your* take on a 200-ton merchant is a better or more interesting choice than a ‘stock’ *Empress Marava*, or whatever. It also lets other players and referees decide whether your work can be incorporated into their campaign without doing violence to either your concept or theirs.

Thus, I once again exhort everyone to really go that extra step, and think about your creation, and its place in the universe, and then to share your thoughts on it. And to look at others’ creations with the same eye, and discuss them. Such discussions can—and I can say from experience, often do—open up new lines of thought, and provide new areas to do some basic study about, and ‘cross-pollinate’ the imaginations of everyone involved. And that’s good for the community, because it results in the next generation of creations being even better.

LBB9: Library Data

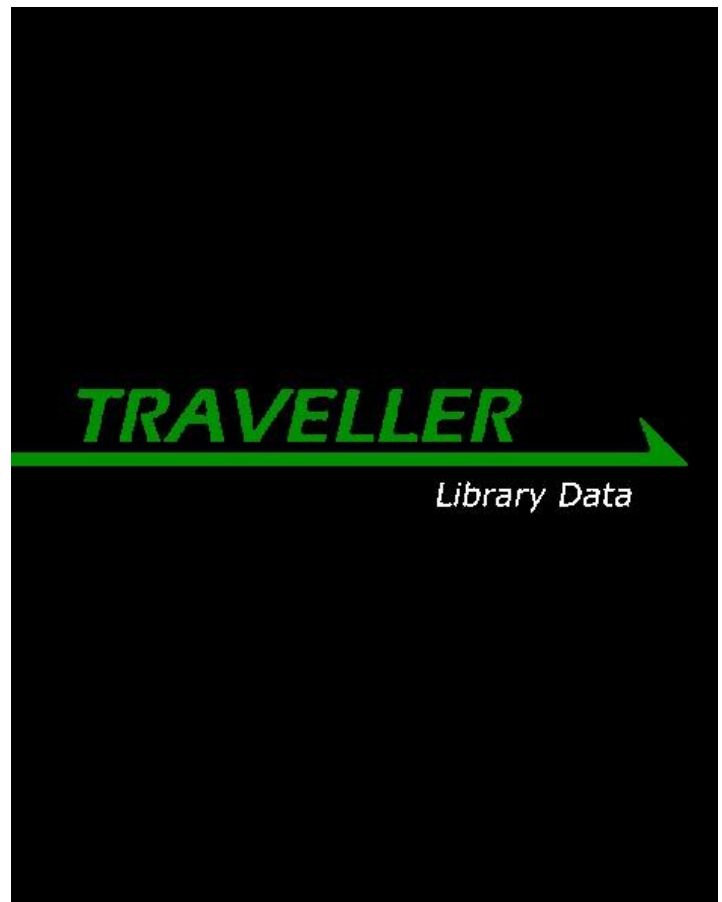
Reviewed by "kafka"

LBB9: Library Data. compiled by Colin Dunn.
Mongoose Publishing: <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
90pp, softcover
US\$19.99/UK£9.99

Library Data used to be one of my favourite parts of *Traveller* systems of yore. Ask some old timers what a library is... This little tool was created in the pre-Internet days of gaming. Essentially, it was a short encyclopaedic capsule of information that may be helpful or not for the players. It was also there to provide information for the Referee to add local colour and flavour. Furthermore, it was authoritative and concise – unlike *Call of Cthulhu*'s Library Use roll – it was meant to give you a snapshot of information not realms of documentation to wade through. Player-characters could access it on their shipboard computers (assuming they paid the berthing fees) or go to a public access terminal, drop down a few credits to tap into the planetary information net and it would allow these little gems to spill forth. The whole concept reflected a time when information was scarce and often contained in silos accessed by seasoned professionals. Those were the days...<sigh>

In the good old Classic *Traveller* days, it took on two forms. It was usually published at the back of adventures and also came in the form of two little black books (*Supplement 8* and *Supplement 11*). *MegaTraveller* updated the little black books and created something called the *Imperial Encyclopedia* which neatly had a player's section and a referee's section (which explained some of the biases and misdirection/red herrings contained in the players' section). Subsequent editions merely incorporated library data as part of the story line in either supplements or books, save *GURPS Traveller* which incorporated the old *Imperial Encyclopedia* into the main rulebook. Now, Mongoose has come around and released a little black book of their own.

With so many versions of *Traveller* floating around, it would have perhaps more sensible to release a writer's bible to the Third Imperium or some-



thing like it (indeed the compiler of this very volume suggested just that but got turned down at this time by Mongoose). OK then, no writer's bible... Then let's have a compilation of all sorts of library data from all that readily exists out there in the *Traveller* verse? Too many copyright entanglements? So, what are we left with...? A very small compact version of the original two Classic *Traveller* supplements designed for the *Traveller* "newby" with some things from Mongoose thrown in for good measure.

Grogards might find this objectionable to pay for something already "out there". I know, I did at first. But, we have to remember this is not meant for us. We already have either in our collections vast library data books or have committed vast tracts of what has already been published to memory. So get over it. If you were a starting referee, would you like to lug around several weighty tomes to find an obscure reference to a planet that has working toasters from Antiquity or would you want a single volume to accompany your pocket *Traveller* rules... Even as a

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Critics' Corner

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grognard, I would have to side with the latter over the former. So I view this as a sort of appendix to the pocket *Traveller* rulebook that would be to fill in some of the details of the Third Imperium campaign setting.

Why in this era of ubiquitous cloud computing, would such a thing be necessary for *Traveller* characters? Well, not all worlds are high tech in *Traveller* therefore like all good stories it might require some legwork to get that information to complete the puzzle or mystery around which the adventure is based. Just as it is now, information increasingly becoming a commodity, there is no reason to believe in the Far Far Future this trend will be abated and having all these things readily available rather defeats the purpose of adventuring. Also, who is to say the information on one planetary grid matches another – a Referee can use this book as a baseline to further create rumours, story hooks and news nuggets.

Well, what are its drawbacks? Its length: I was hoping for a much larger book when I heard Library Data; something that would do some more culling from other sources – one way around the copyright issue would have been to make a direct imprint of Far Future Enterprises (which holds all the *Traveller* copyrights) tweak them a little but still have everything in one booklet. In some ways, it is also a supplement that could afford to wait (unless good folks at Mongoose do plan to release an *Imperial Encyclopedia* at a later date) – as despite the Mongoose rules being out some time – there is little that has been not much written for the Original/Official *Traveller* Universe (OTU). With a mere 380 entries (roughly) and a write-up on the Emperors and timeline, it does seem to be on the small side considering the game has been around for nearly 40 years... So my description of it being an appendix seems particularly apt.

There is also a general lack of art in the volume. What art there is contained within is phenomenal and really captures that dirty realism that *Traveller* is famous for nevertheless one thing that all versions of *Library Data* in the past contained was art that had

you wanting more – for instance, in the Classic *Traveller* – it was the Vegans – one of the more alien species that I long wished to see in Alien Module but it never made it (hint, hint Mongoose).

Also, what of causalities on the editing floor? Are they official or have they been unceremoniously removed from the *Traveller* canon? As this volume does not contain any introduction or rationale behind the selection, merely the encyclopaedic entries leaving the reader wondering – what happened to the other entries from previous volumes? Maybe, I am thinking about this too much like a grognard... Here's hoping that behind the scenes Mongoose is working on a Third Imperium sourcebook (another strong hint to Mongoose) that will overlay on top this one finely giving further chrome to the grand old setting. For if the main polity (the Third Imperium) in *Traveller* has over 11,000 worlds and there are neighbouring polities that have similar numbers plus huge tracts of unmapped space – there can never be One Book to Rule Them All but it would be nice to get more chrome that captures that vibe.

So, if you are a grognard who has indeed committed all previous Library Data to memory – this book is probably not for you. But, if you a newbie Referee that wants a quick and dirty guide to the Third Imperium Campaign – then I don't think you can go wrong in purchasing this volume.

Multimedia Gallery The Burrowwolf

At the time this issue of *Freelance Traveller* “went to press”, no new chapter of *The Burrowwolf* was ready for inclusion due to other pressures. We are assured that the comic will resume as soon as possible.

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.

Slice of Life: Smoking in the Twilight Sector

by Mike Cross

This article was originally posted to the TerraSol Games blog at <http://terrasolgames.com> on April 19, 2011 and is reprinted in Freelance Traveller with the author's permission.

Tobacco has been a part of human culture long before the North American Natives of Old Earth introduced it to the Europeans of that same planet. The Europeans then proceeded to attribute both virtue and vice to its use. The last millennia has seen rises and falls in the consumption of the plant but it has never left humanity's side. As with anything that was extant at the beginning of the current millennium and is still so today it has gone through many styles and modes of use.

Today the predominant form of tobacco use is cigarettes. This form of consumption once branded as the most deadly to human health is thought of as totally safe in 2991. Modern medicine can be thanked for that. Once a decade gene spa therapy treatments remove accumulated tar and correct any potential medical problems. Even with that fact there are still those who abhor the concept of smoking and attack it on medical grounds. They have seen success in some Confed political entities getting regulations passed requiring so called "Cleaner Cigarettes" more commonly called cleaning rounds by smokers. Presumably in reference to cleaning rounds used in some weapons. These "Cleaner Cigarettes" contain heat activated nanites which clean out any tar deposits in the lungs. There is typically one "Cleaner Cigarette" in each pack. The problems cited by smokers is they induce coughing fits to clear the debris the

nanites remove and they taste horrible. Most places that require them find that they are seldom used by consumers of cigarettes.

Cigarette usage rises and falls over the decade often as a fashion statement. Currently the practice is quite popular on Terra/Sol with approximately 41% of the population smoking at least every week. Studies have shown that much of this is driven by visibility in the media. This has led to cutthroat competition for product placement in things like movies and vid programs where cigarette advertising is also one of the major revenue sources.

So how does this affect my game? Not a lot really. This is background info designed to provide your game with flavor (no pun intended...well maybe just a little) and depth. However there are some tangible uses as well. Some Orion states like The Federated Republics of the Russias (The Russian Empire) and Ukraine have extensive restrictions on tobacco use and impose extraordinary tariffs on tobacco products. This has created a thriving black market. A two-credit pack of cigarettes can sell for anywhere from four to six times its value. For the most part it's background window dressing to make your game feel deeper. And there aren't many substitutes for "cigarette?" as an icebreaker with your underworld contact or that cute guy/girl in the corner.

On an interstellar level there is a large market for Orion tobacco products on Argos. Apparently the cheap cigarettes provided in the company stores by the PAX Combine are not organoleptically pleasing... in the extreme! Therefore a black market for Orion products (which are banned) exists. MAC workers often smuggle in a few cartons to make an extra credit. A shipload sold to the right contacts could make a crew a pile of money.

Up Close and Personal

Klaus Bögel Andor

profiled by Narciso Maeso

Klaus Bögel Andor 779895 Age 37 Cr4500
5 Terms Scout (Rescue Groups) (pension Cr4000)
Astrogation-3, Computer-2, Vacc Suit-2, Pilot-1, Jack-of-all-trades-1.

Klaus has belonged to the Rescue Groups since their foundation. Klaus is a vocational scout; he loves space like others love the sea.

Klaus was born on a water world near the frontier. Although he was the son of a spaceport administrator, he did not try for the more commonly-sought careers

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Up Close and Personal

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in the Navy or the Merchants; he clearly preferred the Rescue Groups. He was admitted. The department had few ships and never was a priority for the bureaucracy, but dedicated people like Klaus made it work. They were really a public service, saving thousands of lives and hundreds of damaged ships, both civil and military.

But (there is always a “but”) in 1104, Klaus’s ship was seconded to the Navy as part of a joint exercise. The system was near a hostile power with whom there was a truce. Really near... While the exercise was under way a hostile recon ship approached the fleet. Subsequent actions weren’t clear, and the exercise became a naval incident—in other words: a battle. The recon vessel was alone against an entire fleet. They lost, but that day nobody died thanks to Klaus and his mates. The recon ship was burning and drifting, the fleet commanders were shouting and cursing when the Rescue Group ship went (once again) to the rescue. Despite the hysterical commands from the flagship (“Rescue ship return to formation, rescue ship come

back!”), Klaus managed to save the recon ship’s crew, but he could not save his career.

Klaus and his mates were judged one year later. It was a long and expensive legal process. Finally, the verdict was “not guilty”. In fact, Klaus had saved three lives and probably had saved many more from both sides, since the incident could have been the beginning of a new general war. Thanks to the scout’s heroism it was only a minor skirmish without major consequences.

Klaus was forced to retire. He has a pension: 4000 credits per year. Currently (1106) he lives in a cheap hotel near a spaceport with just 4500 credits in his pocket. Klaus’s only ambition is to be the owner of a little ship. But he needs a job first.

The scout is quite tall and slim. However he is a complex man: Rather shy but brave, loyal to his nation but not a fanatic, serious but kind... When the judge asked him why he disobeyed orders and went out to save the recon ship’s crew, Klaus only said: “We heard the mayday and proceeded to the rescue. I have the conviction that they would have done the same for us in those circumstances”.

Fifth Imperium

Shannon Appelcline



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

#20: Genre-ic Plot Seeds, Part Six:

The Scientific SF Genres

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 late June 2011, as the July installment.

Last month I started talking about science-fiction plot seeds by discussing the more fantastic subgenres, from planetary romance to science fantasy. This

month, I'm going to finish up my genre-ic series—which suggests generating plot seeds for *Traveller* through the use of alternate genres—by looking at more scientific science-fiction genres.

The Scientific Research Genre

I didn't know the scientific research subgenre existed before I read *Traveller* adventures. The basic idea is that there's a scientific phenomenon that must be investigated. Much of the activity comes from pure discovery, but of course there needs to be some danger as well ... be it from the phenomenon itself or from scientists or other persons who are competing or interacting with the researchers in some way.

In the *Traveller* universe, players could investigate any number of things: alien cultures, stellar phenomenon, and planetary phenomenon are the most obvious. If you want to tie things more closely to the

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Traveller universe itself, build on some of the unique science of that setting. Have your players investigate the strange results of (what turn out to be) artifacts of the Ancients. Have them look at a planet that Jumps through a sequence of systems. Or, on the flip side, have them investigate something in Jump space.

Traveller References. One of the first and finest examples of this genre is GDW's *Safari Ship* where the players are looking for an alien species, and then must try to understand it. "The Wardn Enigma" in DGP's *MegaTraveller Journal #1* is another interesting scientific adventure, though a bit dry. A few of *Traveller*'s classic "Dungeon Crawls" also had a façade of scientific research that could easily be expanded if the GM or players were interested. These include *Research Station Gamma* (where PCs invade a scientific research station) and "Shadows" from *Traveller Double Adventure 1* (which is more archaeological in nature).

Other References. Though I first realized the existence of this subgenre through *Traveller* publications, there are plenty of SF books that fit into the category too. Arthur C. Clarke wrote about it more than once, more notably in his *Rendezvous with Rama* books. David Brin also seems fond of the subgenre, as shown in books like *Sundiver* and *Heart of the Comet* (the latter written with Gregory Benford).

The Cyberpunk Genre

Sharon MacGuire recently wrote about the cyberpunk subgenre in her Tropes column. I highly recommend her more extended take on the subject. However, in short, cyberpunk is a dark and gritty subgenre that pairs computers, computer networking, and cyberware with faceless corporations and the general downfall of human imagination and dignity.

That's always been a hard sell in the *Traveller* universe because of the game's 1970s-based technology, which imagines huge computers and doesn't really touch upon computer networks. While megacorps have always been a part of the *Traveller* universe, they've rarely been entirely malevolent.

The easiest way to introduce cyberpunk into your *Traveller* campaign is probably to focus on those

megacorps. Let the players investigate a planet controlled entirely by a megacorp, which has created a dystopia for the common man. If you link the PCs up with revolutionaries, they can decide whether to help the revolution or turn it in.

Though computer networking was not a part of the original vision of the *Traveller* universe, you could certainly introduce it without problem, though you'll probably still want to stay within the constraints of *Traveller* physics—which means no faster-than-light communication. Still, players could meet people that they only know through computer networks and even engage in virtual reality adventures if you so desire.

VR adventures could cover lots of topics. Training exercises for the next Frontier War? A virtual assault on a corporate stronghold? A virtual reality that the players think is a real adventure? Use them as you see fit. Springing a virtual reality adventure on players as if it were real might be particularly fun, as it would be less expected within the *Traveller* context.

Traveller References. Cyberware was recently well documented in Mongoose's *Traveller Supplement 8: Cybernetics*. Advanced computers and computer networks have appeared less often in *Traveller*, though *Traveller: The New Era* was built on the core idea of an imperial-wide computer virus. Mind you, it didn't go over too well, which suggests the problems with using the cyberpunk subgenre within *Traveller*.

Megacorps have been featured much more widely. *Tarsus: World Beyond the Frontier* and *Traveller Adventure 9: Nomads of the World Ocean* are just two classic adventures that used megacorps as major plot points. Those corps could easily be expanded upon and made more malevolent. Small-press publisher BITS put out a book called *101 Corporations* a number of years ago.

Robots aren't as important to the core of cyberpunk, but *Blade Runner* showed how they could be used to good effect. Robots have appeared a few times throughout *Traveller*'s history, from the original *Book 8: Robots* to Mongoose's new *Book 9: Ro-*

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bot. They were also a constant feature in *The Travelers' Digest*.

Other References. Wikipedia has a pretty good list of cyberpunk works. Touchstones for the genre include the movie *Blade Runner* and the books *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, *Hardwired* by Walter Jon Williams, *When Gravity Falls* by George Alex Effinger, and *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson—to name just a few of the first-movers.

The Transhuman Genre

Transhumanism is probably the newest genre of science fiction. It focuses on science-fiction that's about humanity ascending above the limitations of the human body. Some people artificially separate out posthumanism, which talks about the end result of this process, but I won't.

One of the most important elements in transhuman science-fiction is the idea of The Singularity, where scientific progress starts to happen so fast that it all suddenly occurs almost simultaneously. The result is as often bad as it is good. Beyond that, transhuman SF is about humanity changing and bettering itself. This could begin with biological uplift and the elimination of aging and could later include cloning, custom bodies, and totally disembodied intelligences that are placed in robots or computers. On the flipside, AIs may be achieving true sentience.

Within the *Traveller* universe, it's clear that technological advance up to at least TL 16 hasn't resulted in a Singularity. However, a Singularity might result somewhere between TL 16 and the Ancients' theoretical Tech Level of 25 or so. Finding the results of such a Singularity might make for an interesting adventure, as the players discover a civilization in absolute ruins, with AIs warring against uplifted humanity. Besides taking sides, players might have to keep the (dangerous) tech from escaping the planet or they might investigate connections between this civilization and the Ancients.

Many of the other elements of transhuman science-fiction could make for interesting plot hooks or NPCs. A fully sentient AI could introduce any num-

ber of problems: where did it come from? What does it want? How should it now be treated? Similarly, a civilization where people regularly clone themselves, uploading and downloading their memories from a wide variety of bodies, could be a very weird experience for PCs.

Traveller References. Again, *Traveller's* 1970s-style science-fiction has largely kept transhumanism out of the *Traveller* universe. And again, one of the main exceptions is *The New Era*, whose Virus fits right into the idea of sentient AIs striving against humanity. However, some newer settings have pushed move on transhuman memes, most notably *Twilight Sector*.

Other References. Until recently, *Caprica* was proudly flying the flag as the first truly transhuman SF show. It didn't last long. *Stargate Universe* also featured some transhuman elements. In the world of printed fiction, David Brin's *Kiln People* offers a brilliant look at downloading memories from multiple bodies (though its ending unfortunately flops). Charles Stross' *Eschaton* books and Alastair Reynolds' *Revelation Space* books have also touched upon transhuman themes.

Closer to home, *GURPS Transhuman Space* may have been the first RPG to explore the concepts of transhuman SF, while the indie *Eclipse Phase* is a newer take on the topic.

Conclusion

Throughout this series of articles, I've tried to suggest how focusing on a new genre can give you easy plot hooks to build upon. I think that's as true for these subgenres of science-fiction as it was for some of the more farflung genres I've covered, from mystery to fantasy.

And that ends my looks at different genres. I've got one last topic I want to cover in this column: a look at the Spinward Marches and where within them you might want to place your own campaign. I'm going to wait until I get a copy of Mongoose Publishing's new *Spinward Encounters* before I write that piece, but when I have it in hand I'll be back here—in a month or two—to finish off this column.

Ghost Ship

by J.E. Geoffrey

Belters and spacemen in the system murmur of a ghost ship that sometimes appears in the outer areas of the system. Always hovering there in complete darkness and radio silence, it never answers to calls. And then just fades away. Sometimes it appears in the local belt, on rare occasions it scares the hell out of some ship coming out of jump-space close to the local main world, yet it never comes into the range of the more popular places of the system.

It has been an old legend among the inhabitants of the system, yet every time someone tried to find it they just spend time in the icy hinterlands of the system, only to come home with nothing to show for their efforts. But then there were those which never came back from there at all...

People say it was:

1. An old Vilani battleship, lost here before even the Interstellar War period
2. An old Scoutship trying to find its way out of this system
3. A merchant, trying to calculate what system would be most profitable
4. A battleship from the 3rd Frontier war, lost, but never reported destroyed
5. A pirate, cursed to never land by an old Vilani witch
6. An ancient ship, lost in jumpspace for the last 300,000 years

Signs for the appearance of the ship might be:

1. Ghost signals on the sensors; the sensors say something is there, but it isn't
2. A ship, in the distance, slightly glowing and then disappearing again
3. A ship, flying much too close to the PCs', but it's gone as soon as they take eyes of it for a second
4. Strange, faint radio signals coming in, in some cases nearly understandable
5. Strange smells in the noses of the crew, even though nothing can go through vacuum
6. Any combination of two or more of the above

It might be in reality:

1. Nothing at all, somebody made it up to have a laugh at some foreigners

2. Smugglers to go about their business
3. The activities of a local or foreign power, e.g. Zhodani
4. A secret base for a local government agency
5. It's a ghost. Really! Roll on the above list of rumours again to find out what it is.
6. It's an alien, but one unlike any seen so far: a being living in space:
 - a. A space whale! Or however else you call a giant floating thing that obviously sails the interstellar space and lives off small planetoids and other scrap floating in space.
 - b. An energy being from a far off part of the galaxy trying to find it's way home
 - c. A vampiric energy being from a far off part of the galaxy, it likes the occasional light snack in form of a sophont ship
 - d. A Great Old One, just idly watching the locals as a human might look at ants before getting disinterested again. Damn, Lovecraft was so right...
 - e. A local colony of beings similar to the Fungi from Yuggoth

How to get the characters involved

1. A newscrew hires them to help them investigate the rumours of a ghost ship
2. As 1. but instead of a news crew it's a well-known local kook tries to make a name for himself by finding said ghost ship
3. As 2. but the kook is a famous author of interstellar fame who hires them to gather material for his new book "Spirits of the Marches. The Unsolved Mysteries of the Spinward Marches" or something along these lines
4. As 3. but the patron wants to hire them to pretend to be the ghost ship. He thinks he can make more money if there are some carefully prepared clues that the ghost ship actually exists
5. The characters stumble into it themselves, jumping into system far off from the normal jump points, and there is something there already, something that moves...
6. The characters jump into the system and end up in the middle of the ghost hunt of 1. - 4.

Retief: Envoy to New Worlds

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Retief: Envoy to New Worlds. Keith Laumer

Original Publication: 1963

Current Availability: Print

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in July of 2009, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

Author's Note: I think that one of the best ways to prepare yourself to run a game is to immerse yourself in its fiction, and thus get a real sense of its milieu. Thus, this series of reviews, which looks at some of the fiction that influenced Traveller, was influenced by Traveller, or is actually set in the Traveller universe.

Marc Miller has mentioned numerous books that influenced *Traveller* in just one of his interviews, and so I'm less convinced that they had much major impact on the game. Herein, I cover one of them.

This third review discusses *Envoy to New Worlds*, the first of Keith Laumer's *Retief* books, which focus on an underappreciated diplomat, who gets his hands dirty on the galactic stage, but never gets the credit.

About the Story

Envoy to New Worlds is actually a collection of stories. They all center around Retief, a member of the Corps Diplomatique Terrestrienne, an organization which does its best to mediate disputes in a highly bureaucratic manner. Retief doesn't really go in for bureaucracy, so he's willing to take on a more hands-on approach—often leaving his fellows aghast.

In "Protocol", Retief is the only one who realizes that his diplomatic party is being insulted. In "Sealed Orders", he has to stop a war between humans and an alien race. In "Cultural Exchange", a variety of problems come together, leaving Retief to skillfully juggle them. In "Aide Memoire", we learn that even sponsoring youth groups can lead to problems ... when you're dealing with aliens. "Policy" is about the hunt for a missing heavy cruiser—that only Retief seems to care about. Finally, "Palace Revolution" puts Retief right in the middle of things, as the knives come out.

They're all short and succinct stories that mainly focus on how clever Retief is, even if he never gets the credit.

Genre & Style

Envoy to New Worlds is a bit hard to categorize, genre-wise. It certainly has the trappings of science-fiction, as Retief is hunting for a 20,000-T heavy cruiser in one story and is negotiating with aliens in most of the others. However, the trappings are just that. They're the excuse for the story.

The book's real genre is satirical-screwball-comedy of the sort that often goes after authority figures and their silly social mores. Here, it's all about the idiots running the CDT who are too dumb to actually understand what they're doing. I think of *Envoy to New Worlds* as more akin to P.G. Wodehouse than most books in the science-fiction category.

Stylistically, Laumer pulls off the comedy genre well. The stories read quickly and are fun. You can smirk at the failures of Retief's superiors and smile at Retief's successes.

Substantially, there's not a lot here, however. In writing about the stories in this article, I found that I just barely remembered them, though I read the entire book in the last week. This shallowness is particularly bad in the first several stories, where the aliens are clearly just stage props. Later on, they get a bit of substance, so in "Aide Memoire", for example, you can get a bit of an impression of the alien Fustians, who grow shells as they age.

With that said, I give *Envoy to New Worlds* a "4" out of "5" for Style, but only a "2" out of "5" for Substance.

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

I came into *Envoy to New Worlds* not expecting a very close correlation with *Traveller* and that's certainly what I got. It's pretty hard to imagine what Marc Miller felt influenced *Traveller* in this book, because of the fact that it uses its science-fiction elements so much as backdrop.

The only thing I can see is that Laumer's aliens might have influenced *Traveller* somewhat. As I said already, the Fustians start to imagine what a very alien species might be. You also have the Groaci, who show up in a few stories (and several later

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Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 9)

books), and I've got a vague impression of their race. So, a *Traveller* GM might get some ideas for how to differentiate alien races from this book too.

Nowadays, there's one more element that might be of interest to a *Traveller* GM: the diplomacy. Unlike in the original *Traveller* game, there's a diplomat subclass right in the core rules of Mongoose's release. If that's the direction you want to take your campaign, there's a nice set of potential diplomatic missions found in this book.

I'll offer a grain of salt with all of that: I've only read this first *Retief* book. It feels a bit rough, and the stories clearly improved as the book went on, so maybe there was better developed background in later books that influenced Marc Miller and could

influence GMs today. If you're familiar with anything of note for *Traveller* in later books, please talk about it in the forums.

And I will add one other element from later books that I found interesting: the most recent *Retief* book, published after Keith Laumer's passing, was written by William H. Keith Jr., a well-known *Traveller* writer from the 1980s. It's called *Retief's Peace*. I'm very curious to see what a *Traveller* writer has done to a series that had at least some influence on *Traveller*, and so that may be the topic of a later review.

Conclusion

Envoy to New Worlds is a funny but shallow book of interstellar diplomacy. If the series had any influence at all on the *Traveller* game, it's hard to see it from this first book in the series.

1. Envoy to New Worlds
2. Galactic Diplomat
3. Retief's War
4. Retief and the Warlords
5. Retief: Ambassador to Space
6. Retief of the CDT
7. Retief's Ransom
8. Retief: Emissary to the Stars
9. Retief at Large
10. Retief Unbound
11. Diplomat at Arms
12. Retief to the Rescue
13. The Return of Retief
14. Retief in the Ruins
15. Reward for Retief
16. Retief's Peace (by William H. Keith)

Editors Note: Most of the Retief books are collections of short stories, as the reviewed one is; several stories have appeared in several books. A complete list of Retief stories, including full-length Retief novels, can be found on Wikipedia, in the entry for Jame_Retief

In A Store Near You

TL12+ Autodoc

by Scott Diamond

Autodocs are semi- to fully-autonomous medical service systems that provide a wide array of services including first aid, surgery, trauma stabilization, and healing routines. Beginning at TL-12 they become increasingly advanced over the TL range by being able to add more patient modules and improvements in the expert systems can handle increasingly complicated procedures and treatments. They are quite handy for use onboard starships to supplement medical facilities on warships, or provide treatment for those crews without access to a doctor in a timely fashion.

At TL-12 and 14 patients can be treated with mini-

mal monitoring by a doctor with at least Medical-2 skill in case emergency intervention is required. At TL-14 Medical-1 is required at a minimum for operation. At TL-15 the unit requires nothing more than occasional monitoring, often by using common remote medical pocket computers and no specific medical expertise is required to use one at this TL. As a safety measure if there are any complications developed during treatment (at all Tech Levels this feature is present) the system cannot handle, and there are no medically qualified personnel to intervene, the system will automatically induce cold sleep and function as an emergency low berth until medical help can intervene.

The base unit can treat one patient enclosed in a treatment capsule. The base and capsule require 2 tons

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In A Store Near You

(Continued from page 10)

of space for the complete unit. At each tech level above 12 another capsule can be added up to a maximum of 3, thus at TL-15 a fully equipped autodoc can treat 4 patients (base unit + 3 capsules) at once.

The materials used for treatment need to be replenished from time to time. The autodoc heals one point of damage for 1 point of medical supplies. The base unit has 50 points worth of medical supplies in the support unit. The rate of healing is 3 points per day per attribute worked on, 3 points per 3 days per attribute if

the attribute was at zero. Autodocs cannot bring the dead back to life, but since they can double as a low berth with medical life support to keep the body functioning possible reanimation may be achieved at a facility capable of it depending on the extent of the injuries or disease involved.

Base Unit:	Cr550,000
Additional Capsule:	Cr250,000
Medical Supplies:	Cr2,000 per healing point of supplies

Raconteurs' Rest

TravCon11 – Conference Report

an after-action report by Timothy Collinson

There's...

- ... *dangerous, big and burly assassins released from incarceration by an earthquake;*
- ... *mightily miffed Aslan ready to pounce on whoever's made off with a precious cargo of dustspice;*
- ... *strange goings on in the cactus plantations of a desert world dictatorship;*
- ... *the socially inept trying (unsuccessfully) to fit in at a Duke's ball;*
- ... *the ongoing adventures of the crew of the Angel's Share;*
- ... *and the return of the Skyraiders from classic Traveller times...*
... it must be time for TravCon11!

For the fourth year running almost 30 intrepid Travellers gathered at Redwings Lodge on the Old Great North Road in Cambridgeshire (a little over an hour on the train out of London) on the 4th-6th March 2011. Once again, the annual British Isles Traveller Support (BITS) convention laid on a dense weekend of twenty games across 4 four-hour slots and one six-hour slot. Once again, this reviewer wished for a clone or three as there was so much great adventure to get involved with and so many excellent referees devoting their skills to providing fun and excitement.

This One Looked Easy

An early finish at work, and a couple of trains later, my journey from the south coast of England saw me arriving with a little time to spare before the first game at 8pm on Friday. The usual dilemma over the choice of which adventure to sign up for could wait until tomorrow as the only slots left were in the ongoing *In Search of Angels* saga. But the individual segments are stand alone and it was great to meet up with familiar characters from previous years. Simon Bell (see picture, next page) was refereeing and his precise, carefully thought out style ensured we were in for a treat with *Storm Warning*.

SuSAG were employing the group to deliver a cargo to a research base and as the teaser for the game had it, this one looked easy. Unfortunately, a nasty storm hit the underground base delaying our departure from a world with a corrosive atmosphere and not somewhere we were hoping to linger. Meanwhile something or someone was going berserk in one of the labs. Although the ensuing panic was quelled, it was clear that something was not quite right with some of the base staff, including the director. Matters weren't helped by our observation that maintenance at the base seemed to be rather shoddy. Trying to get medical assistance to two laboratory workers, we arrived too late to be of any help; and now more people were acting strangely. When the

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Raconteurs' Rest



Simon Bell in action as Referee of *Storm Warning*

(Continued from page 11)

power went out, there was nothing for it but to race to the power plant. Here our worst fears were confirmed when we encountered a giant tentacle emerging from a crack in the floor. It was unfazed by our attack, and reasoning that a giant tentacle is probably attached to something even larger that we really didn't want to meet, we decided that discretion was the better part of valor. Unfortunately, there was little time before the atmosphere was going to breach the base. We rescued what personnel we could and headed for the surface in ATVs before the whole place turned into an outpost of hell.

I don't think I've played in a *Traveller* game where we so completely failed to achieve any reasonable goal – save that of getting out with our own skins. But it was certainly an entertaining chapter and a great start to the weekend.

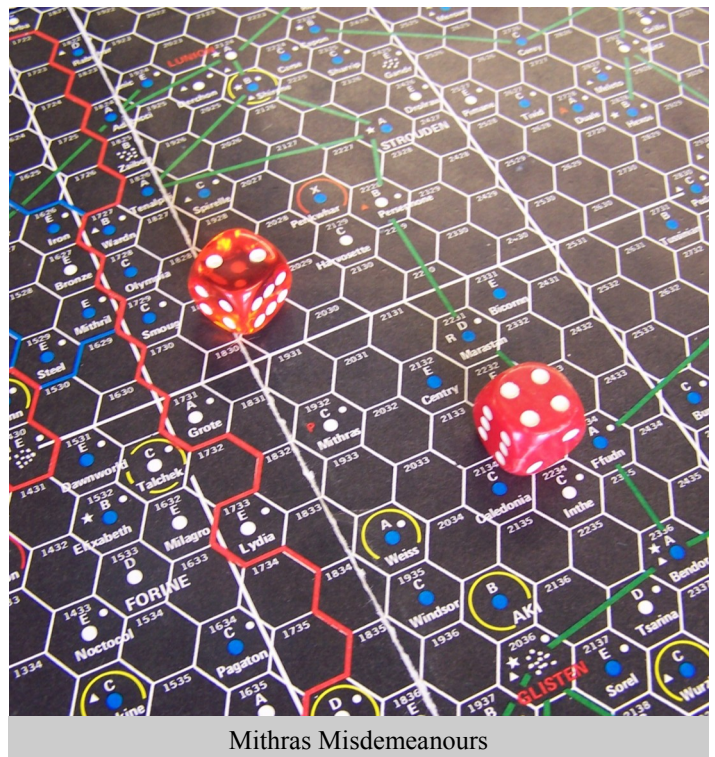
Cons at a Con

Next morning it was time for the usual weighing up of options. Choose an adventure based solely on the teaser given on the sign up sheet? Try to outguess the teaser and predict what the contents will be? Choose based on referee and/or other players signed up? Or some complex algorithm of all the above?

In the end I plumped for *The Y699 Occurrence*, possibly intrigued by the title more than anything else. Run by Edd Quick, this adventure saw five of us as assassins locked up in prison and kept in stasis on Mithras in the Spinward Marches (see picture below). We were awoken occasionally to be checked over medically but it was a pretty miserable existence. When we woke up in the dark with emergency warnings going off, it was soon apparent that we were being automatically and unceremoniously decanted from our stasis pods because something was very wrong.

Using what little we could find about us, we were able to explore and eventually break out of our 'cell' only to find the situation not much better elsewhere. Worse, one of our number was attacked by an apparently flesh eating, skinless nightmare in the dark. I was so glad I was playing this on a Saturday morning rather than late at night! Eventually we made contact

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Mithras Misdemeanours

Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 12)

– just barely – with a member of the prison staff behind a makeshift barricade. They weren't pleased to see us out of our pods and even less pleased to know one of our number had been bitten. Kill him now, was their advice. We weren't pleased to find that they'd been experimenting on inmates in particularly unpleasant ways. There appeared to be no way out of this level of the prison except via a damaged lift shaft. No apparent lift cage, cables or anything for power even if there was. The sides of the shaft looked too difficult to climb or descend. Trying to negotiate food and protection from the prison staff didn't go well but eventually we were desperate enough to storm the barricade. Only to find there were only two members of staff remaining and they were barely in better shape than we were. They were also down to their last rations after several months of trying to survive.

Basically they were now the only survivors of a prison that had gone horribly mad from whatever it was being tested on us convicts. The lower levels of the prison were now a no-go area with monstrous figures preying on each other. It really was a nightmare scenario and there was only one way out: climb the lift shaft and escape the world. Some trials of making the climb – roped up as best we could manage – demonstrated that it was a one way ticket to the bottom of the shaft. Unfortunately as the most athletic and dexterous of the characters it fell to me to play the hero. But with a little ingenuity we were able to cobble together a primitive grappling hook and place a makeshift platform into the shaft to give just a chance of success. When the time came to make the climb, I've rarely had such a sense of 'presence' in a game, and been so uncertain of success. But *alea jacta est* (the die is cast) and after a moment of stress I made it to the next level and was able to help the others up after me. As ex-cons we didn't wait for rescue or to find out what happened subsequently – we were out of there.

Naked Dewclaws

After a quick lunch, snaffled as usual from the



Andy Lilly, convention organizer, introduces us to
Astrogator Ftoulreisktoal

garage beside the hotel or grazing on the excellent snacks that BITS provides, it was time for my first experience of *Living Traveller*. The adventure itself, *Of Dust-spice and Dewclaws* (available from: <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com/living-traveller.php> as 'Adventure 1'), was great fun and well refereed by Andy Lilly (the conference – and BITS – organizer, see picture) with his usual touches of humor that work so well. I particularly liked the taste of the high-population world Mora and a visit to the semi-submerged Wavecrest City. With a stressed Aslan as a patron we were on the trail of some missing – and hugely valuable – dustspice. Amongst other places we visited a restaurant (the Land of Spice) and pretended to be inspectors, found our quarry being thrown naked out of his apartment, and ended up in a dock area complete with menacing gang members rippling with muscles. For once, the characters met with complete success and not only retrieved the dustspice but did so without the Aslan captain finding it had gone missing, thus saving the honor of a poor junior crew member. Not to mention that of the stressed Astrogator who had employed us. The climatic moment the gang members turned on us thinking we'd be easy meat, only to have several angry Aslan appear behind us, is a moment I'll treasure for some time. My only difficulty with the game was the rather bland character I was given in the place of

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Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 13)

(not) having my own *Living Traveller* character. It was quite hard to get into role-playing someone I had so little handle on. Moral of the story: bring your own *Living Traveller* character for just such occasions!

From Land of Spice to Spice Land

Saturday evening and supper is either a visit to the Spice Land Indian restaurant next door to the hotel (yes, the venue in the previous game had been directly inspired by the place), or for someone to make a phone call to get a short ton of Chinese take-away delivered. Either way, stomachs were filled, and paying the bills remarkably avoided any need for Douglas Adams' style bistro-mathics so we could get on with the matter in hand.

There was no question of what I wanted to do. *Detached Duty*. A few months ago I'd read the excellent *Crowded Hours* book by Martin Dougherty and I spotted that one of the adventures was a re-titled version of 'Type S' from that book. Fortunately I could remember none of the details of the story save their being a volcano involved, but knew it was going to be a lot of fun. Nick Walker was refereeing in his own inimically relaxed style and we had a huge amount of laughter – not all of it game related admittedly – as we somehow bumbled our way through to the heroism of saving a couple of dozen people from certain death as tephra from the erupting volcano rained down on our heads.

Thorny Problem

Finally, Sunday morning dawned – not too early which was a relief after the late nights of afterhours Monty Python Fluxx games in the bar – and TravCon11 was all too soon drawing to a close. Just time for the six-hour game slot and I signed up for *Thorny Problem* which sounded interesting. Andy Lilly was once again refereeing and this time we were the crew of a scout ship responding to a request from a journalist friend of the captain. A particular highlight of this game was Edd's remarkably accurate portrayal of a female computer expert. From tak-

ing the gun-bunny shopping for respectable clothes, to acting (or was she?) royally narked off with the captain, 'Marie Benn' was definitely a character to watch. As we got deeper into trying to figure out why there was so much interest in some otherwise unremarkable cactus farming, and realized that we were also getting deeper into potential conflict with a rather nasty government, debate raged as to just how much our captain really cared for the woman we were trying to help. Is she just an old friend – or is there something more? We're risking our lives for how much? Eventually with plans of using a lightning strike to free a hostage – no, not a quick raid but a real live thunder and lightning storm lightning strike – with a backup plan of poisoned pizza delivery by a 40-something professor, we moved in (see picture). There was mixed success with no opportunity to extract the hostages, but a chance to deliver a communit to the key hostage which sufficed.

A final look around the sales tables – books, miniatures and more from all the *Traveller* eras were available, as well as second hand material which conference attendees could sell with a percentage going to charity. The hotel had looked after us very well as usual so final thanks were due to the staff who are so patient with so many guys (and one lady) descending on them and taking over for a weekend of what must seem to outsiders as quite bizarre.

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Moving in on the mansion

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The Awards

Traditionally two awards are handed out at the end of TravCon. The *Starburst for Extreme Heroism* for a heroic act and the *Ping... F*** It* award for the best (worst?) awful moment when a player or their dice roll or circumstances foul up in a particularly extraordinary way. This year the SEH (a beautiful acrylic trophy) was won by Derrick Jones (see picture, below). In a Dom Mooney written game, *Fallen*, he was playing 'The Mother' – one of the survivors of a lifeboat crash and an amnesiac character defending herself by waving a baby around. We trust it was being done tastefully.

The PFI award went to Tom Zunder (see picture, right) who in jumping onto a moving beanstalk capsule managed to just barely make it. Then jumping off after his colleagues again just barely made it. That might not have been enough to win the award as he did, in fact, survive - but unfortunately the valuable hostage he'd grabbed and was carrying wasn't so fortunate and was last heard of screaming profanities as he fell a considerable distance to *terra firma*. A strong runner up for the PFI award was the delightful moment when a low social standing character at a garden party thrown by Duke Norris, managed a double 1 on his carouse throw as he tried to



Tom Zunder (left) barely survives to take home the PFI award

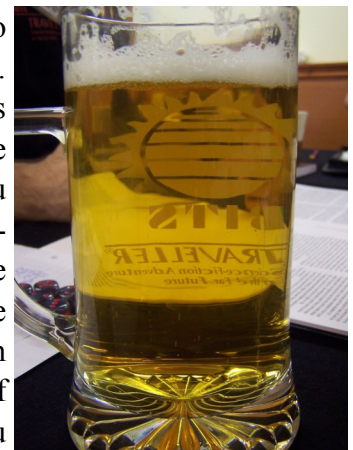
chat up three charming young female nobles. He was unceremoniously ejected from the function, the referee decreed, for inappropriately pinching one of the ladies! One suggestion for next year might be to include an award for best role-playing.

The auction of some of Derrick Jones' specially designed (and Marc Miller approved) *Traveller* ales – 'Ancient's Dream' and 'Scout Brew' – raised more money for the Help for Heroes charity. And in a well-placed final moment, Andy's wife Sarah was revealed as the author of *Thorny Problem*. Many hope that she will put pen to paper again. A special note should be made of the support that Sarah and daughter provided in making TravCon happen. Thank you.

Writing this, while enjoying a glass of the cold stuff in a splendid BITs tankard (see picture) which were gifts for everyone who attended the conference, I look forward to another year of Travelling. At time of writing it looks as if TravCon12 will be running – make sure you sign up as soon as bookings are open as places are sure to go quickly. I hope to be there and have even been inspired to dream of running a game. See you there!



Derrick Jones (left) wins the Starburst for Extreme Heroism



Conference gift—a BITs tankard—smoothing play

Active Measures

Filch

by Michael Brown

Synopsis

A woman needs help in stealing an artifact containing secret information.

Equipment Requirements: none, although the Disguise Kit from *Classic Traveller Book 3: Worlds and Adventures* may be useful.

Setting: any world with atmosphere 5, 6 or 8.

This adventure is best suited for 1-2 players. If more players participate, the GM should adjust the number and power of the NPCs.

Players' Information

Katrin DeVries is gorgeous, intelligent, sophisticated and fashionable. She moves with a feline grace and devours the adventurer with eyes that seemingly miss nothing. Underneath the sleek exterior, however is a subtle trace of menace that raises the hackles and leaves the impression that this is not a woman to triffl with.

However, she is all business as she explains to the adventurer why she has made contact. Until recently, she was romantically linked with Iikesh Hentento, a local businessman with rumored ties to organized crime. The relationship ended badly, and resulted in Katrin's ouster from Hentento's secluded mansion amid veiled threats on her life.

Unfortunately, Katrin wasn't able to retrieve all of her belongings; Hentento still has in his possession a small silver statuette she describes as a family heirloom. Obviously she cannot simply show up and demand its return, and Hentento not only has little fear of the police, he has highly-paid lawyers with fearsome reputations and efficiency ratings. That leaves only illicit means to retrieve her statue.

Katrin has a plan: rumor has it that Hentento is throwing a big party in several days. She wants to hire the PC to infiltrate the party, locate the statuette and get it out of the house and back to her. While she has the necessary skills to do it herself, the guards have been especially alerted to watch out for her (and employ enough technology to see through any disguises she may use) and she's taking Hentento's

threats seriously. For his or her help, the PC will be paid Cr5000.

Katrin can supply the location of Hentento's residence and what details about it she can recall (which appear in the GM's Information below), and a forged party invitation. She suggests that the PC travel to the house beforehand, case the place and report back, so Katrin can advise on any changes to the security arrangements.

Referee's Information

Hentento lives on a small mountain estate. The road to the general area is well-known and marked; a long private road leads off the main thoroughfare to the estate grounds. The road ends at a gate with an occupied gatehouse. The guard will inquire as to the visitor's business and communicate with the main house for instructions before admitting entry. (If the world is high-tech enough, the gatekeeper may be a sophisticated computer or a robot.)

The road is not the only access to the estate, just the easiest. The adventurer could hike overland, but that would take hours and would at some point involve some climbing. He or she could fly over in an air/raft or grav belt, but this means being spotted and possibly confronted by Hentento's guards. Orbital scans of the property are easy to obtain, but would lack in enough detail as to render any suggestions by Katrin useless. A good compromise between convenience and stealth would be to travel up the road by vehicle close enough without being seen, and then hike uphill far enough to get a good view with binoculars or other visual enhancements.

The main dwelling itself is impressive. Built facing planetary sunrise, it appears as a series of round buildings stacked one atop another, jutting out of the face of a sculpted cliff; the main floor is fully exposed on top of the cliff. (Think of film cans of descending size, stacked atop each other from largest to smallest, embedded in the cliff face.) Also on the grounds atop the cliff are a garage for ground vehicles, a small storage area/workshop and a generator sufficient to power the entire estate. It may be easier for the player to envision the generator as a ground-

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Active Measures

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side starship power plant. The entire affair is surrounded by a wall 10 feet (3 meters) high, built of whatever materials the GM cares to envision.

According to Katrin, the floors of the main house, from largest/top to smallest/bottom contain the following rooms:

Top floor: reception area, formal dining room, master (Hendento's) bedroom, guest bedrooms, living room, kitchen.

Second Floor: Recreation room (takes up most of this floor and has a glassteel face with breathtaking views of the mountains), bar, kitchen.

Third Floor: servants' quarters.

Fourth Floor: library/study.

Fifth Floor: Air/raft garage (holds three air/rafts).

Each floor is accessible both by staircase and an elevator/lift shaft. The GM may want to prepare a sketch map of the house, specifying exactly how the rooms are laid out on each floor. S/he may also place bathrooms/lavatories and storage space as needed.

Katrin remembers that Hendento has surveillance cameras placed at strategic locations around the grounds, but none in the house. Again, the GM may place these where needed, perhaps leaving a few blind spots. The cameras are supplemented by a security team of six guards, not counting the gatekeeper. The house itself is very well appointed; Hendento has very expensive tastes.

His bedroom is where Katrin last saw the statuette. Also in the bedroom, stereotypically set into the wall behind a hanging picture, is a wall safe with cash and jewels worth Cr10,000, Hendento's personal papers (the contents of which would land him in jail if the authorities got hold of them), and various knickknacks of sentimental value only.

Some information on Hendento can be found in the local datanet. He is the somewhat shady owner of an import/export company based in Startown. He has made as many local news headlines for his dealings with alleged local crime figures as he has his willingness to donate to local charities. He has been indicted in the past for various minor crimes, but has so far evaded conviction.

If the adventurer meets with Katrin again to compare notes, s/he receives a blanket DM of +1 to any actions concerning securing the statuette for the rest of the adventure.

Unfortunately for the PC, Katrin is not completely forthcoming. She was indeed involved with Hendento for a time, but the statuette is not merely a family heirloom. The item — which does not actually belong to her — is about a foot high, made of precious metals, encrusted with jewels and worth perhaps Cr50,000 on the open market. But this is not the reason why she is after it. One of the jewels on the statuette is actually a sophisticated data crystal. When subjected to a laser of the proper frequency, the crystal projects a holographic representation of several bordering subsectors, complete with locations and information on numerous major criminal concerns. Using this data, law enforcement — particularly the Imperial Ministry of Justice — could deal a serious blow to organized crime in the sector. In criminal hands the data would spark wars between organized crime groups since the locations on the map represent tempting takeover targets for ambitious bosses. Doubtless other parties would love to have such an item as an expensive bartering chip.

Hendento does not know about the crystal, and has no regard for the statue's monetary value; he only keeps it to annoy Katrin. Katrin knows of the crystal and would willingly part with the entire statue just to get the jewel. What she wants with it is anybody's guess.

Several days after the PC's first meeting with Katrin, the party begins and quickly gets into full swing. The PC must put into action whatever plan he or she has concocted to get the statue. The party may provide excellent cover, or be just another obstacle to overcome. Referees who enjoy acting out NPCs are encouraged to sketch out a number of colorful characters beforehand to interact with the hero.

Successfully getting the sculpture out of Hendento's house and into Katrin's hands concludes the adventure. The hero can keep anything else s/he has taken from Hendento, but in that case Katrin will advise a hasty exit offworld as his thirst for revenge is deep.

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Active Measures

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Complications

Of course, an adventurer's life is never easy. If things seem to be going a little too easily for the hero, the referee can always use one or more of the following unexpected situations to make life more interesting:

1. A rival thief has learned of the figurine and has made plans to steal it herself. Posing as another party guest, she makes her move at the same time as the PC.
2. Organized crime figures have learned of the existence of the data crystal and have sent a team of assassins with orders to retrieve it and eliminate all witnesses.
3. Planetary law enforcement has learned of the data crystal and is racing to get hold of it. 20 officers are on their way to the villa to take part in a major raid, armed with a search warrant to see what else Hentento might be hiding. If Katrin learns of the im-

pending raid (throw 10+), she will try to get word to the PC.

4. Hentento is cooperating with the local offices of the Imperial Ministry of Justice for reasons of his own, although he has no idea why they want the statuette so badly. He is awaiting a MoJ contact to pick it up and take it to the subsector headquarters.

5. Katrin herself is a covert agent for the MoJ. She is using this method to get at the statuette because Hentento knows her on sight as a cop.

6. Katrin need not be working for herself; she could have a patron of her own who has paid her to obtain the statue. Who this person is and why they want the item is for the GM to decide.

7. Someone at the party — perhaps even Hentento himself — becomes infatuated with the traveler and follows him/her around like a lovesick *gilunuu* all evening, making it difficult to sneak away and nab the item.

As always, the GM must determine the flow of subsequent events.

Raconteurs' Rest

Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 7

Leaning forward in the Big Chair, Captain Fyyg rubbed his chin, thinking. Punching a switch on the armrest warranted an immediate response from crewmen stationed in the *Waffles'* remaining turret. "Gentlemen." was all the Captain had to say. "Aye." was the response, amidst whistles and cheers from the turret's crew.

Within less than a minute the turret rose on rocker arms from recesses in the ship's hull, rotating its double load of multiple launchers to face the pirate. With the order to fire, the business ends of the launchers popped briefly to life, sending a swarm of deadly homing missiles tearing toward their pigeon at more than 20Gs acceleration.

"Take that you bastards!" the Captain muttered

nervously as the missiles streaked away.

The pirate, already traveling at full thrust attempted to jink the missiles; turning to port and trying to dive to put some more distance between themselves and the oncoming load of persistent bees. As the missiles closed, the pirate's rail guns flashed and sputtered, sending its own swarm out to meet the missiles.

Several minutes later the blackness between the combatants erupted in a succession of bright globes of destruction as a good half-dozen missiles were destroyed.

The remaining missiles, having altered course at the approaching cloud of magnetically-propelled slugs, closed, intent on completing programmed mission parameters.

Splitting into two groups, a handful of the missiles slammed into the pirate's stern, wreaking havoc on its drives and Engineering spaces, while the sec-

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Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 18)

ond group impacted in a line along the vessel's belly; blowing open cargo spaces and quarters, and sending cargo, wreckage and bodies into cold, black space.

"Ye Gods!" Brodie muttered as he watched the destruction. "Those poor bastards!"

"Don't cry overmuch for them Mr. Le-Boucherre," the Captain said, clapping Brodie on the shoulder. "That could just as easily be us out there, crippled and out-gassing..."

As the pirate tumbled like a dead thing, Mr. Hertzog disconnected from the computer and asked "Do we close and pick up survivors, Captain?"

"No, Mr. Hertzog, we do not. They'd have shown us no mercy." Turning to the console on his armrest, the Captain contacted the crew in turret number two once more. "Gentlemen, send them to Hell," the Captain said, and within a few minutes, the dual missile launchers, now reloaded, fired on the dying hulk. The flight of missiles struck the ruined pirate, and the remains of the vessel were consumed in a series of large explosions; the largest one occurring when the pirate's reactors blew.

As the ball of fire that was the pirate ebbed away to nothingness, the Captain flipped a switch; his voice echoing throughout the crew spaces of the ship.

"Excellent job, people!"

In the cargo hold, Thom Vasquez didn't hear the praise there in the atmosphere-less space. Even if he were to somehow hear it, it might not have registered with him, so intent was he on muttering over every cursed aspect of his job.

He had finally cut through enough of the outer wrapping to get to the cargo stacked beneath. The boxes didn't look as if they'd be all that hard to maneuver; each being only about a meter by one half by one half. The problem was when he attempted to lift one of crates, only to discover they seemed to weigh about eighty kilos each.

Thom grunted with the hard effort of the lift; the box resting awkwardly on his right shoulder and pushing against the side of his bubble helmet.

He took three of four steps away from the pallets

to an empty spot on the cargo deck and half lowered, half dropped the heavy box.

Thom went back to the stack and wrestled a second box in the same fashion as the first. Then a third, and a fourth.

By the eighth crate, the wiry Vasquez needed a break and sat down on the small, throne-like stack he'd managed to build for himself. Exhausted, Thom sat there, stoop-shouldered and panting; taking the occasional sip from the hydration unit's straw built into his helmet.

"Oy," Thom huffed, "I could really use a cold beer."

Thom wished he could communicate with someone, the old vacc suit he happened to put on was an ancient Willoby Made, and the suit's radio had, unfortunately, shorted out.

"Well," Thom thought, getting back to work "At least the hydration kit is a bonus."

Down in Engineering, the Captain and Chief watched the feed from one of the cameras in the cargo bay. Watching movement, the Captain said, "Thank God someone is still alive in there!" At first they puzzled as to just what the Rooster was doing, then Wyeth came to the realization "He's trying to get to the hull patches, Captain. That's what it is. They're in a locker right there behind that cargo!" the big Engineer said, poking a finger at the screen.

"Mr. Vasquez, is it? We just saw by playback that he has been working like a madman for the last hour, and has almost cleared a single pallet. Clearing the other pallet will take at least another hour."

"At least." Gibby agreed.

"Round up a few of your black gang, Gibraltar. You're taking patches outside with you. We're giving Mr. Vasquez some help, yes?"

"Aye." the Engineer answered, not happy at the prospect of sealing himself up in a pressure suit.

Within some 20 minutes the repair crew was ready for EVA. Assembling on the bridge and exiting the starboard bridge airlock two at a time until all seven were standing on the outer hull, magnetic boots keeping them firmly rooted. Slowly traveling along the ship's back, the gang stopped first at the

(Continued on page 20)

Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 19)

jagged socket where the Forward Turret had been located, and, using a Weimher heavy industrial laser welder, quickly sealed the hole over with sheets of hull plating.

When that was done, the group headed down the curve of the ship to the large expanse that was the cargo bay. Finding the dual holes blown through the port side, plates were quickly welded in place, and the life support system began pumping atmosphere into the emptied cargo bay.

Taking another break after cutting away the packaging on the second pallet, Thom sipped at the hydration pack. He absently looked at the atmospheric meter on the arm of his suit, to find it registering again and slowly rising. Looking to the holes in the port bulkhead, he no longer saw black beyond, but the lighter gray that was hull plating.

Thom checked Number Two's vital signs on her suit display, then sat down and waited.

Once the ship determined the pressure was the same on both sides of the door, the blast shield went about its automated task and raised itself. Standing on the other side of the door to meet them was former IN Pharmacist's Mate Fahad with a stretcher team. He sent the team ahead with the still unconscious Officer Freilander and stayed to talk to Thom.

"A most unfortunate turn of events." Fahad decided, looking at all the gore.

"You said it." agreed the gore splattered Vasquez; kind of drifting as he took in the blood and all.

Fahd said "You did a good job back there---treating Ilsa's leg, Thom."

Focusing on the conversation now, Thom told the dark medic, "Can't really take any credit for that, Doc." Adjusting his stance slightly, Thom continued, hands clasped behind his back, "Something I learned back when I was in the army on Dahl."

Fahd had heard how Dahl's Ground Forces operated in conjunction with Imperial Marines at the bloody Siege of Whitehall, but, not batting an eye, he decided not to mention Whitehall to Vasquez.

"Tell you what, Thom. Let's get you up to med-bay. Give you the once-over. Make sure you're alright." Fahd suggested, putting a hand on Thom's shoulder and guiding the battered crewman toward the elevator.

As they left, Fahd took a quick look over his shoulder at the bodies lying on the cargo deck, deciding he and another orderly would be coming back as soon as possible to gather up the remains. They'd need that damned Doctor Billings too, wherever in hell he was, to fill out the paperwork and make it all official.

Critics' Corner

Off the Table

Dorsai!

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Dorsai!. Gordon R. Dickson

Original Publication: 1959

Current Availability: Print

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in July of 2009, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.

Author's Note: I think that one of the best ways to prepare yourself to run a game is to immerse yourself in its fiction, and thus get a real sense of its milieu. Thus, this series of reviews, which looks at some of the fiction that influenced Traveller, was influenced by Traveller, or is actually set in the Traveller universe.

Marc Miller has mentioned numerous books that influenced *Traveller* in just one of his interviews, and so I'm less

convinced that they had much major impact on the game. Herein, I cover one of them.

This fourth review discusses *Dorsai!*, the first of Gordon R. Dickson's *Childe Cycle* books, originally published as *The Genetic General* in 1959.

About the Story

Dorsai! is the story of a boy, Donal Graeme. He is a Dorsai, which is a race of man who are especially trained for battle and who are the great mercenaries of the sixteen worlds.

The story itself is told in a rather unique manner. It covers nine or ten years, focusing on the story of Donal as he rises up through the ranks, beginning as a "Cadet" and very quickly moving on to higher plateaus. It also focuses on Donal's interactions with one William of Ceta.

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Genre & Style

In 1959 two books were published within a few weeks of each other. One of them was Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, while the other was Gordon R. Dickson's *Dorsai!*. It is no exaggeration to say that these two books created the military science-fiction subgenre, which still publishes actively today. They weren't the first books in the genre, but they did popularize it.

The two books also give military science-fiction two different directions to move in. *Starship Troopers* highlighted the ideas of infantry and powered-armor suits while instead *Dorsai!* was built upon great navy battles in space. These have both continued as strong directions for the subgenre, probably thanks only to the near-simultaneous publications of these originating novels.

As a ground-breaker for the genre, of course *Dorsai!* embodies many of the themes and elements of military science-fiction. What's more impressive is that it still continues to be very readable today. Donal is a real character, that you'll care about and enjoy watching him go through life. Beyond that, Dickson describes military tactics both entertainingly and believably. As a biography of the life of a military man, *Dorsai!* is top rate.

However, I do have some problems beyond that, most of which didn't really emerge until the end of the book. I won't spoil things, but I will say that the conflict between William and Donal isn't dramatically presented in such a way that it can truly hold the spine of the book. In addition, the climax spins off into silly areas of philosophy that remind me of Frank Herbert (who I suspect was influenced in his creation of *Dune* by *Dorsai!*).

Overall, *Dorsai!* was a great read, but in some ways less filling than I would have liked, resulting in a Style of "5" and a Substance of "3".

Books of the Childe Cycle

1. *Dorsai!*
2. *Necromancer*
3. *Soldier, Ask Not*
4. *Tactics of Mistake*
5. *The Final Encyclopedia*
6. *The Chantry Guild*

Editor's Note: Since the publication of this review, Tor has released additional novels in this series:

7. *Young Bleys*
8. *Other*

Tor has also released two collections of short stories set in the universe:

- A. *Lost Dorsai*
- B. *The Spirit of Dorsai*

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

So, I said that this was one of those books which Miller had listed as an influence on *Traveller*, but which I was more dubious of. Does it really seem to be at the basis of any of *Traveller*?

I remain dubious.

There's no question that *Dorsai!* is foundational military science-fiction, and I think there's also no doubt that Miller and others imagined at least part of *Traveller* as a military science-fiction role-playing game. The one has to have influenced the other in general ways. Nowadays, *Dorsai!* remains a great general source of military science-fiction theming that might influence your own *Traveller* game.

However, it's equally obvious that the specifics of *Dorsai!* didn't go into this game of ours. Maybe *Dorsai!*'s chameleon battledress became *Traveller*'s battle dress but that was the closest specific element I could find. *Dorsai!*'s space travel works quite differently from that in *Traveller*, and *Dorsai!* military depends upon very general "contracts" for mercenaries, as opposed to the much more specific "tickets" of *Traveller*.

Mind you, I think there's a lot that a *Traveller* GM could find for his own use. I like the idea of *Dorsai*'s mercenary code, which gives mercs the right to question their merc leaders. I also like some of the ideas of *Dorsai*'s merc contracts, such as the fact that they can be traded around, that there might be specific "loyalty" clauses that keep you from going over to an enemy, etc. It's just stuff you'd have to introduce to *Traveller* on your own, rather than building on something that's already there.

Conclusion

If *Dorsai!* influenced *Traveller* it was only in the general way of a foundational military science-fiction book influencing the first military science-fiction RPG, but given that foundational basis, and the fact that it's a fun read, *Dorsai!* can still be a useful influence for your own *Traveller* game with a military feel.

In A Store Near You

Robotic Wardrobe

by Ed Swaneck

Eneri Uiddon Outfitters LTD, in cooperation with Naaskira, has created a robotically enhanced travel wardrobe that allows the full time traveler to carry every need with them as they move from liner to hotel and back with minimal encumbrance. The wardrobe is constructed of a hi-tech plastic core (5mm thick) with soft felt inner lining and UV protected Kevlar outer fabric with the copyrighted Eneri Uiddon pattern. The whole wardrobe is further reinforced by external aluminum corner, edge and side guards (with handles) and secured by both electronic and manual clasps. Electronic clasps can be opened via thumbprint or by a fob via a low power encrypted radio link.

The Naaskira supplied gravitics, power plant, brain and sensors are located in the back of the right side of the wardrobe (viewed when standing upright), behind the storage drawers. These are metal components. Concealed compartments are placed in such a way that the robotic components obscure stored items to metal detector and x-ray type devices. Each such compartment has its own door that appears to be part of one of the robotic components. To access a compartment, one or more of the drawers must be removed, the maintenance cover opened and then the door opened using the appropriate movement. As a further security precaution against theft, the gravitic system can be turned on in reverse mode, adding 400kg to the weight of the entire package.

The wardrobe is powered by a Type B fuel cell and provided with enough fuel for ten hours of operations. While this may seem like a short duration for a robot, the robotic components are rarely in use for more than a few minutes at a time (boarding, debarking, check into/out of a hotel, etc.). Refueling costs about Cr1 and can usually be arranged with a steward while onboard, for a nominal tip. Audio and visual sensors combined with cargo handling software allow the robot to move about and obey orders like "setup in that corner" or "follow me". The single arm is actually the actuator that allows the wardrobe to open and close itself.

Accessories include:

- Padded and unpadded dividers and liners for the drawers and secret compartments, allowing the owner to customize the storage to their needs
- Two lock/unlock fobs.
- Clothing hangars that lock into the hang bar.
- Matching overnight bag
- Netting and various straps to secure items while in transit
- Black, brown or matching hard side briefcase
- Black, brown or matching backpack
- Black, brown or matching messenger bag

W-2 Wardrobe - B110E-01-7B002-PF11 Cr23,200

Fuel=1.5; Duration=10 hours; TL=12

200/500 (mesh)

1 Light Arm (opens and closes storage area)

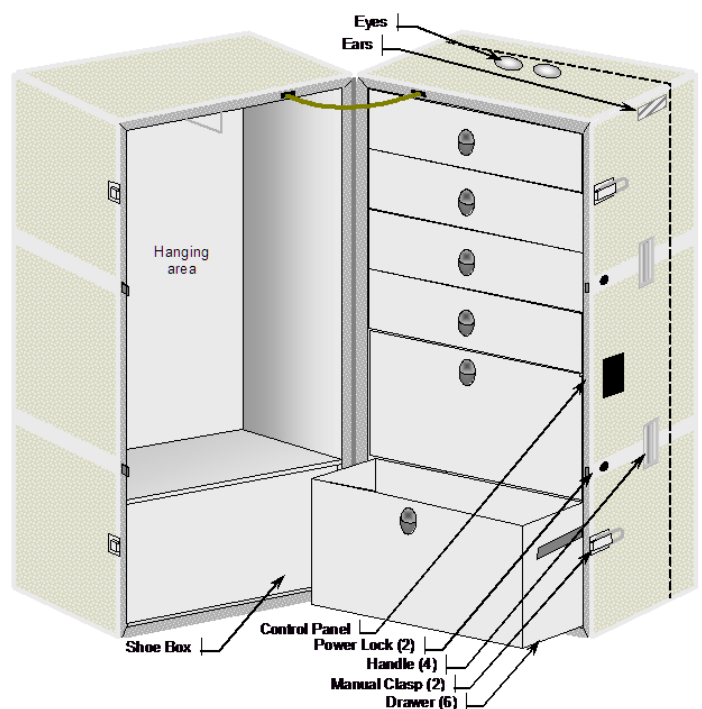
2 eyes, 2 ears

Cargo Handling – 1

Grav Vehicle - 1

1.8m(H) x 0.91m(W) x 0.61m(D); Mass=155kg

The robot worksheet for this item appears on the next page.



In A Store Near You

ROBOT DESIGN FORM				URP: B110E-01-7B002-PF11		W-2 Wardrobe		TL12
Description			Factor	Notes	Power (kw)	Volume (liters)	Mass (kg)	Price (Cr)
Chassis	Size		B	Type VI		1000	100	4000
	Configuration		1	Box/Wedge				
	Armor		0					
Power Plant			1	Fuel Cell	20	-30	35	800
Batteries			0					
Locomotion	Transmission							
	Suspension		E	HV Grav Module	-8	-20	12	10000
Appendages	Head		0					
	Arm		1	Light	-2		5	500
Sensors, Devices, Weapons	Visual Sensor				-0.5		0.5	100
	Audio Sensor				-1		0.5	50
Software	Logic	CPU	Storage					
		2	10	0	Low Data			400
	Command	1	1	0	Limited Basic			500
	Applications							
	Cargo Handling	2						200
	Grav Vehicle	2						400
Brain	CPU Linear	7				-1.4	0.7	3500
	CPU Parallel							
	CPU Synaptic							
	Storage		11			-1	1.1	2750
Fuel				Dur: 10 hours		-1.5	0.105	0
Total					7.5	941.6	154.905	23,200

Legend: Chs - Chassis, Loco - Locomotion, App - Appendages, SDW - Sensors, Devices, Weapons

Critic's Corner

The Third Imperium: Tripwire

Reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

The Third Imperium: Tripwire. Simon Beal.

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

96pp, softcover

US\$24.95/UK£16.99

This first-released campaign for Mongoose *Traveller* has both strengths and weaknesses, but will likely satisfy a desire for an “action” campaign.

On the Shelf

As part of the *Third Imperium* line, it matches the style of other releases in this line. The cover picture is dark, showing someone coming down a ramp from a ship to a cluttered landing area, with shadowy armed figures in the background.

Initial Impressions

The campaign takes place in the Jewell subsector of the Spinward Marches. It's divided into seven pri-

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Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 23)

mary modules, each taking place on a different world of the subsector; once the primary modules are completed and the campaign brought to an apparently successful conclusion, there's a mini-campaign to wrap up some loose ends, which has the party revisit some of the worlds and contacts from the primary modules.

As one of the earlier Mongoose releases, it suffers from the early poor choice of body font (FF Scala Sans), impairing the readability somewhat. It does not, however, suffer from the "grey wall of text" problem; illustrations, sidebars, and tables are used liberally to break up the text.

On Closer Inspection

Although most of the modules have several options for play, and the outcomes of none of them are certain, the campaign as a whole is really a bit of an exercise in railroading. Clues garnered in each module point strictly at the next, with no ambiguity or room for misinterpretation, other clue-gathering, or wild-goose chases.

The party will have the Zhodani chasing them practically from the start, and their influence will be felt throughout the campaign, including strong evidence that many world governments and the Imperial intelligence network are compromised.

While most of the individual scenarios offer non-violent options for completion, the author does ap-

pear to have a bias toward open conflict; most of the non-violent options will, if failed, lead to the violent option that they were trying to avoid. Generally, the violent option is more often presented as the more straightforward one.

The successful party will have opportunities to make contacts in places both high and low, and those contacts can prove useful in the future, especially if the players make a certain decision in the final module, but the mini-campaign takes one of the most useful ones away.

Two minor races are encountered in the course of this campaign, but neither is more than an incidental bit of local color—both of them could have been replaced with standard humans without materially degrading the campaign. However, what is presented may well be enough to inspire a creative referee to develop either in somewhat more depth.

Conclusion

Overall, a good product, though perhaps not top-rank. It definitely wants a good referee running it, but the railroad structure may leave an experienced referee or party cramped. If completed successfully, it does leave the party in a good position for future campaigns in the area, whether Mongoose-published or not, without giving them too much in the way of *dei ex machinae*. Purchase it if you want a ready-made campaign of this sort on-hand; if it doesn't fit your style, save the \$25/£17 for products that you'll make more use of.

Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
 - what you think of the articles we publish
 - how we can make our magazine better
 - how we can make our website better
 - what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
 - what you think of our look
 - how we can make it better
- Please, give us your opinion! We've provided several ways you can do so:
- e-mail: feedback@freelancetraveller.com.

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.
 - Forums:
 - Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg.org.uk/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>
 - Lone Star at Citizens of the Imperium: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>
- Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.**

Lisse-class Cargo Submarine

by Richard Perks

The *Lisse*-class cargo submarine is a standard design from Enrii's Maritime Industries LIC of Ke-plo/Core, and is named after the manager's daughter. Cargo submarines find widespread use on water worlds, or worlds with extreme environmental conditions that make grav vehicles impractical. With a top speed of 100kph and a dive depth of 300m, the *Lisse* can avoid surface weather conditions and deliver its cargo to underwater cities and other facilities common on worlds with TL9 or higher.

The *Lisse* is actually a stripped down version of the *Riptide* attack submarine. Enrii's Maritime Industries realized that the demand for the *Riptide* was not sufficient to keep their yards busy, so they modified the design into a cargo sub. The weapons, advanced sensors and redundant comms were stripped out, the hull material thickness reduced, and the top speed reduced (with associated reductions in power plant size). The freed up space was filled with cargo holds.

The reduced crew requirements meant that large staterooms could be provided for all crew members. It should be noted that with a smaller crew, the *Lisse* is no longer mandated to carry a medic, and the steward is often cross-trained in first aid.

The new cargo holds occupies the front half of the submarine (along with bow mounted sensors and

the forward airlock. Aft of the small conning tower (containing the mid-ships airlock, periscopes and radio and sensor masts) are the crew quarters, fuel, engineering, and the control systems.

Care has to be taken to balance the weight of the forward cargo, and any empty spaces in the holds filled with water filled ballast sacks to maintain the correct buoyancy.

Craft ID: Lisse Cargo Submarine, TL11, MCr43.9481
 Hull: 270/675, Disp=300, Config=Submarine, Armor=20E, SurfaceUnloaded=2563tons, SurfaceLoaded=3941tons, SubmergedLoaded(Max)=4141tons
 Power: 1/2, Fusion = 84Mw, Duration = 90/270, Consumes 0.042Kliters/hr
 Loco: 1/2, Standard Anti-Grav Thrusters, Thrust=475tn, SurfaceSpeed=74kph, SubmergedSpeed=100kph, MaxAccel=20kph, MaxDecel=40kph, MaxDirChange=180deg, MaxDive=300m
 Commo: Regional Range Laser Communicator, Regional Range Radio, radio mast.
 Sensors: Very Distant AEMS, Very Distant Active Sonar, Very Distant Passive Sonar, night periscope, day periscope, sensor mast. ActObjScan: Diff; ActObjPin: Diff; PasEngScan: Form
 Off/Def: None.
 Control: Computer Mod5 x 2, Panel=Dynamic Linked x 36, Environ=basic env, basic life-support, extended life-support, airlocks x 3
 Accom: Crew=33 (Bridge=8, Deck=7, Sensors=3, Engineering=14, Stewards x 1), State-room=Large x 33.
 Other: Fuel (hydrogen)=90.7kl, Extended Duration Food & Water Supplies=5.9kl, Cargo=1366kl, Lead Ballast=420kl, Ballast Tanks=200kl, 3 x 100kl/h pumps (for ballast tanks), Spare CP=0.39, Spare MW=18.9, ObjSize=Avg, EM Level=Faint.

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

July, 2011

- **Mongoose Publishing** has released parts 9 and 10 of their *Secrets of the Ancients* campaign. This completes the free PDF release of the product; a bound edition is expected to go on sale later this year. Also released during July was *Alien Module 4: Zhodani*.
- **Terra/Sol Games** has released, in PDF and bound formats, their Twilight Sector career book, *Tinker, Spacer, Psion, Spy*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Quick Worlds 11: Chance*.

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.

Instellarms PW-S34 “Crowdpleaser”

by Colin Campbell

PW-S 34: (Mongoose Traveller)
 TL11, Ranged Pistol skill, Dmg: 3d6+2, Auto: No, Recoil: 1, Mass: 1.3kg
 Magazine: 6, Cost: 600 Cr, Ammo Cost: 50 Cr
 Personal: -1, Close: +1 (max range Close)

A large, difficult to conceal pistol, the Instellarms PW-S34 “Crowdpleaser” has become popular among civil enforcers and military police, especially those on riot control duties, because of its unique design.

Built to address the specific concerns of over-penetration and stray rounds in an urban environment, the Crowdpleaser fires a shot type shell loaded with pellets of a compressed, highly volatile compound. Though potentially lethal at short ranges, the pellets will dissipate harmlessly within 10 meters of the muzzle of the pistol. This limited range allows the weapon to be deployed in situations where bystanders behind the target might be endangered. It has also been considered for use by some planetary customs officials, as the weapon’s shot is unlikely to

damage sensitive controls or equipment. Of course, because of this weapon’s unique characteristics, it is intended to be deployed as a secondary weapon, not as the primary weapon for a peace officer.

Physically, the weapon has a very large frame for a pistol, a wide bore, short barrel (16 mm), and a 6-round box magazine just forward of the pistol grip (the box magazine is too large for a hand grip usable by most humans, and the barrel length is largely inconsequential for such a short range weapon. The recoil for this weapon is impressive, as is the report and muzzle flash—the disorienting effects of the report and flash can be almost as disabling as the impact from the pellets at ranges under 5m. A standard two-handed firing stance is recommended.

Because of the composition of the propellant and pellets, atmospheric differences from Imperial Standard gas mix (75% N₂, 20% O₂) or pressures significantly different than 1 atm may cause changes in this weapon’s performance. This weapon is not usable in vacuum.

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 and let us know what will make the chats work best for you!

Contest: Wooden Ships and Iron Men

Create a career for a Wet Navy, with technology limited to the Age of Sail. Personal firearms are to be assumed to be muzzle-loaders, as are cannon. You may invent undocumented skills that are relevant to the career, but provide an explanation of the skill and its relevance—examples of situations where the skill would be useful are a plus. Do not assume anything about the setting other than technology being limited to roughly the early-to-mid 1800s in Europe.

The career must be compatible with *Classic Traveller* (Basic or Expanded chargen), *MegaTraveller*, or *Mongoose Traveller* (or the *Mongoose Traveller* SRD).

Send entries to contest@freelancetraveller.com. They must be received by 23:59:59 EDT August 31, 2011; the editor will decide which he likes best (realism and lots of options are pluses), and that winning entry will appear in the October 2011 issue of *Freelance Traveller*. It will also become a core component of a *Freelance Traveller* project that has been back-burnered for a while; the author will be invited to participate and an overview of the project will be posted in the October issue along with an invitation for serious participation in further development only.

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 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 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*, the two *GURPS* variants on the Official *Traveller* Universe, and the forthcoming *Traveller Prime Directive*.

...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. 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”.

