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From the Editor

In our August issue, we announced a contest ("Wooden Ships and Iron Men") asking for a low-tech Wet Navy career. The winning entry, by Timothy Collinson, appears in this issue.

But we indicated that that career would be one of the central pieces of a project that had been back-burnered, but which we were bringing forward and resuming work on. That project is the "conversion" to *Traveller*, with permission from the author, of the setting and concepts of "Two-Space", from *The Two-Space War* and *The Guns of Two-Space* by Dave Grossman. These novels represent a very different sort of melding of the Age of Sail with interstellar science fiction than the usual: when we say "Wooden Ships", we mean it! You can find a description of the project on page 30 of this issue.

We've had more than a few inquiries about *The Bur-rowWolf*; we're happy to inform you that it *will* return in the November issue of *Freelance Traveller*—as I write this, the last piece of the magazine to be done before PDF generation, my email alert chimed and deposited the next installment in my Inbox.

We'd like to extend our apologies for being two weeks late—in addition to having had a somewhat rough patch of real life that left the editor exhausted for most of a week right when it was most critical for the magazine, just as he started to recover, he had a telephone service outage that also took down internet access. Both are back, and the issue is finally up, as you can see. We might be a week late in November, but we hope to be back on schedule for the December issue, to close out our second full year of publication—your support for which we once again thank you!

Supplement 10: Merchants and Cruisers

Reviewed by "kafka"

Supplement 10: Merchants and Cruisers. various authors.
Mongoose Publishing: http://www.mongoosepublishing.com
130pp, softcover
US$24.99/UK£16.99

My first reaction upon receiving this item was: "WTF another book of deck plans and no fluff?" having been burnt by *Supplement 3: Fighting Ships*. However, I am happy to report greater care has been taken by Mongoose in providing the reader with many more useful ships and deck plans (gone is the redundancy of the endless levels of ships like the *Tigress*). If deck plans are your thing—they're essential for boarding action games—then this product is the one for you. However, if you're not interested in the internal arrangements, or if you already have a vast array of ships populating your *Traveller* universe, you may wish to give this product a pass.

The deck plans are still presented in the traditional vector method of *Traveller* games past, save the graphics are now clearer and cleaner. Purchasers of new fangled deck plans who are used to 3D representations may be disappointed by the presentation offered in this supplement; while 3D representations are certainly prettier and more evocative of a sense of space in which action takes place, they are (in my opinion) much more difficult to use. I also consider it more problematical that they leave far less to the imagination. I have thus been turned off the new treatment of deck plans for *Traveller*. Essentially, ships so presented are going to be dungeon crawls, rather than having a 'personality'. I prefer to bring out a ship's personality by adding fittings and quirks myself, or with a gaming group, rather than relying on the publisher to do so. So, I have come back to the notion that this minimalist aesthetic is superior for *Traveller*, especially after seeing too many poorly conceived 3D deck plans.

Long-time *Traveller* players will spot more than a few familiar ships now given a Mongoose treatment. The ships in this supplement come from the military services, paramilitary (e.g., Scouts or Search & Rescue) and the merchant branches. The volume is nicely rounded out with ships of Aslan, Darrian, and Vargr designs. Each ship is nicely illustrated as a line drawing, with certain areas and objects shaded in grey tones, allowing the Referee to colour the ships as they see fit. Unlike the main rulebook, which used greys and black to accentuate chrome, these drawings are much plainer. I realize Mongoose is doing this to give Referees a chance to add the chrome on their own but it would have been nice to see more trimmings on these ships. Therefore, while the art is far superior to the ship art of prior versions, it lacks excitement and is not very stimulating. Hopefully, in the future, Mongoose will commission artists to show these ships in action; now that the fundamental visual design principles have been laid out.

To this end, I would wonder why Mongoose would not have wanted to included a section of chrome/fluff in the supplement. If at all possible, a 3-4 page spread (colour in an equally ideal world) of these ships and those presented in earlier supplements/books in action would have been quite attractive. Yes, it would have increased the cost of the production of the book but certainly would have in-

Critics' Corner

creased the value of the book to purchasers, and made it more of a 'keeper' rather than just another resource. Perhaps they might consider this for future ship books, or possibly a downloadable PDF supplement.

Although this is a minor flaw to pick on it does reinforce opinions about the lack of vibrancy in the Mongoose *Traveller* line. I do realize art is expensive but art is often one of the reasons that players or referees choose to buy RPGs or particular supplements. Art adds to any sense of wonder induced by a product, and nowhere is this needed more than in SFRPGs. Although the appropriateness of the selection of a particular artist's work on a previous version of *Traveller* was much debated, there is no question that that edition of *Traveller* had a very distinctive look.

With text dominating over art in the Mongoose offerings, I find that Mongoose does not really have a distinctive look for their line. *Alien Module 3: Darrians* was excellent, for the most part, because art nicely complemented a great text. *Starports* had great text but no art. *Merchants and Cruisers* does have art but not great art and not much text. There are fine lines between 'underdoing' 'doing', and 'overdoing' when it comes to balancing text with art, and Mongoose has in the past been on all sides of them. One can hope that Mongoose will include more fantastic art in future supplements, without it being at the expense of the textual 'meat'. Although I would prefer more chrome and fluff, the other side of the equation, that there are those who do not want more art and do want more Tables & Charts, must be acknowledged…so the debate will undoubtedly continue. If *Traveller* still has its sights set upon joining the pantheon of Science Fiction imaginations beside the likes of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, as Marc Miller once wished for, Mongoose *Traveller* must, in my opinion, become more visually appealing.

Supplement 10: Merchants and Cruisers is certainly a worthy addition to any *Traveller* library, despite the drawback of lacking chrome. It does not get a high Style rating because it is missing the coolness factor; there are lessons that can be learned from the 3D presentation of starships, even if one dislikes them as I do. One can liken this supplement as presented to looking at the skeleton and sketches of the human body to learn about anatomy; doing so can teach some of what you need to know, but it takes seeing accurate diagrams of muscles and organs to fully grasp the subject. So too with this supplement; it is missing the additional information that could have been provided with *"in situ"* pictures of cabins, common areas, and so on. If Mongoose had included more of this fluff, I would not hesitate in giving this supplement a much higher rating for Style.

Doing It My Way

Ansibles in Traveller

by Jeff Zeitlin

The classical *Traveller* setting is one where Charted Space is filled with large multistellar polities, with communication being slow, no faster than travel. The problems of managing empires on this scale are obvious from historical analogy, especially the examples of the British and Spanish empires. If you add faster-than-travel communications (FTTC, henceforth) to such setting, you increase the ability of the home government to centralize control. The faster such communication is relative to the speed of travel, the greater the tendency toward centralized control. *Traveller* deliberately limits communication to travel speed to minimize the ability of a polity to centralize control (and thus maximize game opportunities).

One of the consequences of the lack of FTTC in *Traveller* is that the various worlds are largely independent, with the Imperium providing limited inter-world services, such as defense or protection of commerce. But is an Imperium—or rather, any multi-world polity—really necessary on the player-character scale?

The practical independence of worlds and canonical levels of anticommerce activity such as pi-

racy suggests not (though it could be argued that the threat of Imperial response is itself a factor in low levels of anticommerce activity), and in a setting where imperial polities do not exist, FTTC can be introduced without ruining the essential "*Traveller*-ness" of the setting. As is common in SF, I will assume that such communication is instantaneous between stations and refer to it as an "ansible".

Assumptions

There are a number of ways to introduce the ansible into a story setting, ranging from telephone-like (anyone can make an ansible call to anyone else, and interact in real-time) to something more like electronic mail (where messages are stored and forwarded for later retrieval). The particular model used will, naturally, depend on the needs of the story, and it is not unknown for the described use of the ansible to be inconsistent with the described model.

If we assume that "scientific consistency" will be maintained—that is, if our 'story' does not use the ansible in ways that our definition would not allow—in a no-multiworld-polity setting, I believe that the following model/constraints will allow a campaign setting to remain recognizeably "*Traveller*":

1. Ansible hardware is large enough (and expensive enough) that mounting an ansible aboard a ship is impractical at best. Perhaps a hull from a *High Lightning*-class ship could be gutted and an ansible mounted to create a poorly-armed communications ship, but in a setting lacking large multiworld polities, it is unlikely that such large ships will be constructed, and would be difficult to justify in any case.

2. Ansibles can only operate at a distance from gravitationally-significant masses. For simplicity, assume that the ansible platform must be outside the 100-diameter limit of any such masses. (Yes, this means space-based. It is more reasonable to construct a platform that is not independently mobile and which can be defended by smaller but well-armed ships than it would be to mount the ansible in a ship.)

3. (for re-emphasis) Multiworld polities do not exist. Customs unions, postal unions, trade com-bines, and the like may exist, but in no case is there any centralized legal, political, or military multi-world authority.

General Implications

It should be noted that the strength of any effects described here will depend in part on the cost of an ansible call/message—the higher the cost, the lower the overall traffic, and with lower traffic—that is, less exchange of information—the more conducive to the 'standard *Traveller* model' the setting will be.

The expense of the ansible means that only the richest systems—and of them, only those that have settlements significant in their own right off the mainworld—will consider construction of more than one ansible. However, the benefit of FTTC will be enough to ensure than all but the poorest and smallest of systems will have one, and economically marginal systems will be willing to go into debt to build or purchase an ansible.

Even aside from the gravitational-significance standoff distance, prudent system governments will establish their own standoff distances (or, if the ansible is a commercial monopoly of a single company, the company will mandate such standoff distance) for gravitationally-insignificant bodies (such as ships) such that space traffic or debris in space traffic lanes will not present a danger of damage to the ansible. Additionally, provisions are likely to be made for some level of defense against deliberate attack, and standoff distances will be sufficient to reduce the ansible's target profile.

If the ansible is capable of 'streaming' data, and the standoff distance allows for light-lag delays of less than about a second (thus allowing real-time interaction), it is nearly certain that large space stations will develop at the standoff distance, and those stations—which will rapidly develop into cities—will take over the role of the system's primary trade hub, with businesses that depend on interstellar trade being the principal 'residents' and employers. Any port facilities farther away from the ansible will be relegated to acting as feeders for the primary 'OutPort' at the ansible standoff. If, because of technical or

regulatory constraints, 'streaming' data is not possible, such space hubs are less likely to develop, as the communications model will be, in effect, store-and-forward, and the impact of light-lag will be far lower.

Implications for Trade

Speculative trade as currently understood will not exist—when one can contact a destination system before making a purchase of cargo, it becomes possible to determine whether there will be a market at the destination, and possibly for several destinations ahead. To the extent that anything similar to speculative trade exists, it will likely be a market analyst with good sales ability taking goods on consignment from a manufacturer trying to break into a new market, or developing a new product line.

The same factors that operate to reduce speculative trade will operate to favor the development of standard shipping routes, with ships operating according to fixed schedules. The majority of ship 'trade' will be the buying and selling of space for shipping goods, and shipping companies will compete on the basis of reliability, efficiency (how quickly is hold space going to be available on any particular segment to be traversed), and price. Hold space will often be scheduled weeks or months in advance.

Military Implications

Recall that there are no multiworld polities. A world's defense forces will be only what that world can muster on its own, plus whatever other nearby worlds might contribute to a mutual defense pact. In the event of an attack on a world, relief forces will be potentially only one week away (instead of two weeks)—but the ansible represents a single point of failure for communications, and it will be a target for takeover or destruction by an attacking force. Takeover will be more desirable than destruction, as an ansible in control of the attackers can be turned to their purposes. A failure to prevent the target system from using the ansible means that other worlds in the immediate stellar neighborhood will have very early warning of hostile operations in the region. If, as is permitted in some versions of *Traveller*, an actual destination can be determined from analysis of the outbound 'jump flash', the almost instant notification of the destination system means that mutual defense pacts can be activated prior to the actual attack, and supplemental forces can be available to the defenders almost as soon as the attack commences.

Tweaking for Effect

How strong the effects of the ansible are on a campaign setting will depend on how easily accessed the ansible is. That in turn will be defined by two factors: message capacity, and message cost. Both factors are left to the referee to control for his campaign; in general, making the ansible less accessible will lessen the effects of the ansible on the setting. Additionally, how any restrictions are imposed will play a role in shaping the setting; referees are thus cautioned—as always—to consider carefully the effects of any fiat.

A Note on the Origin of the Idea

In various *Traveller* forums and mailing lists, there is always a perennial thread on books, movies, TV shows, and so on that 'have a *Traveller* feel'. While no two individual lists will ever match perfectly, certain examples are repeatedly mentioned by multiple people. One of those is the *Vatta's War* series of books by Elizabeth Moon, and I used that series as a jumping-off point for the idea. A few days of discussion following the posting of an earlier draft of this article to the *Traveller* Mailing List revealed some considerations not addressed in the series, and I have incorporated my thoughts on those into this article, with thanks to the various list members that opened them up for consideration and discussion.

Slice of Life: Gloop

by Mike Cross

This article was originally posted to the TerraSol Games blog at http://terrasolgames.com on May 18, 2011 and is reprinted in Freelance Traveller with the author's permission.

Gloop is the 30th century staff of life. It is the stuff that goes into feeding the cell culture that becomes your synth meat or into the food synthesizers to directly become your ham or potatoes. Gloop is made from organic materials; the most common one in the Twilight Sector is Krill foodpaste from Argos. It is the raw material that your food synthesizer uses to create your meal. It comes both in a liquid form and a dried brick form. As a liquid the stuff just looks like "gloop", hence the name.

On the grand 30th century food pyramid, gloop is firmly entrenched at the bottom. Synthetic products like synth meat, vegetables or fruits are regarded more highly, and above everything are natural foods. But just because it sits at the bottom of consumer preference doesn't diminish its importance. For space travel, space habitats, and sealed environmental habitats, where storage is at a premium, gloop is a godsend.

The problem with gloop has always been taste, and with good reason. Early versions of the stuff were simply awful but with time and consumer demand more palatable versions of gloop came onto the market. Like any consumer product, from carpet to gauss weapons, there are endless quality levels of gloop. The quality of taste that is experienced by the consumer is based on two factors: the quality of the gloop and the fidelity level of the food synthesizer that ultimately converts the gloop into a food item or recipe.

The quality of gloop is usually described as being in one of three tiers, low, moderate or high. For purposes of determining the quality of what you are consuming the factor assigned to each level is 75% for low, 90% for moderate and 99% for high. The costs for the three tiers per meal equivalent is 2, 4 or 8 credits. Clearly as stated above there is room in each tier for higher and lower quality gloop with corresponding incremental price adjustments.

The second factor is the quality of the food synthesizer that ultimately converts the gloop into a meal. These are rated as a fidelity factor to the recipe program used by the processor, the range is 91 to 99%. So an example of the worst quality meal would be low quality gloop (75%) and a low quality (economy) synthesizer (91%). Food produced by this combination would result in a meal that tasted 68% like a meal using natural ingredients. It doesn't sound too appetizing, but that is what many starship crews must put up with

besides whatever real food they can sneak on board and keep out of the hands of their shipmates. On the other end, though, gloop can be quite good; high quality gloop with a state of the art synthesizer (99% × 99%) would produce a meal that tasted 98% like a natural one. The average person would have a hard time telling the difference.

Gloop Cost per Meal	
Quality	**Price per meal-equivalent**
Low	Cr 2
Moderate	Cr 4
High	Cr 8

Food Synthesizer Quality and Cost[1]				
	Low (75%)	**Moderate (90%)**	**High (99%)**	**Cost[2]**
Economy (91%)	68%	81%	90%	Cr2,000
Standard (95%)	71%	85%	94%	Cr5,000
Advanced (99%)	74%	89%	98%	Cr10,000

1. This is a cross-matrix of synthesizer quality (left column) with gloop quality (top row). The value at the intersection of the two quality values represents the taste similarity to an all-natural-ingredients meal.
2. Other factors, including the size and recipe range, also affects the cost. See the following tables. These costs are the baseline for further adjustments

Synthesizer Size Effects On Cost			
Size	**Number of Meals (per 10 minutes)**	**Cost Multiplier**	**Mass/ Volume of Unit***
Personal	1	0.5	5 kg
Compact	2	0.75	15 kg
Small	5	1.0	50 kg
Medium	10	2.0	0.1 dton
Large	20	5.0	0.5 dton
Industrial	50	10.0	1.0 dton

* Once the unit reaches Medium size, it must be a fixed installation, and mass is less important than volume. This table thus switches to volume rather than weight. Personal through Small units may be portable.

So, a starship with a Medium unit does a crew meal and a passenger meal; a liner with 2 large units sits 40 at a meal.

Recipes includes the number of recipes that can be prepared and the range of general flavors and styles that can be mixed and matched for example grilled, fried, BBQ etc and food types such as beef, pork, bacon, lamb, chicken, fish, shellfish. So a limited unit could have beef, bacon, chicken and then have a total of 20 ways of preparing or cooking said food. BBQ chicken strips, beef burger, steak, crispy bacon strips etc.

Recipe Range Effect On Size and Cost			
Range	Recipes	Cost Multiplier	Size Multiplier
Limited	20/3	0.5	0.5
Good	100/5	1.0	1.0
Excellent	500/unlimited	2.0	2.0
"Recipes" is expressed as number of ways that foods can be prepared/number of basic food types that can be prepared.			

Cost × SSE × RRE is the cost of any single unit, where:
Cost is the cost from the Food Synthesizer Quality and Cost table;
SSE is the cost multiplier from the Synthesizer Size Effect On Cost table; and
RRE is .the cost multiplier from the Recipe Range Effect On Size and Cost table

How does this affect my game?

Well, once again it's is mostly background info but it is important info if you are trying to feed your crew or your crew plus the 10 lucky souls you just plucked from lifeboats after that pirate attack.

Critics' Corner

Mercator

Reviewed by Benjamin Pew

Mercator. Paul Elliot.
Freelance Traveller: http://www.freelancetraveller.com
56pp, PDF
Free, originally released as supplement to October 2010 issue

Mercator is a fan-made supplement for *Traveller*. It is set in the eastern half of the Roman Empire during the first and second centuries of the Gregorian Calendar, and aims to adapt the original version of the *Traveller* rules to a low-tech setting. To that end, *Mercator* includes Roman-style careers for character generation, combat, equipment (not just weapons and armor), sailing ships, economics and trading (with a sailing bent), low-tech encounters and a brief survey of the Eastern Empire.

Character generation covers the careers of Legion (citizen soldiers, SOC 6+), Auxiliaries (non-citizen soldiers, SOC 5-), Navy, Merchants, nobles, rogues, barbarians and the ubiquitous "other," which in these rules represents crafters, townsmen, slaves and the assorted characters which don't fall under the other careers. These careers follow the standard 2d6 method and start at 18, except for Barbarians which roll 1d6 for Education and start at 14. (In my opinion, the careers of Noble, Rogue, Other and maybe Merchant should begin at 14 as well, as humans usually begin their

Mercator
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Ancient World

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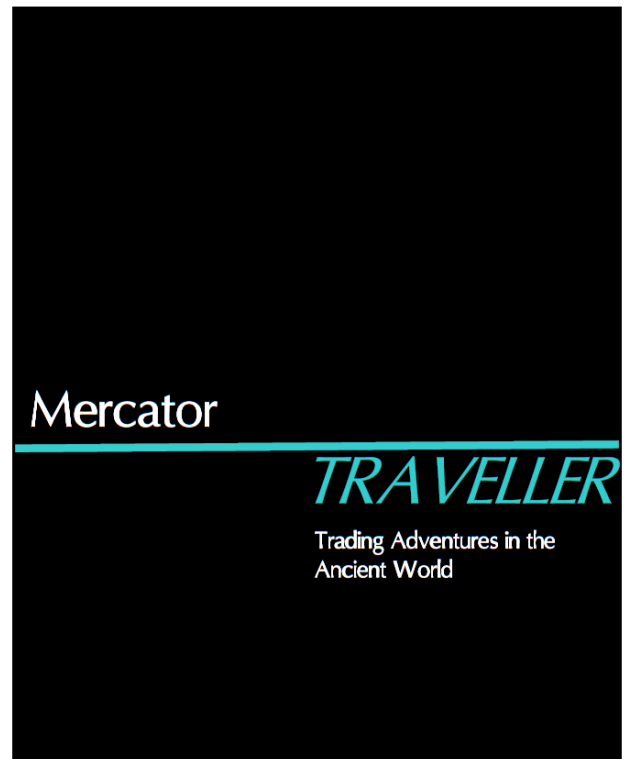
careers earlier in lower-tech areas—teenagers in this time were usually out working, and many teenage girls were married and/or mothers, more so than today.) The aging table is the one in Classic *Traveller* Book 1, which is appropriate for the time period—once you made it past infancy you'd be fine until 60, unless someone killed you (never unlikely).

The careers include a mustering-out table, which no good *Traveller* career is complete without. Money is handled in silver denarii instead of credits, and the weapons are blades instead of guns. Indeed, like in sci-fi *Traveller*, Nobles and Merchants may aquire a ship—a wood sailing vessel without a mortgage.

One interesting change is that Nobles use the title that is the highest one that their families have held, which doesn't necessarily mean that the character holds it (I would not allow a PC to hold high titles without it being a political campaign), which is the other reason that I would begin Nobles at 14—they had to undergo a course, the Cursus Honorum (Cursus!), which was designed to give them experience in how the Roman government worked. As opposed to commoners, who were supposed to let the First Families tell them what they *really* wanted to do.

There have been a few skill changes—for example, "Equestrian"—also a lower-noble Roman who isn't a senator but just rich—becomes "Riding" or Teamster, which is handling carts (which I would put together with Teamster when it comes up in Chargen—they're not the same, but a player making a legionary could pick Riding when he gets Teamster—once). There is also Blacksmith, Carpentry and Stonemason, which are specific and highly important subsets of Artisan (I would allow anyone who got a result of "Artisan" skill to pick these three, especially if playing an "Other"); "Artillery," which is ballistae and catapults, with Siege Engineer complementing them; meanwhile, Pilot and Small Craft refer to sailing vessels instead of starships.

The combat section of Mercator has a sailing-specific section which mentions distance, time and winds, both favorable and unfavorable. This is actually a good idea; I don't think I'd have thought of it. In addition, there are also rules for fire, boarding, and so on, which can be easily added in to any game.

There are both sea and land encounters, with pirates and jackals and such, with the random encounters including commoners, barbarians and even wedding parties; a patron encounters section is included as well (merchants and Christians, oh my!).This is good, especially for lower-tech worlds; my wishlist for further encounters would be more types of animals and more random types of humans (and a fantasy

version as well, for those who want a more mystical bent to their low-tech *Traveller*); the Classic sci-fi *Traveller* can be raided for such, since it has encounters that are a bit more low-tech than I'd expect for a sci-fi game: e.g. hunters and peasants, as opposed to taxi cabs and computer techs.

The section following Encounters covers ports, such as Alexandria and Corinth, and provinces, such as Egypt and Greece. While the available ports and provinces are among the richest in the Roman Empire, and provide plenty of opportunity for trading and adventure, it is also is my source for complaint—I would actually be more interested in the Western Empire, such as Rome, Spain, Gaul and the author's native Britain. Also, I'd like more ports and inland cities on the map generally, just in case players say "I'd like to visit Judea, it's a lovely place, but *just once* I'd like to avoid Caesarea!" And it'd be good to provide more color for the campaign, even if it's just news. Likewise, I would love to see other nations on the map—Persia, the German tribes, and desert nomads are good examples. These would be excellent places for military or political campaigns. However, those areas which are mentioned are done well, albiet briefly (especially the comment about how Egyptians of the era are effectively slaves on their own ancestral lands...).

The equipment section covers weapons and armor—good thought on including shields—as well as tools, camping gear, lodging, food and sailing gear. It is well thought out except for a lack of horses and riding equipment (that and clubs being free; like in sci-fi *Traveller*; I'm sure that there are those who sell clubs for whatever the drachma version of 10 credits is).

In the end, I quite enjoy *Mercator*; it is an entertaining look at how to handle low-tech, non-fantasy *Traveller*. The author obviously knows a lot about the Roman period, and the available locations are well done. As I said, my main complaints about this are a lack of Western Empire and other inland locations and (what I feel is) an over-emphasis on sailing. That said, if ever I run a low-tech *Traveller* campaign, or even a sci-fi *Traveller* campaign, I shall utilize this, especially if someone in a sci-fi game wants to play a Barbarian (they aren't all tribal savages, you know!).

My suggestions for this would be: expand the equipment list, especially for non-sailing gear; have a section on horses and overland travel; add a way to differentiate non-citizens from citizens and from slaves (e.g. Soc 4 & 5 are free non-citizens, 6 + are citizens and 2 & 3 are slaves); finally, if someone, or groups of someones, were to write up a series of province books, e.g. Aegyptus Book, Hispania Book, Persia Book, etc., including maps, ports, inland towns and such, I'd be happy (and would contribute, and would write up some NPCs and mythical creatures as well, as I've done already).

Nell Troutgarden

profiled by Ken Murphy

Captain Nell Troutgarden 878965 Age 42
Human female
5 terms, Mercenary (Captain)

Ground Vehicle-0, Computer-0, Vacc Suit-0, Brawling-2, Combat Rifleman-1, Rifle-3, Carousing-1, Animal Handling-1, Survival-1, Stealth-2, Recon-2, Leader-1, Mechanical-1, Medical-1, Bludgeon-3, Polearm-3, Tactics-2, Heavy Weapons-1, Handgun-1, SMG-1, Linguistics-3 (Nepali) (Chinese) (Japanese)

Nell Troutgarden was born to a poorer family in the steel producing center of Coopertino, in Ellig, just south of the Great Canal that ran through the northern territories on the balkanized world, Titus.

At the urging of a media assault designed by Ellig's ruling Corporation, Nell left her education behind, and at 12 (the age at which one could legally begin working in the steelyards), she joined the Ground Forces of Ellig when they went to war with their southern neighbor, the Democratic Principality of Manjibahpoor, over land on the north side of the Great Canal settled by both.

After eleven years of vigorous, if inconclusive warfare, a treaty joining the two was ratified, and Ellig eventually became a state within Manjibahpoor. With the war over, each side was whittling down their effective combat strengths, and thousands of troops were now out of work. Nell decided she just didn't want to, or didn't *think* she could anyway, go back to Ellig to work a smelter and eat a cheesesteak every day, so she decided, like many other vets, to join with a group of her fellows in newly-formed Free Companies—mercenaries for hire.

There was always some friction between the remaining governments of Titus, and a mercenary could make some pretty fair money—maybe even enough to retire to one of the palatial compounds to be found overlooking the north side of the Great Canal.

Eventually the Free Company of which Leftenant Troutgarden was a member, "Oswegatchie's Troopers", went offworld seeking contracts and spent the next six years on a number of different worlds, during which Nell was promoted to Captain.

Then a ticket came up for work out on The Frontier—the territory either butting right against, or well beyond the border of the Imperium—independent territories the Imperium liked to refer to as Principalities, regardless of what their rulers or organizations might actually be called.

The Whitehall Star Empire, called The Independant Principality of Whitehall by the Imperium, owed its name to the planet's largest man-made structure, the carving of a huge mesa into a massive city surrounded by cyclopean rock walls 40m thick, more than triple that in height, and covered by hundreds of terraces balconies. Countless weapon stations bristled. This ancient hive of military might was situated at the natural narrowing of the terrain, allowing the citadel to protect the fertile valleys that stretched asway beyond it from encroachment. A spiderweb of interlinked trenches surrounded Whitehall at ground level.

The locals of the WSE were a TL5 culture, and "Oswegatchie's Troopers" had been hired with the understanding that they were to support the WSE against several local factions composed of TL4 and TL5 cultures, joined in allience against them

It looked like the WSE and their allies the Troopers were going to be facing a protracted siege.

Soon after waking from cold sleep, and debarking the massive, rented transport which got the unit to Whitehall, Captain Troutgarden asked one of the WSE locals what was going on dirtside. The local told the tall, gangly woman "The Usurper—some minor, offworld *Princeling*—has proclaimed that the King and all on Whitehall must swear an Oath of Fealty, *or else*! Our King, knowing the hearts of his people, refuses this upstart's demands out of hand! God Bless Him! So we are at War!"

This was definitely at odds with the briefing she'd received about the OpFor alliance, before entering cold sleep. As Troutgarden went to report this to the Major, a sudden cacophony of sonic booms split the sky in the wake of an air squadron's fly-by. Nell knew the Allience weren't supposed to be advanced enough to field supersonic aircraft, so she supposed that the Alliance might've hired mercenaries of their own—maybe Rami-

rez's Aces and Eights, or Van Norman's Hell Squadron, she thought.

As the fast movers tore over, target consentrations on the ground, weapon stations atop walls, heavy weapon mounts and armored vehicles, both ground and anti-grav were suddenly bathed in star-bright globes of searing plasma. With such advanced technology, it was no mere mercenary flight wing, but state of the art Imperial Fighters. In terror, many of Whitehall's forces ran, some burned or blinded by the plasma blasts, only to be beaten or threatened bsck to their posts by hard-eyed Troopers..

After a dozen more sound-barrier-shattering air strikes laying down sun-hot plasma in the target zone, the local radio was jammed by the Imperial Navy, at near 100 decibels, delivering, in perfect, bone-jarring, accentless Anglic, "Rebels, Stand Down!", it began. As the message droaned, one of the King of Whitehall's command officers, intent on surrender picked up the communicator only to be cut down by the King's Champion. The Champion also laid out several more who appeared to be of questionable moral fiber in a red whirl of prowess.

Excusing himself from the King's staff slaughter, Major Oswegatchie left with his aides, and once in private contacted the Imperial Navy on the Guard Channel in an attempt to surrender before the Navy's customary response to rebels—the flying of the blood red "Flag of No Quarter" (sending its image across all local communication bandwidth).

"I am sorry, Major Oswegatchie," some nameless rating droned, "But siding with Insurrectionists against His Majesty is Treason. Your unit's status is flipped from Free Company to Rebel Combatants, with no rights under Imperial Law. Your Bond and rights to equipment retreival are hereby rescinded. IN Cruiser Tacumsa—speaking for His Royal Majesty The Emperor, in absentia—Out."

Oswegatchie and his Troopers were screwed. Hired to fight the WSE's enemies, only to find their foes, an Alliance of local forces, didn't exist. The Troopers were pawns in a battle between Whitehall separatists and some minor, offworld "Princeling"—His Majesty The Emperor of the Imperium.

Major Oswegatchie had been in the Imperial Marines a hitch in his youth, and informed his people of the inevitable next step: Concentrated fire from orbit before the Marines made their assault. Some Troopers spent these last minutes digging in, others made Cr1,000 bets to see who was going to make it out, while others simply broke and ran before being shot down like dogs by their brethren.

Then molten hell poured from the sky, churning up the ground and battering and breaking the ancient block that was Whitehall, killing tens of thousands before the Imperial Marines arrived by dropships to assault the ancient citadel in savage, street-by-street and house-by-house close combat that went on for almost two weeks.

The locals and the mercenaries made a good showing of themselves, if only it had mattered.

A visiting ship belonging to the TNS that had been planetside, interviewing and capturing images all through the action, managed to thread themselves through the Imperial Navy's blockade of Whitehall and escape into space with six Troopers and three locals aboard as the Imperial Marines were detonating an enhanced radiation WMD inside the monolith to bring the battle to a quick end—The Emperor, after all, wanted results.

Not only had Troutgarden been one of the lucky survivors, but she'd managed, by mere happenstance, to be holding the blood-drenched bag with the bets when she stopped to render first aid to Corporal Costello when he was hit while reloading the gauss SAW.

As the Newsboat left Whitehall, the crewmen aboard interviewed the survivors. After they'd gotten Nell's information, all they could get out of her was long, slow laughter, followed by jags of horrible crying.

One of the lasting images from Whitehall's destruction remains that of a filthy, gore-spattered Captain Nell Troutgarden, hair long and matted, sobbing noiselessly.

After some knocking around, Nell, ever the professional, eventually wound up working as a driver/bodyguard or dog-handler/bodyguard on Olde Earth.

After crossing and beating senseless the wrong Triad member over a game of Pai-Gow, Nell decided to

leave; getting working passage as a security specialist aboard a merchant. Then working security became the norm, and she's done it for many ships over the past 10 years.

Nell is a bit more than 1.6m tall, with a long,too-thin-seeming neck suppporting her small, round head with its large ears. Her shock of very thick, sandy hair is now cut into s short, tangled mess, and her clear green eyes strike some as sad. Nell is lanky, well-muscled, and an amazingly fast runner.

Nell speaks Anglic and her dead partner's Nepali, as well as Chinese and Japanese.

While some vets will tell war stories, Nell manages to avoid these. If pressed, she might mention some other action, but not Whitehall.

Nell has no intention of ever going back to Titus. If aboard a ship that either orbits or lands on Titus, she will stay in her quarters, alone, for the duration.

Nell has a real weakness for strawberry-banana milkshakes.

Nell has a serious rage disorder lurking just beneath her quiet surface (See the reason she had to leave Olde Earth, above).

Nell learned flower arranging (and Japanese) from her grandmother, and finds it soothing (Successful use of this skill offsets any rage problems for 1/2D days). Sometimes her work is truly quite beautiful.

Regardless of what she's wearing, Nell carries herself like a vet.

Nell has a large, geneered Mastiff. The dog can't talk or do assorted stupid stuff like Scooby Doo (pass itself off as someone's Aunt while in a dress and sunhat, drive a car, climb a rope, etc), but *is* smarter than the average dog, and does understand what Nell tells him. To make things exotic, have the dog understand one of Nell's other languages instead of Anglic.

Banking the Break

by Michael Viviano

The PCs have a free trader with over fifteen years left on the mortgage. Unfortunately, they've been getting the butt end of the stick when it comes to trade in the Spinward Marches. They've busted their butts trying to make an honest credit, but for the last seven months, they've only been able to send half of what they owe the bank each month. They've been rushing along off the beaten path trying to avoid paying the piper, but one fine day, a business dressed man with a large briefcase approaches the PCs' table in a startown café, and identifies himself as Agent Krueger of the First Imperial Bank of Mora. He's here to discuss the state of their mortgage.

He immediately explains that he is not trying to take the ship back; "We already have twelve ships just like yours rotting in a parking orbit, putting another up there isn't going to turn any red ink black." He wants to keep the ship operating, but he is going to have to review the captain's logbook and account ledger. As the agent has

legal authority to repossess the ship, the captain has little choice but to comply.

After asking a few sharp questions about some investments that failed, the agent agrees that times have been tough and commends the captain for dealing as fair as circumstances have allowed. Then he offers the captain a deal:

1.) Bring the ship in to Mora and have that overdue maintenance taken care of... on the bank.

2.) Several operational changes will be necessary, like either making that gunner start helping with the passengers and cargo, or firing him.

3.) The ship will be running jobs for the bank for the next year. The bank will waive payments for that year and forgive the past due, and the crew will keep all incidental profits.

5.) One stateroom will be available for bank agents at all times, free of charge.

If the PCs accept—as they likely would—they should suspect the bank of putting recorders and bugs throughout the ship. The bank can hang a lampshade on

it by making it a big, obvious recorder painted orange on the bridge with a clause in the contract that prohibits the crew from intentionally damaging "upgrades" made during the overhaul.

Possible "Requests" from the Bank

1. Looking for other defaulting/"skipping" ships and at least reporting their whereabouts and doings, but this is distasteful work for a free trader. But the bank has investments other than in free traders. The bank loans to planets, schools, nobles, it even loans to subsectors. These investments require travel and cargo room, and sometimes they require adventure.

2. Transporting sizeable amounts of "hard" money, along with security and bank agents double stacked in every stateroom, and with an armed escort ship keeping *very* closely stationed near the party's ship at all times.

3. Baiting a corsair that has been preying on the other traders financed by the bank, hoping that the "escort" that will spring the trap shows up *before* the party's ship—and crew—becomes a casualty.

4. Transporting a group of people, at the bank's request, to a backwater world. There's something about the group, though, that leaves the PCs wary of them...

5. Bringing a branch office module to an asteroid system, arriving after a collision smashes two big asteroids into a gravelstorm.

Editor's Note: When originally posted to Citizens of the Imperium, this adventure seed generated a fair number of ideas from the community. Those ideas are presented here, otherwise unattributed.

6. Delivering repossessed or recovered (from being stolen) cargo to its proper owner, possibly in the face of opposition from the thief or defaulter.

7. Government-subsidized (agricultural or technical aid) shipments to colonies. This can be normal colony-building, or recovery from sabotage or a disaster. If the colony was sabotaged, will this shipment be targeted?

8. The bank decides to use this ship as transport for executive junkets.

9. The "bank representative" is not who he seems. An underworld group has bought the loan from the bank, and now intends to use the ship—and crew—to launder ill gotten gains...

10. The "bank representative" is not who he seems. A Megacorporation agent invoved in shady dealings with the underworld has used corporate funds to purchase the loan, and now intends to use your ship for some shady dealing with the underworld. Naturally, his tracks are well-covered, and if the dealings come to light, it won't be the agent who gets burned...

11. A Government agency plants recording devices in the ship for use in a "sting" operation. It's not clear who the target of the "sting" is...

12. The ship gets used as a breakable toy, to train up young executives. The PCs are saddled with a succession of ambitious, inexperienced, but not necessarily stupid owners-aboard. Each of them uses the opportunity to show what they can do. Being inexperienced, they *will* make mistakes for the PCs to clean up… somehow.

13. The bank—or rather, a group within the bank (might as well call them a "cabal")— have long-term plans to set up their own fledgling line to take over a number of free-trader routes. They have been active in undercutting the free-traders locally, which is why the PCs' own ship got into difficulty in the first place. Now the PCs will be used to do this to other free-traders.

14. The banker is actually trying very hard to avoid repossessing the ship, since that would reveal to his bosses that he has made a multi-million-credit loan to someone with no collateral and a business plan centered on incidental, ad-hoc charters and cargo speculation.

15. Whether they like it or not, the ship and crew are used to not only spot skipping ships, but to act as a covert platform and agents to facilitate the repo. The bank hopes to make this more palatable to the PCs by offering them credit toward their own mortgage for any ship that sells for more than its remaining loan balance.

16. As 15, but one ship's original owner bears a "blood grudge" over the loss of his somewhat tarnished dream to "turncoat" free traders, and will use every opportunity to track them down and give them their "just desserts". Being without assets, this ends up as a many month hopscotch of working passages for the no-longer-owner to catch up with the characters and their "bargain.". The bank will do nothing as long as the ship isn't damaged.

Force of Destiny

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Force of Destiny. Dale L. Kemper
Original Publication: 2003
Current Availability: Print (used) and e-book

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in August 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.

As with my last review, I am continuing my look at books that were influenced by *Traveller*—even if not set in the Third Imperium.

In the early 1980s, FASA was one of the more notable *Traveller* licensees. Among their more famous releases are six beige-colored adventure modules, set spinward of the Third Imperium in the Far Frontiers sector.

If FASA hadn't picked up the *Star Trek* license in 1982, they probably would have continued to publish Far Frontiers adventures, and they probably would have eventually published Dale L. Kemper's Far Frontiers novel, written later in the 1980s.

This seventh review covers *Force of Destiny*, the novel that Kemper wrote in the 1980s, and which wasn't published until ~15 years later.

About the Story

Force of Destiny is a story of a sector at war. The Protectorate has fallen into a civil war, with loyalists fighting against the Tellamatrixians.

However, *Force of Destiny* is a very small story against that large backdrop. It is the story of the couriercraft *Speedy* and the priority message that she brings of a massive Tellamatrixian fleet on the move. It is the story of *Destiny*, the ship forced by bad luck to stay and face the oncoming fleet, the ship that may be *Speedy*'s only hope. And lastly it is the story of the people on these two ships—and those of their enemies.

In *Force of Destiny* we never really come to understand the civil war, or even who the forces fighting it are. Though the events of the novel could have some effects on the overall conflict, we will never know what they are. Instead we only get the desperate tale of the hours or days in which two Protectorate ships face a fleet of enemies that outguns them 100:1.

Genre & Style

This was probably Dale Kemper's first novel, and it shows. The biggest problem that it has is weak and/or clichéd characterization. I'm not convinced that the characters themselves are clichéd, but Kemper doesn't show much nuance in his descriptions. And thus the first mate who's in love with the captain seems unduly smitten and the admiral of the opposing fleet seems maniacally evil.

I think this wasn't helped by the fact that more than once Kemper goes straight to a cliché to show off an emotion, as one character wants to bash his head against a desk in frustration and another closes their eyes to "avoid screaming". This was all sometimes distracting, but not constant enough to really harm the reading experience.

Contrariwise, Kemper's attention to the space battles is terrific. The book is straight naval military science-fiction, and that generally requires exciting and evocative space battles, and Kemper really delivers. Not only do his missiles and lasers seem realistic, but he also shows the real (and terrible) effects of war in a way that few writers would be comfortable doing. I think the highs of Kemper's space battles more than offset the lows of his clichés.

Though I don't normally comment on the physical aspects of a fiction book, it's unavoidable here, because the Hamster Press printing of *Force of Destiny*, which I had the misfortune to pick up (though to be fair it's the only print edition which is readily available) is horrendous. It's so bad that I can't believe anyone wanted to put their name on this piece-of-garbage production.

To start with the typography is poor. Beginning immediately with the title page, everything shouts, "unprofessional." The paragraphs of the book are

laid out like they were a forum posting, with two carriage returns after each paragraph, and that's made even more frustrating by the fact that section breaks are marked by three carriage returns. Think it's hard to differentiate those sometimes? Yup.

Finally, this book was clearly typed in by hand from a printed manuscript and either no one bothered to edit it afterward, or else the editor who did so should never be allowed to work again. I'm pretty sure that there's more than one error a page, on average, including missing words, repeated words, and missing letters. Also, either the typist or the author didn't know the different between "loosing" and "losing", and at least once that combined with the generally poor editing to produce the word "loosig" in the text.

So, the Hamster Press edition is shamefully amateur. If I was rating this book's Style based on the qualities of the book, I'd give it a "1". Despite that, you might want to get it anyways, as the author occasionally sells it through eBay, and if you want a print copy, that's the way to go. There's an older Cargo Press edition, which I've never seen, but it's probably impossible to get. However, if you don't mind reading eBooks, the edition of *Force of Destiny* on DrivethruRPG seems much cleaner: I looked over the preview, and it's clearly been reset and the errors on at least those pages were corrected.

Anyway, getting back to the quality of the book. I don't really see much point in rating a novel's Style based on its physical qualities, because that's a pretty binary operation: the publisher got it right or not. Instead I try to judge Style based on how entertaining and professional the author's storytelling was. Here, as I said, good space battles but some clichéd characters. Similarly, looking toward Substance, this isn't a very deep story, though it is largely fun. Thus I've given average ratings of "3" for both Style and Substance. As a first effort, though, it's not bad at all.

(However, as far as I know, it's not only Kemper's first novelistic work, but also his only one; no surprise when it took over 10 years to find a publisher, and even then its publishers were both super small press.)

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

Force of Destiny was arguably the first-ever *Traveller* novel. Like predecessor, *Not in Our Stars*, it uses the science of the *Traveller* universe, but it goes the next step and actually sets the story in the Far Frontiers sector, two sectors spinward of the Third Imperium. Of course, *Force of Destiny* wasn't published until 2001, by which time numerous other *Traveller* books were in print (and perhaps back out). As I said, it's arguable ...

Traveller GMs should really like that aforementioned look into the science of the universe. The book kicks off with the *Destiny* fuel-scooping a gas giant to refuel, and in fact the whole book is about the necessity of fleets refueling at gas giants. Though *Space Viking* showed how a *Traveller*-like universe could be really big, this book shows how it can likewise be pretty small.

Beyond that the attention to military forces also is very clearly a part of *Traveller*. The one thing that confuses me in this book, as a *Traveller* book, is the constant reference to a "shift point"—as if *Traveller* ships could only leap into jump-space at certain points, rather than whenever they're far enough away from gravity wells. Maybe the Far Frontiers sector has different jump technology, different customs, or maybe they just speak more about points than distance, I dunno.

Unfortunately, when we go beyond the science to the actual physical geography of the *Traveller* universe, its people and its cultures, this book doesn't have a lot to offer. That's partly because it's set out in the middle of nowhere, and that's likely to be beyond the area most *Traveller* GMs are interested in—unless you're running those old FASA adventures, I suppose, and I should say that the *Sky Raider* adventures are considered absolute classics.

But, beyond that, Kemper never tells us much of anything about the setting of this area of space. That's partly a purposeful storytelling decision, so that Kemper could tell just one small story amidst

Critics' Corner

many others in this time of war. However, as a *Traveller* GM it disappoints me a bit because I know there are pro-Zhodani states and pro-Imperial states in the area, plus some ancient mysteries like that of the Sky Raiders. There are lots of stories that could be told in this area of space that might still be of interest to GMs in the Imperium proper, but Kemper chooses not to tell them.

So, is the story still of interest to *Traveller* GMs? A bit. I think it has about the same value as *Not in Our Stars*, which I've already reviewed: it'll get you into the mindset of the physics of the *Traveller* universe, and might spontaneously generate some ideas for you.

Conclusion

Force of Destiny is a fair book with a good basis in the physics of the *Traveller* universe. Some of the characterization is rough, but particularly if you're looking for evocative and interesting ways to describe space battles—or if you want to think more about what refueling at gas giants can result in—this is a good source.

Far Frontiers Adventures

1. Fate of the Sky Raiders
2. Legend of the Sky Raiders
3. Ordeal by Eshaar
4. Rescue on Galatea
5. Trail of the Sky Raiders
6. Uragyad'n of the Seven Pillars

The Far Frontiers Adventures were originally published by FASA in the 1980s, and are currently out-of-print. PDF scans of them can be obtained from FarFuture Enterprises on the Apocrypha-1 CD-ROM.

In A Store Near You   The Showroom

TL1 Bicycle

designed by Ewan Quibell

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CraftID: Bicycle, TL1, Cr 105
Hull:    1/1, Disp=0.074, Conf=4USL Open, Armour=0W,
         Unloaded=0.022 tons, Loaded=0.022 tons*
Power:   External=0.0002 Mw
Loco:    1/2, Simple Wheels x2, Suspension=integral,
         P/W=9, Road=40 kph, Offroad=8 kph
Comm:    -
Sensors: -
Off:     Hardpoints=1
Def:     -
Control: Direct
Accom:   Crew=1 (Operator), Seat=None
Other:   Cargo=0 klitres, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=None
Comment: Price in quantity=Cr 84
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This TL1 wooden, sophont-powered, bicycle is a passenger vehicle that can be found on almost any low tech planet. The hull is 1cm thick wood and the seating area is covered by cloth or hide to offer some protection for the operator's bottom and legs.

The operator uses direct controls, handlebars, and puts its feet on the ground directly both to power the vehicle and to brake. There is no luggage compartment and anything carried must be on the operator's back, but the vehicle is not intended to take much load.

The bicycle is powered by the operator, who is assumed to have two legs. In the above case the external power source was calculated using a standard human producing 200 watts. The speed of the vehicle varies considerably depending on the road conditions and load (the weight of the sophant and what they are carrying), and while theoretically can be driven up to 40kph, roads of the quality needed for these speeds are almost non-existent on low tech worlds.

The suspension is effectively the vehicle itself and offers very little in the way of comfort to the operator. At later tech levels springs under the seat are added to provide some comfort.

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.

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.

#22: Setting a Campaign: Subsectors of the Marches, Part Two

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 September 2011.

In my last column, I began discussion of the subsectors of the Spinward Marches, offering advice on which would work best as campaign settings. This time, I'm going to finish that catalog with a look at the rimward half of the sector.

Spinward Marches Subsectors: From Darrian (I) to Trin's Veil (P)

Darrian Subsector (I). The Darrian Subsector is the home of the Darrian Confederation, the oldest interstellar government in the Marches and one of the highest-tech civilizations in Charted Space. It might be slightly less desirable as a campaign setting because the Confederation is relatively civilized, but there are still a number of opportunities for adventure including: stories digging into the history of the Darrians and archaeological sites from before the original Darrians annihilated themselves 2000 years ago; conflicts (hot and cold) with the Sword Worlders; and explorations of worlds that lie outside the Confederation itself.

The Darrian Subsector is also tempting as a campaign setting because of the official support it's received. Most recently that's thanks to *Alien Module 3: Darrians* (MongT), which focuses mainly on the Darrian culture, but also devotes almost 40 pages to the worlds of the subsector. The previous source for the Darrians was *GURPS Traveller: Humaniti*, which devoted 20 pages to them and probably still has some worthwhile tidbits. (It also talks about the Nexxies

from the Mora subsector.) The earliest book on the area was of course *Traveller Alien Module 8: Darrians* (CT). Even with just the Mongoose book, you've got a great basis for a campaign. And if you want a ready-made adventure, there's "Fiddler's Green" in *Crowded Hours* (MongT).

What's surprising is that the Darrian Subsector is just one of three adjoining subsectors that's been richly detailed over the years!

The Sword Words Subsector (J). Next door, the Sword Worlds also is a subsector with a single government, but the result is very different, as the Sword Worlds are an aggressive culture that's been falling apart and coming together for hundreds of years. The society is violent and chaotic—making it all around a great place for adventure as long as you don't get on the wrong side of the Sword Worlders. There's also ample room for intrigue thanks to animosity toward the Darrians and the Imperium and past alliances with the Zhodani and the Vargr.

There's also some really hefty source material for the subsector, again making it a really nice complement to the Darrian subsectors. At the moment that starts with *GURPS Traveller: Sword Worlds* (GT), an all-around superb sourcebook that gives extensive details on, well, everything. Mongoose will have their own *Sword Worlds* (MongT) out momentarily. For a campaign set in the Sword Worlds, I expect you'll want both, as I find it hard to believe that the Mongoose book could capture all the details of the GURPS volume. (Hopefully it'll have lots of new details all its own.)

Several shorter pieces have also helped to detail the area. Over at the edges of the Sword Worlds, you have the classic adventure "Mission on Mithril" (CT), found in *Traveller Double Adventure 2*, and Avenger's campaign-length *Project Steel* (MongT). Among super-short pieces is my own "The Sword Worlds" in *Signs & Portents #80*, which offers a nice overview of Sword Worlder worlds here and in nearby subsectors.

If it's not obvious, the Sword Worlds is the second of the three richly detailed subsectors of the the rimward Marches that are just begging for exploitation by GMs.

Lunion Subsector (K). Lunion has been called the "crossroads of the Spinward Marches". There's industry and commerce, but as with other civilized locales in the Marches, there's not necessarily a lot of adventure. Lunion's another of those subsectors like Lanth (which is just coreward) that you're more likely to go through than adventure within.

A few adventures have been written for Lunion, including two Amber Zones in *Spinward Encounters*, but none of it's enough to hang an extended campaign upon, so you'd do better with one of the (many) subsectors in the Marches that has received more detail.

Mora Subsector (L). Mora is the industrial and political heart of the Spinward Marches and also the "Gateway to the Marches" (or if you're looking at it from a Marches' point of view, the Gateway to Corridor and the rest of the Imperium). You can certainly have political, espionage, and industrial adventures here, but traditionally I would have said it's not the best place for adventure, because it's the most lawful corner of the Marches, and that's typically been anathema to *Traveller* campaigns. However, Mongoose has been giving the subsector some focus in their *Living Traveller* campaign, so maybe those adventures will help point to the new sorts of campaigns you can run therein.

Two Mongoose *Living Traveller* adventures, *Of Dust-Spice and Dewclaws* and *A Festive Occasion* together constitute the majority of the official source material for the Mora subsector to date. They're both set on the planet Mora itself.

Five Sisters Subsector (M). Though the Five Sisters subsector is technically part of the Imperium, it's remote and disjoint from the rest. With a scant 1.845 billion population, the Five Sisters is literally the least populated subsector of the Marches. You could have a pretty blank canvas to paint upon if you wanted to use the Five Sisters as a home base, and there's a lot of room for exploration and discovery, but absent those being strong factors in your campaign, you'll probably want to choose elsewhere. Nearby District 268 has a lot of the same feel as Five

Sisters, but has a some advantages over it.

A handful of standalone adventures are all the existing source material for the area.

District 268 (N). District 268 is overall a lot like Five Sisters: a sort of wild-west frontier. It's technically an undeveloped region that hasn't been welcomed to the Imperium yet, but: its population is a bit higher than Five Sisters at 2.456 billion; it includes a few notable planets like the industry of Forine and Collace and the agriculture of Tarkine; and it's just a bit closer to the Imperium proper, allowing for a wider variety of adventures.

Even better, District 268 has received a lot of support over four different eras of the game, much of it in the form of really well-detailed world books that give GMs an opportunity to create a richly detailed sector. That kicked off back in the '80s with *Beltstrike* (CT), which details the Bowman Belt, and *Tarsus* (CT). *Traveller Adventure 10: Safari Ship* (CT) offers extensive information on the world of 567-908, which was later revisited in *GURPS Traveller Planetary Survey 2: Denuli, The Shrieker World* (GT). During Traveller's print hiatus of the early '00s, Avenger Enterprises put out a series of PDF cluster books (Generic) that are sadly now unavailable.

Some of the aforementioned setting books include adventures, but the setting information is so extensive that it's easy to extract. However, a few straight-up adventures also exist for District 268. Avenger produced a few Fifth Frontier War adventures (T20) in District 268 that are also unavailable. More recently, Mongoose and Avenger have both produced adventures for Mongoose Traveller, including a ~30 page mini-campaign in *Spinward Encounters* (MongT).

Though the District 268 publications aren't as cohesive as those for the Darrian and Sword World subsectors, they probably are more extensive (especially if you can find the out-of-print Avenger PDFs). They also provide far more in-depth information on a handful of planets, which could form the strong basis of a campaign. Thus District 268 is the other rimward sector of the Marches that's ideal for

campaigning—especially for those GMs who like piles of background that they can build on themselves.

Glisten Subsector (O). Glisten was a backwater until District 268 was opened up, and is now mostly interesting (for adventurers) as an stepping-off point to District 268.

With that said, there are a number of interesting planets in the Glisten subsector, some of them related to the District 268 expansion. Interesting elements of the planets include: an Imperium Ministry of Colonization training base on Egypt; the Glisten Institute of Planetological Studies (GLIPS) on Glisten; large Jonkareen populations on Callia and Melior (which are sometimes a point of dispute between the Ministry of Colonization and GLIPs); an Imperium exile prison on Mithras; an Imperial Reserve on Marasten; and dust-spice production on Romar. It's almost enough to make you set a campaign in the subsector—though if you do, it should probably be with the intention of using Glisten as a home base while your players adventure into District 268.

The other element discouraging play in Glisten is the lack of published material. The only printed source is *GURPS Traveller Planetary Survey 4: Glisten, Jewel of the Marches* (GT). Avenger Enterprises has also produced a few PDFs containing sitreps (MongT) of individual planets. They've stayed available through Mongoose (unlike the District 268 material), but they're mostly color with little crunch.

Trin's Veil Subsector (P). Trin's Veil—named for the shattered moon of Trin, which is surely an adventure in and of itself—is the "Backdoor to the Marches", as it acts as another path into the sector from Corridor. It could be a rising power in the Marches, and that could create some good politicking with Mora, but generally it's too civilized for most adventuresome Traveller campaigns and would be, if anything, an adjunct to Mora (and perhaps Regina) if you wanted to created a more political campaign.

(Trin's Veil's general unsuitability for campaign play is much of what caused me to write this article:

I started my own *Traveller* campaign in Trin's Veil before coming to the conclusion that it wasn't the most exciting subsector in the area; I hope this article will offer some better alternatives to other GMs.)

Very little of note has been officially written about Trin's Veil over the years. *Spinward Encounters* (MongT) includes two short Amber Zones, which might well have doubled the amount of official material on the area.

Conclusion

In looking at the rimward side of the Marches three subsectors jump out as being great for campaigns: the Darrian subsector; the Sword Worlds subsector; and District 268. An extensive amount of background material has been written for each, all of which could provide a solid basis for any GM who wants a foundation for his own stories.

Generally, I'd suggest that GMs in the Spinward Marches decide where to run based upon what amount of material they'd like to have prepared for them. If they want complete adventures/campaigns I'd suggest the Jewell (B)/Regina (C)/Aramis (D) area that I discussed in the last article; if they want extensive background material to work with while making up their own campaign, I'd suggest the Darrian (I)/Sword Worlds (J)/District 268 (N) area that I discussed in this article; and if they want a blank slate, I'm not sure the Spinward Marches is the right answer, but if so, pick Five Sisters (M).

I'd originally planned for this to be the last article in this column (for now), but while writing it I turned up an article on the Spinward Marches that I wrote for *Signs & Portents* two years ago that slipped through the cracks when editors changed. *Signs & Portents* is now on hiatus, so I've decided that their loss is your gain. So next month, I'll present "Aliens of the Marches: the Jonkeereen" as my farewell to *Traveller*.

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.

Jump Destination: Bryant's World, Amberstar System

by Ken Pick

Located at the end of a secondary Jump-1 route, Bryant's World is a typical low-population, moderately high-tech colony world; its Class A starport and Scout base are the best facilities for two parsecs around.

The system consists of Amberstar, a K0 main-sequence sun ("orange dwarf"), with six planets.

Planets I and II, **Cinder (XS0000-0, Orbit 0)** and **Scarlett (DS00468-A, Orbit 1)**, are tiny Mercuriforms baking in inner-zone orbits. Cinder is in a "torch orbit", too close to the sun to be of any use; Scarlett, however, has a population of 30,000 working a major mining industry.

Planet III, **Bryant's World (A557588-B, Orbit 2)**, is the main world with a population of 300,000, Scout Base, and the only Class A starport in the immediate area. Its two small moons, *Amber (ES00268-A)* and *Aki (AS00368-A)*, house the highport elements of the Starport, Scout Base, and shipyards with a combined population of 6300.

Planet IV, **Fiddlestan (E440118-A, Orbit 3)** is a twin of Mars with one small moon, an inert atmosphere, and a 30-man outpost investigating the planet for possible future T-forming.

Planets V and VI, Travertine and Topaz, are two large gas giants of nearly-identical size (150 T-mass "half Jupiters"), each with a ring system and nine moons. The inmost moon of each is a sulfur/water volcano world similar to Io; the second moon of each is a larger tidal-melted iceworld like an enlarged Europa with a thin inert atmosphere. The gravitational effects of these two gas giants have swept the inner system pretty much clear of asteroids.

Travertine (LGG, 150 T-mass, Orbit 4) is almost completely covered by white clouds with some breaks showing the sapphire-blue of its lower atmosphere; like Saturn, its brilliant ring system has two distinct rings with a large gap between, caused by resonance from its inner moons. Two of the outer moons have small populations (3000 and 300) of Belters doing miscellaneous ice/chemical extraction.

Topaz (LGG, 150 T-mass, Orbit 5) is a pastel yellow with pinkish and white cloud bands with a single thin ring well away from the planet. The second moon (the super-Europa) has a population of 30,000 doing mining and chemical extraction from the exotic ices.

Outside of Topaz is a "clear zone" where tidal effects of the two gas giants have swept the orbits clean; a moderate-density Kupier belt of comets and iceballs begins about 15 AU out. Due to the same "sweeping" effect and apparent age, the system has little close-in asteroid/comet activity.

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Bryant's World A557588-B Ni S 302
(Amberstar III)
Eaglestone Trade Index 3
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Bryant's World is a typical small surface-habitable world with one peculiarity: an axial tilt of just over 40°. This tilt results in extreme seasons – for half the year, one hemisphere is under constant sun and the other in constant darkness, with the hemispheres alternating. The thermal differences cause extreme wind, weather, and ocean current patterns on surface for much of the year and limit the settled area to along the equator.

Planetary Geography

Being a smaller world with a thicker crust, Bryant's World has low seismic/tectonic activity, with a geography dominated by many small, mostly-volcanic landmasses scattered around a planetary ocean. The largest landmasses, five small continents and eight large islands, center around mega-shield volcanoes whose peaks and calderas rise out of the breathable atmosphere.

Surface Conditions/Sky Picture

The day is 20 hours long, with a year of about 282 local days. Climate at the equator is a cool temperate, with severe wind and weather conditions prevailing about 100 days of the year, clustered in two 50-day seasons at hemispheric summer and winter. Seasons become pronounced immediately upon leaving the equatorial regions – 90-day springs and autumns alternating with 50-day extreme summers and winters. Above 30° N and S latitude, the seasons become so extreme as to be uninhabitable; above 50° N and S, the sun never sets in summer and never rises in winter. Hemisphere sum-

mer is fifty days of steaming seas, desiccated land, and hurricane storms beneath a sun that never sets; hemisphere winter is a fifty-day night of blizzards and iced-up seas as thermal convection draws moisture from the bright hemisphere and deposits it on the dark. At these times, Bryant's World has only one polar icecap, a temporary icecap on the dark pole extending down to 40-50° latitude that melts away as the hemisphere takes its turn under the sun. All that keeps the world from "snowballing" – freezing over completely – is that only one pole at a time is icecapped.

The first thing a visitor will notice is the gravity – only about 62% of standard. The second is the atmosphere – as thin as that atop a high mountain, almost enough to cause a subliminal feeling of suffocation upon any exertion and definitely enough to trigger altitude sickness. Then the "yellowed-out" color shift from the sun, distinctly amber-colored and 30% larger than "normal" in a deep sea-blue sky that becomes almost indigo at the zenith. Then the two moons, each about 1/3 the apparent diameter of the sun, just large enough to show visible disks, hurtling through the sky like the fabled moons of Barsoom.

Then the weather; hemispheric summer and winter manifest on the equator as storm seasons and rough sea conditions from the thermal-driven airmasses sweeping from one pole to the other. Spring and autumn, the iced-up seas of the former winter hemisphere thaw and break up, raising sea level by a couple meters and sending icebergs drifting clear into the settled tropics.

In the night sky, each of the three outer planets has its own unique color – Fiddlestan a rust-red, Travertine a warm off-white, and Topaz the yellow of its gemstone namesake. Any set of binoculars will reveal the larger moons of the two gas giants – four for Travertine, five for Topaz. The inner planets, Cinder and Scarlett, are normally not visible – too small and too close to the sun, though Scarlett makes occasional appearances as a morning/evening star.

Peculiarities

The Law Level of 8 applies to the starport town of Bryantsport and the outer moons and outpost worlds;

law level is lower the farther away from the port, to effectively Law 0 way in the Outback.

Sea level varies between three and four meters depending on time of year; lowest during hemispheric summer and winter (equatorial rainy season), highest during spring and autumn (equatorial dry season). This results in an extreme "intertidal zone" along all the coasts, swept by frequent monsoon rains and occasional hurricanes when above water.

Native Life

Unlike most life-bearing worlds, Bryant's World flora and fauna have evolved well beyond the usual bacteria; both land and sea are home to complex multicellular life, and the huge seasonal intertidal zone from the changing sea levels helped the transition from sea to land.

Bryant's World native plants are leggy and tall in the low gravity, with massive dark grey leaves for maximum gas exchange in the thin atmosphere. Common equatorial biomes are forest and scrub (medium-to-dense swamp along the coasts), both growing during the summer and winter rainy seasons and going dormant during the spring and autumn dry seasons.

Native animal life are pseudo-arthropods and various invertebrates, with high-efficiency respiratory systems unlike their Terran counterparts. Most land life is amphibious, with their biggest concentration in or around the intertidal zones on the coast.

Animal Descriptions

Animals on Bryant's World fall into four general "phyla": Pseudoarthropods, pseudochordates, beaked invertebrates, and general invertebrates. Encounter stats for representative animals for each pseudophylum can be found in the table on the next page.

Land Trilobites: most common land and sea-bottom animal on Bryant's World, especially outside the tidal zones. Small to medium grazers and gatherers. Some species are purely aquatic, some are amphibious.

Whipscorps: armored amphibious grazers, relatives of the Land Trilobite; resemble a cross between trilobite and scorpion with long whip tails for defense.

Tigerscorp: main predator of the intertidal zones, carnivorous relative of the Whipscorp. No tail, but large

Bryant's World Representative Animals						
Animal	**Type**	**Mass**	**Hits**	**Armor**	**Wounds and Weapons**	**Attack/Flee/ Surprise**
Pseudoarthropods						
Land Trilobite (small)	Grazer	12kg	2D/2D	jack	teeth-1D	F4 A9 S1
Land Trilobite (medium)	Grazer	50kg	4D/2D	mesh	teeth	F4 A8 S2
Land Trilobite (large)	Gatherer	200kg	5D/3D	cloth	teeth+1D	F8 A7 S3
Greater Whipscorp	Grazer	100kg	5D/2D	cloth+1	thrasher	F5 A3 S2
Lesser Whipscorp	Grazer	25kg	3D/2D	cloth	thrasher	F5 A0 S4
Tigerscorp	Hunter	50kg	4D/2D	none	claws + teeth	A3 F7 S1
Invertebrates (Beaked Slugs):						
Great Swamp Stomper	Grazer	6000kg	9D/4D	none	trample×2	F3 A7 S3
Greater Whipslug	Gatherer	800kg	7D/3D	none	thrasher+3	F7 A8 S1
Lesser Whipslug	Gatherer	25kg	3D/2D	none	thrasher	F7 A7 S2
Invertebrates (other)						
Bryant's World Kraken	Eater	6000kg	9D/4D	jack	1D claws×2	A5 F9 S1
Lesser Kraken	Trapper	400kg	6D/3D	none	as blade	A0 F7 S1
Pseudochordates						
Sea Eel	Hunter	25kg	3D/2D	none	stinger	A6 F5 S3

pincers and poisonous bite. Solitary or pack predators depending on species; generally solitary species are more likely to be poisonous.

Great Swamp Stomper: largest of the amphibious beaked slugs and king of the intertidal swamps. Massive mountain of wet flesh with massive beaked head surrounded by sensory cilia. Becomes very aggressive (A3 F7 S3) at random times during the year.

Whipslugs: omnivorous smaller relatives of the Great Swamp Stomper, with thrasher tails like Whipscorps. Use their tales for defense and to corral aquatic prey.

Bryant's World Kraken: apex ocean predator; a massive nest of thrashing tentacles with a miniscule central body. Claws represent squid-like sucker-teeth.

Lesser Kraken: smaller kraken, shallow-water/reef predator. Lurks in natural para-coral mazes in shallow water. Blade represents stabbing claws on specialized tentacles.

Sea Eel: aquatic swimmer resembling a cross between worm and eel; closest thing Bryant's World has to a vertebrate. Swims in packs; venomous stinger in head.

Cautions and Hazards

Bryant's World has a thin atmosphere, near the lower limit of human breathability – 500 millibars at sea level, about that of Earth at 3500m altitude. Because of the thin atmosphere, visitors from standard or dense atmosphere worlds will definitely suffer from altitude sickness (aka Mountain Sickness) – headaches, exhaustion, and shortness of breath – until they acclimatize. Above 1000 to 2000m above sea level, the air becomes too thin to be breathable, and compressor masks or supplemental oxygen masks must be worn. All vegetation hugs the lowlands, leaving the equatorial mountains lifeless barren rock and the hemisphere mountains under intermittent glaciers. Seasonal forests are common, growing during the rainy seasons (hemispheric summer and winter) and going dormant during the dry season. Much of the coastal intertidal zones are thick trackless mangrove-like swamps littered with hurricane-downed logs, irrigated by the rising sea during the dry season, and crawling with Great Swamp Stompers.

Hemispheric summer and winter manifest along the equator as extreme weather conditions, including monsoon rains, river floods, and occasional hurricanes along the coast, their storm surges supercharged by the maximized sea levels.

Population and History

Amberstar has a unique position in the astrography of the subsector – at the end of a Jump-1 "chain of stars", it provides a jumping-off point to Jump-2 and Jump-3 routes to the rest of the sector. A compact planetary system with two gas giants plus a surface-habitable world with two small moons to serve as high-ports made this orange dwarf prime real estate.

Accordingly, as the subsector was being explored and settled, the Scout Service selected Amberstar system as the site for a modest Scout Base. Base facilities were located on the outer moon of Aki, with secondary facilities and support settlements on Bryant's World itself. As the sector developed, the base took on a secondary role as starport support for the jumping-off point. This attracted more settlement insystem, which in turn spun off the starport into an independent operation and improved it to Class A to service the through traffic, which in turn attracted more settlement.

At present, the population of Bryant's World is about 300,000 with the largest concentration at the world's only city, Bryantsport. Bryantsport grew up around the Class A downport and surface-Scout Base facilities, and has a population of 80,000. Other towns on-planet are less than 10,000 and Class E ports (no facilities for starships).

The main Class A highport and Scout Base is on the outer moon of Aki; this highport handles all through and insystem traffic and customs, with the downport primarily handling shuttles and small craft. The attached shipyard is mostly scaled around through traffic repairs & maintenance, but can build ships of up to 1000 Dtons, mostly for local use.

Economy & Trade

```
Trade Class: Non-Industrial
Eaglestone Trade Index: 3
            (200 passengers, 2000 dtons/wk)
Exports:    Special Alloys, Chemicals, mi-
            nor Gems, occasional Liquors.
Imports:    Just about everything else ex-
            cept foodstuffs.
Services:   Resupply of through traffic,
            starship maintenance and re-
            pair, (minor) space/starship
            construction, (optional) Psi
            Training.
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Though classified "non-industrial" because of its small population, the system has three major and two minor export "industries". The majors are exotic alloys and gems mined on Scarlett, cryogenic chemicals extracted from Topaz's largest moon, and port services/resupply for through-traffic starships. The minors are wines from Bryant's World proper and overground psionic training.

This results in unusually heavy traffic for such a small-population world – an Eaglestone Trade Index of 3, translating into around 200 passengers and 2000 dtons of freight traffic per week, which in turn translates into 1-2 small ships a day and a medium-to-large ship once a week.

The mainstay of the system's economy is on Scarlett, a tiny mercuriform one orbit in from Bryant's World. Scarlett is a metal-rich world about 600km in diameter, in a tidal lock that keeps one side eternally facing the nearby sun. Exotic alloys and isotopes are mined here by a partnership of local and offworld corporations, refined using solar furnaces, and shipped via insystem lighters (non-starships of 4-500 tons or so) to Aki for warehousing and shipment. This mining industry is enough to support a population of 30,000, mostly dug in along Scarlett's librating twilight zone. (The geography, "climate", and physical setup is similar to that in the GDW scenario *Across the Bright Face*, except Scarlett is much smaller and lower-gravity – about 5% of standard – than the world in the scenario.)

A similar mining economy, but in cryogenic chemicals and exotic ices, is based on the largest moon of Topaz (Amberstar VI). This moon *(Topaz Beta, D634466-A)*

is a Europa-style crackled iceball larger than Bryant's World and sporting a thin inert atmosphere. The supporting population of 30,000 is dug in on the few actual rocky mountain chains that break the otherwise-icy surface. Chemicals extracted from the under-ice, geothermally-melted oceans are shipped to Aki in insystem fuel lighters of 4-600 tons and refined enroute.

Starport services are based on Aki, which has a population of 6000 in domes and dug-ins around the small Class A highport and Scout Base. Fuel is skimmed from Travertine by fuel lighters and refined on the return trip. All incoming traffic stops at Aki Highport for customs and direct loading of Scarlettese alloys and Betan chemicals; only shuttles and the occasional overflow (small Scouts and Free Traders) continue to the downport.

Bryant's World proper has a small agricultural economy, mostly in small amounts of wines and the like. In addition, a regulated overground Psionics Institute – the only one in the subsector – provides evaluation and some training for potential psis from throughout the subsector. (Optional – this assumes psionics are not universally outlawed as in the Third Imperium; attitude towards psis may vary from world to world, or frontier systems like Amberstar might not be as strict about it.)

Society

Still a young colony, Bryant's World is very much a frontier society, with the advantage of TL11 transportation and communications.

Bryant's World society is composed of "claves", quasi-feudal quasi-corporations based around an extended household. A typical clave consists of one or more extended families plus non-related associates, normally with a common profession/trade, normally living together in a clave compound. Claves are usually named after their dominant extended family, geographic area, dominant profession, or occasionally at random. Major claves include:

Clave Bryant: oldest and largest clave, a corporate extended family that sponsored its namesake settlement of Bryantsport.

Clave Pard, **Clave Wanderer**, **Clave Shinjinrui**, **Clave Laycan:** subordinate branches of Clave Bryant with their own clave names

Clave Stitt, **Clave Mardahl:** claves usually associated with Clave Bryant

Clave Highlander: "hermit clave" who settle the higher lands at the limits of atmospheric breathability.

Clave Alarion: owns the shipyards and most of the downport; effectively the Starport Guild.

Clave Kelron: largest agricultural clave and dominant clave in the Bryant's World wine industry.

Clave Vondon: the local Psionics Institute in all but name, under its clave-owned company of Psidetics.

Many additional minor claves exist beside these major ones, from specialized craft-guild or service-guild claves in Bryantsport to "hermit claves" far off in the Outback, Outsiders Keep Out.

Though claves normally get along in a business-like relationship, feuds, trade wars, and outright skirmishes are not unknown. The system is still shaking down in this young colony.

And then there are the Claveless, those who do not belong to any Clave. Claveless have a SOC of –2, representing their lack of access to Clave resources or support. All but the lowest SOC of Claveless are usually attempting to join a Clave or group together into their own new Clave.

Starport

Grouped around the main downport on an equatorial floodplain near the coast, Bryantsport is the "big city" of Bryant's World, with a population of some 80,000.

At the center of the city is Bryant's Downport. A circular reservation some five kilometers in diameter, the downport is only 25% built up with three main clusters of port facilities: the commercial port, the military/mercenary base, and surface elements of the Scout base. The remainder of the Port is undeveloped land with scattered local forest trees.

The downport is listed as Class A, though shipyard facilities are primarily on the inner moon of Amber. On-surface facilities are primarily geared around ships of

600 dtons or less, though there are a couple unimproved landing areas for ships of up to 6000 dtons. Heavy ships primarily route through the Highport, where the major system exports ship out.

The military/mercenary facilities service system defense assets – SDBs and small craft – as well as ground force basing and support. The Scout Base is set up to service up to 400-dton ships – Type S Scouts, Type SD Deep Scouts, and modified Type P Heavy Scouts.

Downport traffic averages some 300 passengers and 500 dtons of general freight per week; the remainder of the freight traffic is export traffic from Scarlett and Beta, handled completely by the Highport. Half the passenger traffic is insystem personnel rotation from the industrial outposts on Scarlett and Topaz Beta, with round-the-clock surface-to-highport shuttle traffic.

Four gates pierce the circular downport grounds – two to the commercial port, one to the military/ mercenary base, and one to the Scout Base. Immediately outside this XT line, a mass transitway connects the gates, running in a ring completely around the port. Around this ring stretches Bryantsport proper, a city of some 80,000.

Both Downtown and Startown extend around this ring, with Startown centered outside the military and Scout base gates and combinations of Central City and import/export warehouse districts centered outside the commercial port gates. Like the downport itself, this ring is not completely built-up.

Major streets (with accompanying flood-control channels) extend out from this inner ring, dividing the city into irregular pie-slice wedges filled in with various neighborhoods including clave compounds of the major Claves. Buildings are low and sprawling – concrete-and -steel prefabs at the downport, mostly concrete in the Downtown ring, with primarily wood construction in the wedges taking advantage of local vegetation. "Log Cabin" construction is a popular style for smaller structures. The wedges peter out in sparse "suburbs" along the main roads with detached wooden houses (including log cabins), primarily occupied by the Claveless.

During rainy season (hemispheric summer and win-

ter), flooding in low areas is a major problem; the city has extensive flood-control channels and levees to divert the intermittent seasonal rivers which flow through the plains during rainy season. A hurricane comes through the area every few years, with lesser tropical storms a regular rainy-season occurrence.

Two main roads lead out of the city, one deep into the Outback, the other to the coast where a small seaport is built on floating "mulberries" to handle the seasonal variations in sea level. At hemispheric summer and winter, the Ocean Road runs on a landfill causeway through klicks and klicks of tidal flats in the rain, fragrant with the organic "Bryant's World Aroma". In hemispheric spring and autumn, these tidal flats are submerged, shallow salt marshes crawling with amphibious land trilobites, whipscorps, tigerscorps, and the occasional Great Swamp Stomper.

Outside the city is a flat floodplain, dotted with agricultural land and vineyards and divided by seasonal rivers. Though most of the area around the city was cleared by lumbering and is kept cleared for agriculture, one large stand of native forest extends like a finger to the outskirts of the city, kept in its natural state. Like most Bryant's World forests, this counts as "light forest".

Government

Bryant's World is a single political entity, officially a loose association of claves. Day-to-day administration is by a separate civil service bureaucracy, hired by the Association of Claves as an administrative contractor in the manner of a "city manager"-style municipality. This insulates the day-to-day administration from any friction between the claves.

Law level is a bit high (8 in Bryantsport itself), due to the natural tendency of bureaucrats to micromanage their fiefs. This is countered by a generally-pragmatic attitude; the environment of a growing colony works against top-heavy or "pointy-haired" bureaucracy, and claves that don't like the law level migrate out into the Outback. The farther you get from Bryantsport, the lower the law level.

The civil service runs the starport, shipyard, and municipal administration of Bryantsport, with most of

their staff drawn from Clave Alarion, Clave Bryant, and Bryant's subordinate claves. Armed forces are technically under the authority of the civil service, but their personnel are drawn from all the claves as a militia levy, and will probably rebel if the bureaucracy attempts to use them against the claves.

Armed Forces

Planetary defenses total a little over 1000t of dedicated SDBs – currently three 300-ton Torpilleurs and a couple 200-ton Spotscouts that double as search-and-rescue, backed up by basic armament on regular insystem craft and surface-based missiles and antimissile lasers. SDBs and most "shore batteries" are based on the moons to avoid drawing fire onto the world itself.

Ground forces total three reinforced battalions, equipped to Tech Level 11. One battalion is full-time Regulars, airmobile in G-carriers with attached air assets; the other two are part-time militia reserves, equipped to TL10-11 but without a lot of the dedicated heavy stuff.

"Wet Navy" forces are primarily patrol/rescue craft, more along the lines of a Coast Guard than a true navy. Grav/air assets and hovercraft are used as well as basic patrol/rescue boats; though submarines would be useful transportation in Bryant's World's rough and iceberg-prone seas, the colony is too small to really afford or support them. The "Navy" also maintains much of the air and satellite assets, including hurricane and iceberg watch throughout the settled areas.

Besides Bryant's World regulars and militia, two mercenary companies have Bryant's World as their permanent base world:

• One mercenary unit is company-sized on a long-term security ticket, handling port security in the Downport, Highport, and on the lunar habitats, more an independent-contractor police and constabulary than anything else.

• The other is a full mercenary regiment, for hire through the immediate subsector, who maintain their base in an undeveloped section of the central Downport (and are major customers of the adjacent Startown). On-world personnel are normally the administrative offices and training cadre; under their basing contract, no more than one line battalion can be on-world at any time. The training cadre is on separate long-term contract to train the world's regular armed forces, and line battalions rotating back to Bryant's World often serve as "OpFor" for the regulars and militia during maneuvers.

Mercenaries are encouraged to marry into the Bryant's World population and retire/settle down into the Claves, in an attempt to develop an identity as Bryant's Worlders, tying them into the world. Despite this, ex-mercenaries do tend to stick together, there is talk of them forming their own Clave.

Language

Bryant's Worlders speak standard Galanglic; the constant contact with traffic through the system keeps the local dialect from drifting too far from standard.

The Moons (Amber & Aki)

Bryant's World's two small moons house the various highports – commercial, military, and Scout base facilities, including the main shipyards. All facilities are dug into the surface of the moons, with only landing and ship-handling facilities breaking the surface. Highport facilities are built around servicing and repair of ships in-transit through the system and/or shipping the exports; all other functions are secondary.

Underground, the highport habitats are compact, with a lot of ship-like facilities. Local gravity is less than 8% of standard. Except for one three-star hotel on Aki, transient accommodations are refitted ship staterooms, common areas, and low berth-like slotshops.

Aki, the inner moon, holds the civilian/commercial highport, shipyards, and extensive storage/warehouse areas for exported Scarlett-refined alloys, Travertine/Topaz-skimmed fuel, and Topaz Beta-mined chemicals. Shipyard capacity is 1000 dtons maximum ship size for builds and rebuilds; anything larger is limited to repair and refit of through traffic. The main Scout Base facilities – basing and service for Scout ships of 400 dtons or less – are also located here, in a separate habitat. Total permanent population is around 6000, mostly of Clave Alarion. Additional transient population – in-transit, personnel to and from Scarlett and Topaz Beta, Belters – normally boosts this to 8-9000 at any given time.

Amber, the outer moon, is more sparsely settled, with primarily-military outposts – SDB basing, system defense missile sites, and backup Scout base elements. Total permanent population is about 300, under more Spartan and claustrophobic conditions than on Aki.

Both moons have Belter support facilities; most Belters in the system work out of Aki or Topaz Beta.

Scarlett (Amberstar II)

The claustrophobic environment and industrial-outpost atmosphere on Scarlett would be similar to that on Topaz Beta, except Fire instead of Ice – industrial outpost on an inner-zone Mercuriform, an airless rock baking under a mega-sun that never sets (except in the Twilight Zone's libration band). Again, the old GDW double-adventure *Across the Bright Face* could be used for geography and situation, adjusted for the smaller world size.

Topaz Beta (Amberstar VI-B)

The ice-mining and chemical-extraction industry on Topaz Beta would be very similar to Io in the movie Outland, with various Claves (or Clave-offworld Megacorp partnerships) substituting for the movie's Corporation.

Adventure Nuggets

A clave could function as a long-term patron – either one of the Major Claves or a minor one seeking some advantage in becoming a major one. Said characters would probably have to base themselves on Bryant's World (or at least call back regularly), but the system's not a bad one to base in, and characters might end up married or adopted into their patron Clave, becoming naturalized Bryant's Worlders.

Clave Vondon would be an ideal patron for a psionics-related campaign, from seeking out psi evaluation and training to covert operations for Psidetics on other worlds where psionics isn't as accepted as Bryant's World.

Clave Kelron tries to promote their wines in the offworld trade, and Clave Alarion is always in search of privateers to aid system defense; both would hire detached-duty Scouts (or even active-duty Scouts not averse to a little side income) for their various offworld promotional and exploration interests.

As a jumping-off point between a Jump-1 "chain of stars" and Jump-2 to 3 routes in a frontier subsector, there is always through traffic – and opportunities for frontier adventures returning to Bryant's World as a high-tech secure base world. (After all, at least one mercenary regiment thinks so.)

On-world, adventures could leave the forests and swamps of the equator to the barren, unbreathable highlands. Or go off the Equator for some pressing reason (disaster relief of a hermit clave?) into the wild Outback, delving into the cold and dark of a hemispheric winter or the scorching orange brightness of hemispheric summer.

Or a major corruption scandal could break in the office of the planetary manager/civil service, and said office and officials are trying to get mercs on their payroll for a coup to make sure the Claves can't kick them out.

Designer's Notes

Bryant's World proper (named after one of two co-referees in a 1982-vintage *Traveller* campaign) was rolled up as part of a *Traveller* subsector for that campaign but never actually came into play. The system was rolled up later under *Scouts*, with four rockballs and two half-Jupiter gas giants in a compact system. System nomenclature followed local convention of gas giants being named for their appearance, with other system features named after the fan names of people associated with the co-referee. Other features (such as the social organization into "claves") were accreted over the years from various subsequent FRP campaigns.

Become the Hunted

Reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in August 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.

Become the Hunted. Jefferson P. Swycaffer
Original Publication: 1985
Current Availability: Print (used)

Among the Traveller-influenced books were seven by Jefferson P. Swycaffer that were published in the 1980s. Though these books didn't take place in the *Traveller* universe, the physics, technology, and feeling of the stories were all straight *Traveller*.

This eighth review covers *Become the Hunted*, the second story of the Concordat by Jefferson P. Swycaffer.

About the Story

Set in the same universe as Swycaffer's earlier novel, *Not in Our Stars*, *Become the Hunted* actually occurs some time previous to the earlier volume. It centers upon a minor character from that novel, Captain Athalos Steldan and tells the tale of how he helped to created the state of the Concordat as seen in *Not in Our Stars*.

Become the Hunted is a story that is at once very small and very large. On the one hand, it's set on a single planet and centered on a single person, Steldan. He is on the run from the navy of the Concordat, and although we don't really understand the reasons at first, it's pretty obvious to the reader that he's been set up. On the other hand, it's a very big story, because Steldan is being hunted for something that he's learned, something that could change the whole Concordat.

(And, for those of us who have read *Not in Our Stars*, we very quickly come to see that Steldan is wrapped up in the very conspiracy that leads Admiral Devon of the earlier novel to see a conspiracy in his own time as well.)

Genre and Style

Though *Become the Hunted* is definitely a step up from *Not in Our Stars*, it's still not a well-written novel. My biggest problem is the railroading. It feels like Steldan is supposed to be free for a certain amount of time, so he remains in the clear, then when the hunter forces start to close in on him, this result seems equally inevitable.

Part of this is due to Swycaffer telling rather than showing what's going on. One of the people hunting after Steldan comments that no one has ever evaded her for as long as him, then later congratulates him for a great chase ... but we never see Steldan really shining in this regard. He has some criminals make him some false identity papers, and for much of the book, that's the extent of his amazing evasion abilities.

Beyond that, I could offer a number of minor critiques. The characters' emotions feel stilted and somewhat artificial. I also never feel like I have a handle on most of them, with the possible exception of Steldan himself. Finally, the book gets a bit dull toward the middle when we spend 30 or 40 pages away from the main character.

Despite all of that, I did find the book interesting. There were sections in the first and third parts of the book which I even found gripping. They kept me reading. I also found the plot original and relatively believable, as various conspirators fight to keep everything that they've fought for from unraveling. Finally, I think it's neat that this book elucidates some of the backstory of *Not in Our Stars*, and I like the coherent vision of a universe that Swycaffer is creating.

I should also comment here that I'm pretty surprised that Swycaffer changed the genre that he was writing to so much. Whereas his first novel was pure naval military SF, this one is much more action-adventure. I'll talk about that more momentarily.

Putting together the good and the bad, I found *Become the Hunter* to be pretty average. I've given it a "3" out of "5" for both Style and Substance, while also noting that it's a step up for Swycaffer, which is

a good trend, even if it only has two data points.

Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

As with the last book, this one notes that it draws on some of the concepts and ideas from *Traveller*. While this is certainly true, the connection is much weaker here.

I think that's because when you strip away the actual Imperium, much of what makes the universe of *Traveller* unique is the physics of its space travel. Since we're deep in the gravity well of a single planet until the very end of this book, we see very little of that.

However, the *Traveller* universe does have one other strong characteristic: an ability to include not just many different stories, but also many different genres. In just the first several weeks of my own *Traveller* campaign, I've run mystery, disaster, action-adventure, intrigue, and science-fiction. Similarly, as I've already noted, Swycaffer has jumped from a military SF novel to a fugitive story. I think that's a lesson worth learning for any *Traveller* GM.

But is this book worth tracking down just for its faint ties to *Traveller*? I'd probably say no, unless you've read other Concordat novels and want to learn more about the universe, or unless you happen to stumble upon a copy of this novel that you could pick up without effort.

Conclusion

Become the Hunted is a fair book with pretty weak ties to the *Traveller* universe, despite its root in that very game. It's a fugitive novel by a somewhat inexperienced writer, all resulting it in being of only minor interest to its *Traveller* GM.

The Concordat Books

1. Not in Our Stars
2. Become the Hunted
3. The Universal Prey
4. The Praesidium of Archive
5. The Empire's Legacy
6. Voyage of the Planetslayer
7. Revolt and Rebirth

Editor's Note: At present, we have been unable to find any evidence that any books of the series are still in print.

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!

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.

News About Traveller

Recent *Traveller* News and Findings

September, 2011

- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released a print edition of their product *21 Plots*.
- *Freelance Traveller* has committed to attending TravellerCON/USA 2011 in Lancaster, PA, October 14-16.

The Shipyard

Covenant-class Consular Ship

designed by Scott Diamond

```
Covenant-class Imperial Consular Ship TL-15
2000 ton needle w/ scoops and fuel purifier
    (High Guard design)

Jump Drive (3)  Jump-3
Maneuver Drive (2)  2-G (Agility 2/Emer agility 2)
Power Plant (5)  (energy=2000)

Fuel = 680 tons (with refinery)
Cargo = 180 tons

Computer  = Model 6fib (CPU-15/ Storage-35)

Vehicles =    1 Herald Class Courier
              4 FM7F-5 Sabrecat Fighters
              2 Grav Carriers

Weapons= 10 Pop-up Triple Turrets (5 SBS / 5 PMP)

Crew:  (45 Staterooms)
    Command: Captain, XO, 2 Pilots, 2 Navigators,
        Commo/Computer
    Engineering: Chief Engineer, 6 Ratings
    Flight: 8 Small Craft Pilots, 4 Crew Chiefs,
        4 "Ground Crew"
    Services: 4 Stewards, 4 Midshipmen,
        Chief Medical Officer, 2 Medical Orderlies
    Gunnery: Chief Gunnery Officer (Gunners from
        Marine Contingent)
    Marines: Major, Captain, 2 Lieutenants,
        Master Gunnery Sergeant, 2 Sergeants,
        20 Marines (10 to be assigned to ship gunnery
        if needed)
    Diplomatic: Envoy, Secretary to Envoy, 2 Clerks,
        Protocol Officer (Naval Intelligence
        Attaché), Head of Security (Naval
        Intelligence Attaché)

Medical Facilities include 4 Autodocs (16 total pa-
tient capacity) and 2 Emergency Low Berths
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The *Covenant*-class Consular Ship is built with diplomatic and first contact (after initial contact by the Scout Service and the diplomats enter the picture) missions in mind. The ships are used in time of peace as well as during war to negotiate treaties so they may seem a little heavily armed for a diplomatic ship. The turrets are hidden as pop-up weapons to give the outward appearance of peaceful intent when it applies, but the government has encountered in the past cultures that value an open display of strength in order to prove the ambassador's position as negotiator. On two occasions it was necessary for the ship to defend itself when negotiations took a turn for the worse.

The ambassador has two staterooms for him/herself and has a staff including two attached members of Naval Intelligence whose duties will include gathering information from less conventional sources if possible during the diplomatic mission.

The procedure for entering a system on a typical diplomatic contact varies between peacetime and war, but basic SOP is to launch two of the *Sabrecat*s as soon as the ship enters the system to act as pickets as the ship travels towards the world. The *Herald* courier is dispatched with the security team, Protocol Officer, and Head of Security to establish contact, set up security, and establish the protocols for the visit between the two cultures well before the consular ship arrives. The security team consists of one of the two squads of Marines assigned to the ship, plus a crew for the Grav Carrier and armored grav sled "limo" which will pick up the Imperial Envoy when the consular ship lands a couple of days later.

Feedback

Please tell us …
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- 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.

Wooden Ships and Iron Men, or "Yes, the Map Really *Is* Flat": The Two-Space *Traveller* Project

For most of 35 years, the *Traveller* community has been looking at *Traveller*, and playing *Traveller*, and playing **with** *Traveller*, and saying that it's fit for more than Space Opera/Science Fiction gaming. Until Paul Elliot wrote *Mercator*, though, low-tech, though regularly acknowledged as possible, wasn't really supported except as an adjunct to a "normal" campaign, or as the occasional half-formed idea that wasn't followed through except maybe in a personal one-off.

At the same time, much was made about the connection between *Traveller* and the historical "Age of Sail"—but, again, nobody took the next step.

Then, in 2004, Baen Books released *The Two-Space War*, by Dave Grossman and Leo Frankowski, and in 2007, a sequel, *The Guns of Two-Space*, by Dave Grossman and Bob Hudson. These books represented a completely different melding of Space Opera and the Age of Sail from any that had been seen before—or since.

After about the third reading, the editor decided that there really was some potential there, and wrote to the author and publisher with an idea… *and received permission to try it!* The "Two-Space *Traveller*" project was born, and a small working group was put together. Unfortunately, that group didn't make much progress, and the project was shelved, with a promise by the editor, to the editor, that it wasn't dead. This, and the August contest announcement, represent the "un-shelving" of the project, with the eventual aim of generating not one, but two sourcebooks for the project: one will be a "generic" Two-Space sourcebook, with rules that can be used for any setting in which the basic ideas behind Two-Space apply; the other will be specific to the setting portrayed in the two novels.

But enough about the nearly-aborted history of the project: since you're being invited to participate, you're going to want to know what the goals are, with a few more specifics about them…

(By the way… while it's not a requirement, it's strongly recommended that you read the two novels, both available at $5 each from Baen's e-book publishing arm at http://www.webscription.net. Formats for most of the major e-readers are supported, as well as Microsoft Word and HTML. They're entertaining stories, even though they're more "Space Fantasy" than "Space Opera" or "Science Fiction".)

Separate out the basic principles from the setting-specific details. When Messrs Grossman, Frankowski, and Hudson were writing the novels, they were looking primarily to tell stories, not play RPGs. The "rules" that they wrote for the setting were for the story setting, and only written for what was needed to support the stories. Just as we generally agree on certain principles making a game "*Traveller*", we want to find the principles that define "Two-Space" in general, as opposed to the specific story universe. We have some authors' notes to share for the purposes of the project.

Define the basic careers. As the novels were written, they portray the various Two-Space naval organizations as essentially the only space-going organizations, and handling not just defense, but trade, travel, colonization, and even the mail. This need not be the case for a generic Two-Space, so we will want to define a set of careers to support both.

Adjust rules for low-tech. Speed, range, and accuracy are all generally poorer than at high-tech; high-tech materials are not available, meaning that e.g., armor of equal protection value is heavier, and so on.

Adjust equipment lists. Some equipment simply won't be available (e.g., energy weapons); other equipment will be less capable (e.g., pistols will have slower RoF, among other limitations); still other items will have at best only roughly corresponding equivalents (e.g., no rifles, just rifled muskets). Additionally, in some settings, it may be necessary to distinguish between items designed for use in Two-Space vs. Three-Space.

Generate campaign material. This is a longer-term goal, and need not be part of the initial efforts of the working group—in fact, it's probably best left until the other goals are mostly worked out. Still, it's an essential part of supporting an alternative setting properly.

If you're interested in participating, please email ***editor@freelancetraveller.com*** and say so—we'll be setting up a mailing list once we're ready to go...
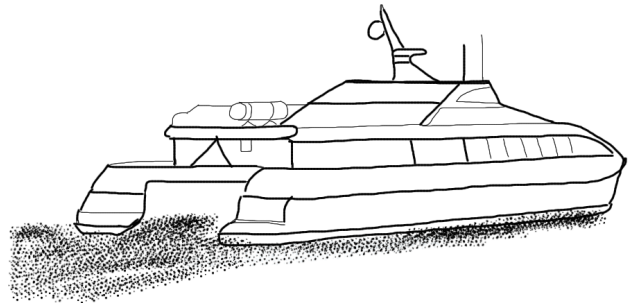
Island Commuter Catamaran (TL8)

designed by Timothy Collinson

Over certain stretches of well travelled water, a fast catamaran may be the solution to commuter transport. Perhaps because of distance, or because certain travellers are willing to pay a premium for faster access to their destination than a traditional passenger ferry might allow. The Island Commuter Catamaran is a no frills passenger vehicle that can carry nearly 200 passengers. Cruising at 35 knots, it has a range of 525 nautical miles and is as at home operating between mainland and island, inter-island or across wide river estuaries. The main deck is the passenger lounge with coach seating and some luggage area. Above is the bridge and below the engine room. There is no external deck space except for minimal access required by the crew at mooring stations and on the bridge wings. Speed across the water does come at a certain cost, the catamaran is not quiet and can be heard at some distance – even three miles away its engines make a distinctive sound. At a distance of 93m the wash created amounts to some 38cm. From its cruising speed the catamaran can stop in 20 seconds and around 111m.

There are three crew, a helmsman who also commands the vessel, a deckhand to assist with mooring stations or act as a relief helmsman, and a cabin attendant who may also double as a second deckhand. Facilities are limited to non-existent. Some examples of this vessel on routes of only half an hour or so, don't even provide passenger toilets.

Typical navigational equipment includes radar, compass, echo sounder, GPS etc and the ship-to-ship/ship-to-shore radio with a range of up to 50km depending on world size, atmosphere and other conditions. Law level will usually dictate what safety equipment is carried, but typically there will be liferafts, lifejackets and other safety equipment as required.

Island Commuter Catamaran (TL8)		Volume (m^3)	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)
Hull	700m3 (base 700 m3) Streamlined configuration, Light alloys, Waterproof	-	56,000	273,000
	Hull: 193 Structure: 193	-	-	-
Drive system	Water-Driven	70	10,500	350,000
Power Plant	Internal Combustion-8			
	Power output:5373			
	Fuel Consumption: 199/hour	199	13,930	298,500
Fuel	2985 litres (15 hours operation)	2.985	2985	-
Armour	Light alloys 2	-	-	-
Sensors	Comprehensive (3km, +2 DM)	1	2	1000
Communications	Radio-50 (range 50km)	0.25	1	750
Equipment	Controls, improved (Agility +1=-1)	0	0	175,000
Crew	3 (1 helmsman, 1 mate, 1 steward)	-	-	-
Operating stations	1	1.25	125	-
Passengers	187	187	18,700	-
Cargo	17.67 dTons	238.515	23,852	-
Agility	-1 DM	-	-	-
Speed	Cruise: 65 kph Top: 86 kph	-	-	-
TOTAL		700	126,095	1,098,250

Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 9

Doc Billings started to come around; conscious of his bleary surroundings. A group of people whose names he normally knew were standing around him, including Captain Fyyg and Pharmacist's Mate Fahd, both bent over him. These he knew for certain.

Fahd was in the middle of a sentence, "--should counter the effects of the Xenalnepharmedene. It's commonly known as Prometheus.

"It's a military-grade Combat Drug, Captain."

"And why do you suppose he took it in the first place, Fahd?" Fyyg asked, looking at the sturdy ampoule with the green and white rings around its tip.

"Only Doctor Billings can answer that Captain, and I believe he's just arrived." Fahd chuckled. Billings' eyes focused on Fahd's dark features.

"Fahd. Report." the groggy doctor commanded. Fahd gave the doctor a summary of the goings on in the med bay while the doctor was indisposed.

"And I'll need you to sign off on this," Fahd said, handing the doctor a clipboard with several sheets of paper attached. "Yes, yes, of course. What is it?" Billings asked as he finished signing.

"Death Certificates. The pirate attack killed five of the Roosters down in the cargo bay."

"Oh how dreadful…." the doctor said. He didn't really care, and would have responded similarly if someone lost their keys, mushrooms were inadvertently put on his pizza, or a picnic was rained out. There had been a time when he did care, but that was at some point earlier in his twenty five years in the business.

Handing the clipboard back, the doctor swung his legs off the bed in the med bay and stood up. "Lord Deuce, but I'm hungry!" the doctor said, rubbing his palms together. "Are you gentlemen up for waffles?"

"I could eat." the Captain agreed.

Within a half hour, all three were seated around one of the scarred tables in the crew lounge. Degrasse was back in the kitchen knocking out the doctor's second plate of waffles; the Captain and Fahd still working on their first. Captain Fyyg liked his with blueberry syrup, while Fahd liked strawberry (and, when he could get them, real strawberries). Doctor Billings liked 'em plain. Just butter.

As he polished off his second serving of waffles, the doc admitted "Boy, I don't ever recall being more hungry. It's like I slept for a hundred years."

"And now you tell us, Herr Doktor?" the Captain asked.

Looking about nervously, the doctor began, "Me being too old and frail to really assist him, I'd given Isaacs something and ordered him to med bay under his own power.

So there I was amongst all those sedated bodies. Isaacs had said they were a danger to the ship and ought to be clapped in irons.

I wanted to help out, Captain, so I pushed that ampoule of Combat Drug.

Everything seemed like a blur, but it was all crystal clear. If you know what I mean... I grabbed the bodies two at a time—one over each shoulder—and carried them into the empty vehicle bay. Must have taken two, maybe three minutes. I closed them all up, then I felt weak again and remember sitting down. Then I woke up in the med bay with you two standing over me."

"You did well, Heinz." The Captain said, using the doctor's first name and clapping him on the shoulder.

A plate of excellent waffles under his belt, Captain Fyyg felt more well-disposed towards the passengers. Going through the med bay, then the passenger lounge near 0615 Ship Time, the Captain explained the lay of the land, "We've experienced a miscalculation with our astrogation, and have come out of Transit four days later than estimated, as Second Officer Freilander informed you earlier.

We are also at the extreme edge of the Nordic System. Traveling Insystem by thrust alone would take almost three months. Precious time we do not have.

So we are to spend some time refueling for Transit, and with any luck we'll be at Nordic Prime outside of a week, providing God keeps any pirates away."

With the speech placating the passengers for the moment, the Captain went to his office and, rummaging through a desk drawer, pulled free a large bottle and a set of four shot glasses on a tray and set them on the desktop.

The bottle, a thick, heavy thing, was a thirty-two-year-old bottle of twenty-year-old Newton & McCenna single-malt Scotch that the last Ship's Master, Furlinda Peel, had willed Fyyg, along with the ship and everything on it.

The Captain poured himself a shot of the smooth brown liquid and, thinking of lost comrades, knocked it back. Then he set the bottle back next to the shot glasses and got on the comm.

Sitting in the med bay at the foot of Quentin's bed, waiting to get something for a patient who needed nothing, Tam chatted with Isaacs. "So you're telling me those passengers you shot were all pirates, then?" the brunette concluded.

Raconteurs' Rest

"Right as rain, Murmisagli. Right as rain. Attacking a Merchant Spacer for possession of a ship? That's book-proper Piracy."

"But until they attacked you, they were merely distraught passengers?" Tam asked.

"Yup. They chose to become pirates."

"And I suppose they're going to get the chop, then? Soon as we make Port?"

"Well, I don't know about as soon as we make Port," Isaacs replied, "but assuming the locals at Nordic Prime are upstanding types, the pirates'll be bound over to their care until they can be sentenced. At which point, the chop, as you put it."

"Makes me glad I'm not a pirate, then." the thick little brunette decided. "Now are you sure I can't get you anything? Water, Coffee, Donuts, an Eryth Cola? A pillow?"

"No, I'm fine, really Tam. If I could get a decent breath now, that'd be something." Isaacs grimaced.

Getting up to leave, Tam heard the summons to the Captain's Quarters. A wave of panicky, prickly, tingly heat suddenly washed over the girl from her tam-covered head to her magnetic- booted feet. "Not a panic attack now!" she reproached herself. "People get called to the Captain's Quarters all the time." she whispered under her breath, hoping she wasn't in some sort of trouble.

Tam tapped on the glazed pane on the door to Captain Fyyg's office before letting herself in. She hesitated near the door for a second, then took the three steps up to the Captain's sturdy desk, and gave a proper, double-stomp, military salute.

The Captain returned her salute, saddened to find her the only crewmember aboard who could execute it.

"Tamala." Fyyg began, "As we are both aware, Mr. Isaacs is currently laid up in the med bay."

"I need you to take the tray here down to Engineering, then work your way forward to the Bridge. Give each crewman one drink; With the Captain's Compliments."

Within a few hours Tam had returned to the Captain's Office and set the tray back on the desk. "Have you had a drink yet, Miss?" the Captain asked before pulling the cork free with his teeth. Seeing her shake her head no, the Captain poured her a shot glass full. "And one for you." he gestured.

Tam picked up the glass and slowly sipped it, the alcohol cutting the ball of nervousness that persisted in her belly. "I shall have another…" Fyyg decided, before swigging a shot from the bottle.

Finishing her shot, Tam set the glass down, and ran a couple of fingers over the table, feeling the solid, real wood construction, and imagining herself bent over that tabletop. Flushed, the alcohol making her feel warm all over, Tam asked "Is there anything else I can do for you, Captain?"

Meeting her gaze, the Captain noticed, not for the first time, the deep hazel of her eyes, and realized if given the chance, one could get lost in them. He also knew, or thought he knew, that Tam was crazy.

"No, Miss Murmisagli, thank you." he replied and they parted company.

A few minutes later, Captain Fyyg contacted Number One via comm. "Mr. Hertzog, we'll need the purser's staff on duty for the passengers, but I want the rest of the crew, where possible, to have the rest of the day off. Tomorrow we'll be moving into the Oort Cloud for refueling, and I want all hands at the top of their games, yes?"

Doing It My Way

Contest Result: Wooden Ships and Iron Men—A Wet Navy Career for *Traveller*

by Timothy Collinson

Editor's Note: In our August issue, we announced a contest for a low-technology Wet Navy career, in connection with a Freelance Traveller project that we are removing from the back burner. For more information on this project, please see the article on page 30 of this issue. This career definition was the winning entry.

This career is presented for both Classic *Traveller* and Mongoose *Traveller,* and requires an appropriate set of core rules. Unless otherwise noted, it should be assumed that all guns, whether personal or crew-served, are black-powder muzzle-loaders. In most cases, skill differences from the standard rules will be noted; where not otherwise indicated, any skill which might depend on the technology base available should be assumed to be at the TL3-TL4 level.

Doing It My Way

Wet Navy [Mongoose]

You are a member of an 'Age of Sail' navy on a low technology world, protecting the seas from pirates, ensuring the safety of trading ships, and on a balkanised world defending against foreign powers.

Enlistment: Automatic (Throw 2D6; if 5-, enlistment is mandatory due to 'impressment'.)

Assignment: Choose one of the following:

Sailor: You're either a Topman climbing the rigging, handling lines and sails or a Forecastle man (pronounced "fo'c'sle") handling the anchors and capstan or engaged in other deck duties from cargo stowage to manning the ship's boats.

Gunner: You're part of the gun crews manning the cannon which are the main offensive weapons of the vessels you serve on. You are also familiar with the

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Sailor	DEX 7+	EDU 7+
Gunner	STR 7+	EDU 6+
Marine	INT 7+	EDU 5+
Commission: SOC 8+		

Mustering Out

Roll	Cash	Other
1	2 Months' Wages	+1 STR
2	6 Months' Wages	+1 DEX
3	1 Year's Wages	2 Shares (Sailing Ship)
4	2 Years' Wages	Blade
5	3 Years' Wages	Musket
6	5 Years' Wages	+1 EDU
7	10 Years' Wages	Frigate

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (available only to EDU 8+)	Officer Skills (available only to Commissioned)
1	+1 STR	Seafarer (Large Sail)	Medic	Leadership
2	+1 DEX	Survival	Navigation	Navigation
3	+1 END	Jack-of-All-Trades	Leadership	Seafarer (Large Sail)
4	+1 STR	Carouse	Persuade	Science[1]
5	+1 DEX	Melee (Blade)	Broker	Tactics[2]
6	Athletics (Coördination)	Gunner (Cannon)	Art (Writing)	+1 SOC

1. Select Philosophy or any Natural Science specialization.
2. Naval Officers receive Naval Tactics specialty; Marine Officers receive Military Tactics specialty.

Specialist Skills and Training

Roll	Specialist: Sailor	Specialist: Gunner	Specialist: Marine
1	Trade (Sail Making)	Gunner (Cannon)	Gun Combat
2	Trade (Rope Making)	Gunner (Field Gun)	Gunner (Field Gun)
3	Seafarer (Large Sail)	Seafarer (Large Sail)	Athletics (Endurance)
4	Seafarer (Long Boat)	Gambler	Tactics (Military Tactics)
5	Carouse	Melee (Bludgeon)	Melee (Blade)
6	Recon	Explosives (Gunpowder)	Leadership

Rank	Sailor		Gunner		Marine		Officer	
	Title	**Skill Received**	**Title**	**Skill Received**	**Title**	**Skill Received**	**Title**	**Skill Received**
0	Sailor[1]	Melee (Unarmed) 1	Gun Crew	Melee (Bludgeon)	Marine Private	Melee (Any) 1	Midshipman (Age 14-18)	Seafarer (Large Sail) 1
1	Ordinary Seaman		Lead Gun Crew		Marine	Gun Combat 1	Lieutenant	Gunner (Cannon) 1
2	Able Seaman	Seafarer (Large Sail) 1	Gun Captain	Gunner (Cannon)	Corporal of Marines			
3	Petty Officer[2]		Quarter Gunner		Sergeant of Marines		Commander	
4	Warrant Officer[3]	(see Warrant Specialty table)	Half Gunner	Gunner (Field Gun)	Officer of Marines	Gun Combat		
5	Boatswain's Mate		Gunner's Mate		Marine Lieutenant		Captain	Leadership, +1 SOC
6	Boatswain or Master[4]	Leadership 1 or Instruction 1	Gunner	Leadership 1	Marine Captain	+1 SOC	Admiral	Persuade, +2 SOC

Ranks and Benefits

1. For the first six months of service, a sailor's title is 'Landsman'.

2. Petty Officers may choose titles indicating their duty. Examples include such titles as Armorer, Cooper, Caulker, Coxwain, Master-at-Arms, Captain-of-the-Foretop, Yeoman-of-the-Sheets, Yeoman-of-the-Powder-Room, or any Warrant Officer Specialty followed by 'Mate', e.g., Quartermaster's Mate, Sailmaker's Mate, Surgeon's Mate, etc.

3. Warrant Officers choose a specialty and receive a skill according to the Warrant Specialty table below. On promotion to rank 5, Sailors become Boatswain's Mates; all other specialties retain their Warrant Specialty titles. All specialties gain an additional level in their specialty skill.

4. Quartermasters take the title of Master upon promotion to rank 6, and receive Instruction 1 as a skill. Boatswain's Mates take the title of Boatswain, and receive Leadership 1. All other Warrant Specialties continue using their Warrant Specialty title and receive Leadership 1. "Boatswain" is pronounced as if written "bosun"; "Coxwain" as if written "coxun".

Warrant Officer Specialties

Specialty Title	Skill Received	Specialty Title	Skill Received
Sailor	Seafarer (Any) 1	Sailmaker	Trade (Sail Making) 1
Carpenter	Trade (Carpentry) 1	Schoolmaster	Instruction 1
Cook	Steward 1	Surgeon	Medic 1
Purser	Admin 1	Quartermaster	Seafarer (Large Sail) 1
Ropemaker	Trade (Rope Making) 1		

lighter field guns which may need to be deployed ashore, even some distance from the ship.

Marine: You're a 'soldier at sea' and while not unfamiliar with sailing ships, you've trained in musketry (either the longer flintlocks on land or the shorter sea service musket), and can fire from a moving deck, high up in the fighting tops, or can be deployed ashore as necessary. You can also use a muzzle loading pistol for close quarters combat. Duties may include guarding the ship or a shore establishment, guarding against mutiny in port, or even occasionally impressment duties.

Doing It My Way

Mishaps

1D6	Description
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury Table on page 37 of the Core Rulebook.) Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury Table and take the lower result.
2	You are injured in action and lose an eye or a limb. Reduce STR or DEX by 2.
3	You are marooned on an island with 2D6 others. Gain 1D6 Contacts, 1 Enemy, and Survival 1.
4	You barely survive a bout of scurvy or pox. Reduce END by 2.
5	You are shipwrecked. Lose 4 years (1 term) of time, but gain Survival 1
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury Table.

Events

2D6	Description
2	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are caught pilfering the rum ration and are keelhauled. Lose 1 STR
4	You are made Ship's Cook. Roll Steward 8+. If successful, your food is appreciated; gain one level of Steward and 1D6 contacts. If unsuccessful, your food is universally reviled, and you're always unlucky with weevils in the biscuits and meat rotting too quickly.
5	While in port, you are impressed by (caught by the 'press gangs' of) another ship's crew. Change specialty and gain 1D3 contacts.
6	You are found guilty of a minor infraction of the harsh rules required to maintain discipline aboard ship and are flogged with a cat-o-nine-tails you've had to make yourself. Gain Trade (Rope Making) 1, but also scars on your back.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table. (At the Referee's discretion, a result of '9—Travel' is only on the homeworld.)
8	**Sailor:** Your sharp eyes as lookout mean that your ship gains the upper hand in combat with an enemy. Gain Recon 1 or Seafarer (Large Sail) 1, and DM+1 to your next Advancement roll. **Gunner:** Your contribution to your gun crew's rate of fire marks you out for promotion. Gain DM+2 to your next Advancement roll, and Gunner (Cannon) 1 **Marine:** Firing from one of the ship's fighting tops (high in the mast) you identify and shoot an opposing admiral on his flagship. Gain Gun Combat 1 and an Enemy. **Officer:** You design an improved life preserver which is particularly useful given that so many sailors can't swim. Gain a Contact, Science (philosophy) 1 and DM+2 to your next Advancement roll.
9	Your ship is laid up for refit. Gain one level of Carouse, Gambler or Melee (unarmed).
10	You are part of a company taking several field guns across rugged terrain to relieve the siege of a town. Gain +1 STR, +1 END and a medal, but throw on the Injury table.
11	You perform exemplary service for your Captain. Gain DM+4 to next Advancement roll.
12	Your ship is the first to discover a new land or island. Gain either a year's wages or +1 SOC.

(Continued from page 35)

While the typical *Traveller* career assumes that the character starts at age 18, Midshipmen can start at age 14, and Ship's Boys can start as early as age 10. If you use these two positions, assume that the character's stats as rolled represent what he will be at age 18, and reduce them to reflect the reduced age. Ship's Boys may only roll on the Personal Development or Service Skills table until age 18, when they may select an assignment (usually Sailor).

Midshipmen additionally have the Officer Skills table available to them. Both Ship's Boys and Midshipmen may roll on the Advanced Education table if they qualify.

Warrant Officer Duties

Quartermasters steer the ship, keep ship's time, and oversee the stowing, and Purser's issuing of, provisions. They are responsible for navigation (setting course, finding the ship's position, maintain-

(Continued on page 37)

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ing the compass, and checking the midshipmen and mates take noon sightings correctly) and the ship's sails, rigging, anchors, and alcohol. They are virtually equivalent to Lieutenants in seniority and eat in the wardroom with the other officers.

The Chaplain, Purser and Surgeon are the only other Warrant Officers to dine in the wardroom. Those three and the Schoolmaster are 'civilian officers' not in the chain of command and are appointed directly by the Captain.

The Boatswain (pronounced "bosun"), Carpenter, Cook, Gunner, and Purser are 'standing officers' who remain with the ship when laid up in port (placed in "Ordinary") between commissions and have much more job security.

In battle, Lieutenants command four gun crews. Skills (where different from Mongoose *Traveller*)

Explosives (gunpowder): Gunpowder (black powder) in various quantities and packaging are needed for muskets, field guns and cannon. It requires preparation, special handling and extreme care. (If the Referee doesn't want skills to proliferate, Explosives as per page 54 of the Core Rulebook can simply be used instead, but it should be clear that this does not mean anything beyond gunpowder.)

Gun Combat: As used here, applies to muzzle-loading pistols or muskets only. Such weapons use black powder to fire solid lead ball projectiles. Record as Gun Combat (muzzle-loader) for campaigns where other forms of gun are available.

Gunner (cannon): This skill covers the wide range of abilities required to clean, load, move, aim and fire a cannon as part of a gun crew. For example, an 18 pounder (8kg) is nine feet long (2¾m, weighs two tons (1.8tonnes) and requires a crew of ten men. A high rate of fire can make all the difference in battle. Projectiles might include chainshot (anti-mast and rigging), round-shot (anti-hull), pellet shot, grapeshot and scattershot (anti-personnel). A cannon designated as "*x*-pounder" (e.g., 12-pounder) is designed to fire round-shot of weight *x* in normal use.

Gunner (field gun): This skill covers the operation of a muzzle loading field gun as well as the physically demanding abilities and teamwork needed to move the gun, its limber and ammunition carriage, possibly over long distances and rough terrain, to where it is needed.

Instruction: The ability to teach others knowledge or a skill that the character possesses. Level 3 in this skill allows the teaching of a skill to the PC's own skill level; Level 2 allows the teaching of a skill to one less than the PC's own skill level; Level 1 allows the teaching of a skill to two less than the PC's own skill level (e.g., Instruction 3 and Science (Philosophy) 2 would mean the latter skill can be taught to skill level 2). Instruction takes 3 months with little other activity or one year interspersed with other tasks. Throw 5- on 2d6 after that period to simply fail to 'get it' and not learn the skill (Intelligence can be used as DM).

Seafarer (large sail): This skill is for larger 'Age of Sail' ships rather than yachts. (If the Referee doesn't want skills to proliferate, Seafarer (sail) as per page 57 of the Core Rulebook can be used instead, but it should be clear that this relates to multi-masted square sails handled in teams from the rigging, not from the deck.)

Seafarer (long boat): This skill covers manning a long boat and working as a part of a team at the oars. You know the commands and disciplines necessary to row, handle the craft, beach it, and also bring it alongside a ship at anchor.

Trade (carpentry): This skill covers 'traditional' carpentry such as furniture making (for officers and crew) but also the ability to inspect and repair wooden ships at any time and in particular after battle with limited tools, space and equipment. This might vary from plugging holes in the hull, repairing a mast or yardarm, or replacing a gun carriage.

Trade (ropemaking): This skill enables the character to earn a living making ropes from the smaller 'lines' to the heavy anchor ropes necessary for large vessels.

Trade (sailmaking): This skill enables a character to make a living making and repairing sails. Checking for mildew and drying sails is also an important part of the role on board ship.

Wet Navy [Classic Traveller]

Enlistment	Automatic
Survival	7+
DM +2 if	DEX 6+
Commission	9+
DM +2 if	SOC 9+
Promotion	7+
Re-enlistment	3+

On Commission jump to Rank 3 but cannot be promoted to Captain before 4th term.

Ranks and Benefits			
	Rank	**Mustering-Out Benefits**	
		Material	**Cash**
1	Sailor	Low Psg	2 Months' Wages
2	Able Seaman	+1 STR	4 Months' Wages
3	Midshipman	+2 DEX	6 Months' Wages
4	Lieutenant	Blade	1 Year's Wages
5	Captain	Gun	3 Years' Wages
6	Admiral	High Passage	5 Years' Wages
7		+2 SOC	10 Years' Wages

Acquired Skills			
Personal Development	**Service Skills**	**Education**	**Advanced Education** (only for EDU 8+)
1 +1 STR	Large Ship	Large Ship	Medical
2 +1 DEX	Gunnery	Gunnery	Ship Tactics
3 +1 END	Recon	Navigation	Liaison
4 Brawling	Ship's Boat	Communications	Admin
5 Gambling	Blade Cbt	Survival	Trader
6 Blade Cbt	Gun Cbt	Jack-of-all-Trades	Instruction

Skills (where different from Classic *Traveller*)

Blade Combat: Character must immediately select Dagger, Blade, Sword or Cutlass.

Communications: The individual is skilled in using flags and semaphore to communicate with other vessels.

Gun Combat: Character must immediately select Musket or Pistol. Both are muzzle loading.

Gunnery: The individual is skilled in the operation of muzzle loading cannon in various weights.

Large Ship: The individual is skilled in sailing large 'Age of Sail' vessels.

Recon: The individual is regarded as having sharp eyesight to keep lookout watches aboard a sailing ship.

Ship's Boat: The individual is skilled in manning an oar in a long boat.

Other skills are similar to those listed in Book 1 or subsequent books, but are limited to TL3 or less.

Rank and Service Skills	
Upon attaining the rank of	**Acquire this skill**
Sailor	Large Ship
Captain	+1 SOC
Admiral	+1 SOC or Fleet Tactics

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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 Sceaptune 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'.

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