



FREELANCE TRAVELLER

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Featured Article

Tanna-Sheru, Alkaiden System

A Jump Destination by Ken Pick

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A Note About Production

Freelance Traveller is prepared using Microsoft Office Publisher 2010 running on a Windows 7 Ultimate x64 system. The program is reasonably easy to use, and produces good results with moderate effort; it also supports advanced typographic features such as typographic quotes and apostrophes, small caps, ligatures, swashes, and stylistic alternatives (if the advanced features are implemented in the font). Generation of the PDF files is built in to this version of Microsoft Office; no additional products are needed.

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Contents

Freelance Traveller #046: October 2013

Editor

Jeff Zeitlin

Contributors

Jeff Zeitlin, “kafka”, Timothy Collinson, Michael Brown, Rob Prior, Ken Bearden, Ken Pick, Ewan Quibell, Ken Murphy, Michael Wakefield, Dwayne Walstrom

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Cover: .NASA, ESA, N.Smith (U.C.Berkeley), et al., and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)

From the Editor: Jeff Zeitlin

Up Close and Personal: Jeff Zeitlin, using *The Sims 2*

Critics’ Corner: K-Studio, Mongoose Publishing, Game Designers’ Workshop, Tabletop Adventures, all from their respective products or from DriveThruRPG’s website.

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From the Editor

Jeff Zeitlin 1

Critics’ Corner

Mongoose Traveller Adventure 3: Trillion Credit Squadron reviewed by “kafka” 2

Aliens of the Rim reviewed by Rob Prior 12

Other People’s Toys: Derelict Starships reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin 17

Denizens II: Biaxial System reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin 27

Doing It My Way

The Ship’s Locker: Limiting Without Specifying by Michael Wakefield 4

A System for Character Improvement by Ken Bearden 13

Up Close and Personal

Shuchithra by Jeff Zeitlin 6

Confessions of a Newbie Referee: A Column by Timothy Collinson

#4: The Game That Wasn’t 7

Kurishdam

Art and Entertainment: Beam Dancing by Jeff Zeitlin 8

Lecture Hall and Library: Jump Destinations: Tanna-Sheru, by Ken Pick 19

Raconteurs’ Rest

Drop Out by Ken Murphy 8

Active Measures

The Bellona Intrigue by Michael Brown 14

Getting Off the Ground: The Color of Monks’ Robes by Dwayne Waslstrom 18

In a Store Near You

The Showroom: Luderitz-class Undersea Mining Trawler by Ewan Quibell 16

Cargo Lifter by Ewan Quibell 18

The Showroom: Holmes-class Air/Raft by Ewan Quibell 26

From the Editor



Last month, I summarized how *Traveller* makes it possible to play non-combat scenarios, and closed by suggesting that the type of SF that influenced *Traveller* was at least partly responsible for that. Rather than looking at specific works, such as Piper’s *Terro-Human Future History* or Tubb’s *Dumarest* series, I think it would be more appropriate to look at what I want to call, for lack of a better term, the ‘shape’ of SF leading up to the time that *Traveller* was first published.

The late 1950s and early 1960s were a period of transition, from what is now viewed as ‘classic pulp’ to what has come to be called New Wave. The characteristics of New Wave SF that are relevant to *Traveller*’s development are principally a focus not on archetypal characters such as the Scientist, the Inventor, or the

Adventurer, but on ordinary people, often caught up in extraordinary situations. It was also a time where exploration of social norms and changes to them were beginning to become prominent, and technology (to include ‘mental powers’, a.k.a. psionics) was less an end in itself than a tool for exploring those changes.

Conflict in pulp SF often meant fighting it out with weapons—man vs. man, man vs. alien, or man vs. alien beast. The New Wave moved away from that, as often as not making the conflict into man vs. himself, or vs. his better nature—conflicts of ethics or honor, of understanding oneself or one’s fellow, rather than merely matching wills. It represented in some senses a maturation of the genre, but it also opened up the field to the kind of stories that play to the strengths of *Traveller* and of other role-playing games. (*More next month.*) ☛



Adventure 3: Trillion Credit Squadron

reviewed by "kafka"

Adventure 3: Trillion Credit Squadron. Barnes Thomas
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
123pp., softcover
US\$24.99/UK£16.99

This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in June 2013, and is reprinted with permission.

The Good

Trillion Credit Squadron is very much like the Classic *Traveller* adventure/supplement of the same name, in which, players take on the role of squadron commanders and preside over large fleet engagements in an isolated powder keg region of space (a subsector of Reft) filled with small powers trying to be top dog. The rules are simple enough and when combined with *Sector Fleet* (aka *Grand Fleet*) there are opportunities for role playing but if battle simulations are your thing, and then this product will suit your needs. I am rather surprised it got labeled as an adventure (perhaps because Classic *Traveller* had the same nomenclature), as there is very little in that can be classed as an adventure. The previous offerings of Mongoose updated old Classic *Traveller* adventures with a twist... however, I couldn't find a twist here.

The fleets of this sector of space are a tad underpowered when compared to the Third Imperium (at its height) or the Zhodani consulate, so those wanting a book on high tech (e.g. TL 15+ (F+)) will be disappointed that many of the fun features of naval engagements in the Third Imperium are shifted toward smaller units. There are rules that cover that advancement of technology, but only as a war-game or a simulation would, e.g., a percentile bonus, rather than discussing the actual effects that, say, a Black Globe being used in combat might have. The highest TL is C (12) and as someone who does not have a good grasp of tactics, I would have liked to see more examples. However, on the positive side, this is very much sandbox play. Smaller units allow for more realistic simulations as opposed to the destruction of an entire fleet would likely be the End Game scenar-



io – although, I do think that is what many *Traveller* players would clamor for since *MegaTraveller* denied them the rules for massive fleet engagements. The best way to describe this product would be as an update of the CT product and T4's buggy *Imperial Squadrons*.

There are some new enhancements to weaponry and explanations of naval terms, as well, as commonly used ships. The New Equipment section offers a number of innovative systems and weapons, only available to squadrons to fleets, some of are more suitable to smaller ships which functions in the events that shape the conflicts fleets take part in. Additional fuel tanks, plasma guns and medical bays all play a part in space warfare that was never fully spelled out in *High Guard*. Game play tends to revolve around defeating the protecting fleet/squadron around a particular planet in miniature skirmishes, once, that is accomplished then a proper miniatures game could be played for players to capture key installations such as the Starport or Key Cit-

(Continued from page 2)

ies or Resources (including shipyards) – which hopefully will be detailed in an upcoming product outlining the rules for Planetary Invasions (perhaps, even *Mercenary Mk II*).

For those who do not have *Reft Sector*, the subsector is reproduced. Sadly, the worlds are predominately markers. There is no reason why particular worlds are important, it would have been nice if the subsector could be integrated to some sort of larger narrative – other than the Reft Sector i.e. bringing the Third Imperium in. In addition, there is a detailed the 5th fleet which is a combat fleet and all its assets, as well as how it operates on the move. Finally there is the Islands Clusters Campaign, a full pre-generated campaign for the ambitious referee without enough time to create their own subsectors or adapt others from other *Traveller* products.

Traveller has long shown its roots as a war-game – and this continues this trend. One day, I would hope that *Traveller* makes the leap and becomes a strictly narrativist product – but, if T5 is any judge that day is quite a ways in the future. The secret for this adventure is to use it as a supplement rather than as an adventure. The rules are solid enough, although, my players are role players – so the opportunity to test them on a live group will have to be postponed and if needed, just as it was for T4's *Imperial Squadrons* one can always jury-rig a solution.

The Bad

Mongoose has been criticized in the past for its inclusion of way too many deck plans and this product is no exception to that trend. I am uncertain if it is a valid criticism, as much of the *Traveller* community has been urging different publishers to produce quality ship art and deck plans since the time of the giant FASA boxed sets (only Seeker Gaming Systems ever came close). The good thing is the quality of the deck plans are up to *Traveller* standard (so no 3D renderings) and the art of the ships is great. In this book of 123 pages there are 86 pages of deck plans

and ship descriptions – that is 72% of the book! The remainder of the book is rather dry with many Tables and Charts—not role playing opportunities, just rolling the dice in which melees are commissioned. Naturally, a good Referee can get players to role out the results but the tables are rather dry because of the scale of the battle. Players would be limited to Mon Calamari crying out, “It’s a Trap” rather than being the pilot of Millennium Falcon.

The Meh (Ugly)

My biggest disappointment is that I had hoped that Mongoose would be doing something more than reproducing rules that had already been produced before in CT and T4. As indicated before, as I cut my teeth on *MegaTraveller* and always read descriptions of large fleet engagements and found the original CT *Trillion Credit Squadron* ok, for some elements but too much grounded in a war gaming ethos. I found the same thing with this adventure. And, not being able to visualize tactics – maybe, because, I do not play war games – I cannot see that I will have much use for this product. However, I do know that many grognards are fond of war games – and this may be something right up their alley. It will be interesting to see how future products might try to integrate these dry rules into game play and thusly truly transform these rules into an adventure.

So, at the end of this adventure, I am not sure what to rate this adventure. As an adventure, it would rate fairly low; as a supplement, mid range; and as a book of deck plans like the other Mongoose *Traveller* products, good. It is really a product that defies easy characterization. So, if you are looking for a replacement of the CT *Trillion Credit Squadron* but with more accessible rules (streamlining and formulating rules that make sense is the hallmark of Mongoose *Traveller*), you should certainly pick up this product. However, if you and your group are not into massive space combat simulations, you would be wise to pass this one by. That said, I can see how in the future, this adventure could easily be part of a larger campaign. 🌟

The Ship's Locker: Limiting Without Specifying

by Michael Wakefield

The standard ship's locker has always been a problem in *Traveller*. Between the players and the referee there has been a constant tug of war as to the contents of the locker and how to quantify the items contained within it. Other than listing every item, the common method is to make a roll to see if the item is in the locker. In reality, most players and referees have no clue what a far future starship needs in the way of equipment and spare parts or the necessities of deep space flight. This system offers a method to limit the contents of the Ship's Locker in a realistic manner, while not fully specifying the contents, nor having unavailable knowledge to do so.

Defining the Locker

The Ship's Locker generally seems to be treated as a catch-all for miscellaneous 'stuff' that might come in handy. That model tends to presume that maintenance and repairs can be done without actually gaming them out, and costs are subsumed into the routine operating costs of the ship (if the campaign insists on 'proper accounting'). Failures on repair tasks typically don't end up imposing costs on the PCs.

Instead, this system imposes limits on the availability of tools, parts, etc., but relieves the players and referee of the need to fully define the contents of the locker, substituting instead an arbitrary measure of value, the "point". While no specific value in currency is specified for the point, the number of points available in the locker is calculated on a per-MegaCredit-of-construction-cost basis as described below. We divide the Ship's Locker and its points into three areas, representing different types of materials, parts, tools, etc., that may be used for maintenance or repair tasks:

1. The General section should list various common items: Medical supplies, vacc-suits, weapons/ ammo, and bulk items. A new ship will also con-

tain 1 general use point per 3MCr of construction cost, but never less than 10 points. Older ships will have 1D-3 points per 10MCr remaining.

2. The Utility section will contain cleaning supplies, office supplies, brick-a-brack and assorted sundries. A new ship will have 1 point per 1MCr of construction cost. Older ships will have 1D points per 10MCr remaining.
3. The Repair section contains mission-critical spare parts, routine maintenance parts (lubricants, spare bulbs, filters, minor parts). A new ship will have 2 points per 1MCr of construction cost. Older ships will have 1D points per 5MCr remaining.

Space for the Ship's Locker should be allocated in the design. Assume 1 dTon per 100 points, allocated from the 'common' area of the ship. Additional space (and points) may be allocated (see **Optional Additional Ship's Lockers**, below); if this is done, the additional allocation should be deducted from the cargo space.

Using the Ship's Locker

Whenever the players need to roll a repair or maintenance task, the referee should determine the difficulty of the task, and the base number of Ship's Locker points used by the task from the table below.

Repair DMs and Parts Costs					
Difficulty	DM	Parts Cost	Difficulty	DM	Parts Cost
<i>General Tasks</i>			<i>Repairs</i>		
Simple	+6	1D-3	Minor	+2	1D-1
Easy	+4	1D-2	Average	0	1D
Routine	+2	1D-1	Major	-4	2D
Average	0	1D	Emergency	-6	3D
Difficult	-2	2D	<i>Scheduled Maintenance</i>		
Very Difficult	-4	3D	Daily	+6	1D-2
Formidable	-6	4D	Routine	+4	1D
<i>Modifiers</i>					
Light Battle Damage		+1D	parts		
Heavy Battle Damage		+3D	parts		
Machine Shop		+2	to Engineering Skill		
Repair Shop		+2	to Mechanical Skill		
Test Stand		+2	to Electrical Skill		
Wilderness Repairs		-2	to Task DM		
Free Space Repairs		-4	to Task DM		

Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 4)

To use this system, the referee will indicate the task difficulty for the action, the referee will then determine the points needed for the task from the list below, then the player will roll for task completion. The referee may indicate to the Player the estimated point cost of the action.

If the task is primarily repairing an item or system, all points used should be deducted from the Repair section of the Ship's Locker.

If the task is primarily maintaining an item or system, at least half of the points should be deducted from the Repair section of the Ship's Locker, and at most 1D of the remainder may be deducted from the Utility section; the exact allocation is determined by agreement between the player and referee. Performing scheduled maintenance reduces the chance of failure of the item or system when used.

If the task is an attempt to "upgrade" an item or system (trying to make it work beyond its expected limits), the points may be deducted in any combination from all three sections of the Ship's Locker, but at least one point must be deducted from each section. The exact allocation should be determined by agreement between the player and referee.

Any other task is a "general" task, and points should be deducted first from the General section of the Ship's Locker, then from the Utility section.

In all cases, points are deducted regardless of success or failure of the task. The point cost is doubled if the player fails the task roll by 4 or more.

Example: Bo needs to fix the inoperative fresher. He has Mechanical-1 as the relevant skill; the referee determines that the repair is only routine (DM +2). There are 33 points in the Repair section of the Ship's Locker. The referee rolls 4 on 1D-1 for the parts cost. Bo rolls 3 on 2D for the task (target 8+), +1 (for the skill DM), +2 (for the task DM), total of 6. Bo fails to repair the fresher. The 4 points are deducted from the Repair section of the Ship's Locker anyway, leaving 29 points. Had the referee ruled that the task was Average instead of Routine, Bo's roll of 3, +1 for

skill, +0 for the task DM, would have resulted in a failure by 4 (Bo's total: 4; task target: 8), and the cost in parts would have doubled to 8, leaving 25 points in the Repair section of the Ship's Locker.

Replenishing the Ship's Locker: The General and Utility sections of the Ship's Locker can be replenished at any starport of Class C or better, on success at a Difficult task at a Class D starport, or on success at a Formidable task at a Class E or worse starport. The cost for each point will be 400Cr+100Cr per stateroom. The Repair section may be replenished at any starport of Class C or better, with each point costing (1000×(TL of the item/system))Cr. The basic ship's locker may be refilled to 125% of "new" capacity (round fractional points down).

Optional Additional Ship's Lockers: The ships locker shown above is the standard locker installed on all ships. Additional lockers can be installed in a ship or specific purpose lockers can be designated. These additional lockers may be installed anywhere in a ship, but their volume should be deducted from the ship's cargo space.

In addition to the Ship's Lockers, expanded Repair shops can be fitted to a ship, and provide favorable DMs on repair tasks fitting their designated shop type. Only one shop of a given type may be fitted to a ship, and the benefit is halved for any ship over 2000 dTons. Shops also have Repair point values that are used and replenished normally.

Additional Ship's Lockers and Repair Shops			
Type	Volume	Points	Cost to install
Standard	1 dTon	100	100,000Cr
Compact	0.5 dTon	50	50,000Cr
Hope Chest*	1 m ³	50	100,000Cr
Machine Shop	2 dTons	100**	1000Cr × Total Engineering dTons
Repair Shop	1 dTon	50**	1000Cr × Total Engineering dTons
Test Stand	1 dTon	50**	2000Cr × Total Electronics dTons

* The Hope Chest contains miscellaneous unusual items, parts, tools, etc., and can only be used by a character with Jack-of-all-Trades skill. Its points are treated as any type of point needed for a task, but the point cost for using it is one task difficulty level higher than normal, and the item or system has a progressively increasing chance of failure.

** These points are Repair points only.





Shuchithra

profiled by Jeff Zeitlin

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website in 2002.



Shuchithra is a striking individual, in many ways. Although she is only 1.5m tall, and masses only 55kg, she nevertheless has “presence”, and stands out even in crowds. Ten years of professional beam dancing, along with almost daily practice in a number of martial arts and some gymnastics experience as a child, has given her a gracefulness rarely seen in someone as young as she is. Her alabaster skin is set off by jet-black hair, which she keeps cut short (usually in a “page boy”), and deep violet eyes. When not actually performing, she wears loose-fitting (but not baggy) clothes, primarily in medium-to-dark greens, often with yellow, gold, or magenta accents. Her soft voice has frequently been described as “enchanting”; nevertheless, she has no difficulty making herself heard when she needs to or wants to. Unique among beam dancers, Shuchithra’s performances include her singing, rather than just the music or music and light of other performers.

When she is performing, she invariably wears a black sequined full-coverage body suit, leaving only her face visible to the audience. Her performance always starts in full darkness. Her first number is invariably to sing a ballad, begun *a capella*; her dance begins about halfway through the number, and gradually brings both light (both dance beams and house lights) and music into her performance. Audiences respond well to her performances; she has been said to play the audience’s emotions with as much skill as she programs her console. In the last three years, she has never failed to sell out a single performance within one standard day of the tickets going on sale.

Strangely, in spite of her popularity and stardom, Shuchithra does not have a collection of “groupies” following her, and her entourage con-

sists of only her three bodyguards, her business manager, her personal tailor, and her personal physician. Additional staff is hired as needed, for the duration of her visit to a particular world. On occasion, some of that staff will be asked to stay on for a few additional worlds, but in general, Shuchithra does not maintain a large staff for any great length of time, and is reluctant to ask people to leave their homeworlds.

Shuchithra never speaks out on “advocacy” or political issues, and, with one exception, keeps her views on such issues to herself. Even on the one issue where her views are public, they are known from her actions rather than outspokenness: she cancels performances where the government attempts to control or restrict the content.

Referee’s Notes:

Shuchithra is psionic, although nobody knows this (not even Shuchithra). She is a full empathy, unconsciously projecting her emotions and reading and responding to those of the people around her. This ability subtly influences her performances, and is a factor (although a minor factor—her beam dancing talent is real) in her popularity. Her talent for programming her own beam dance stages is also a manifestation of her psionic abilities, in the form of Machine Empathy.

Referees detailing a character profile or resume for Shuchithra (her full name; she legally changed it early in her career) should give her higher-than-normal dexterity, endurance, intelligence, and education, and a social level appropriate for a major famous performer. Skills should focus on things like gymnastics, dancing, and martial arts, though she should also have a good level of computer skill.

Shuchithra invariably stays at facilities operated by or funded by the Travellers’ Aid Society or equivalent organizations, as these are not open to the general public. While there, she is not unapproachable by other guests for a few minutes of quiet conversation.

(Continued on page 7)

Up Close and Personal

(Continued from page 6)

Shuchithra will instantly cancel performances on worlds where the government attempts to control or restrict the content of her performance.

She will hire teams to act as cadre for on-planet security (and will occasionally ask a particularly effective team to stay on for a few planets), or ships and crews to carry relief supplies to a disaster area on a nearby planet. Teams or ships that have acted on behalf of governments that practice censorship of

art will not be hired under any circumstances. Teams or ships that have acted for her before will be remembered, and hired again if need and opportunity coincide.

As a patron, she is wealthy enough to buy and outfit a yacht or courier ship without needing to take out a mortgage; nevertheless, she does not spend money unnecessarily, and is a very savvy investor—she will insist on strong justification for any purchases she is asked to make in support of a team's effort. ❁

Confessions of a Newbie Referee

Timothy Collinson

The Game That Wasn't

by Timothy Collinson

In daring to run a second TravCon game, it seemed blindingly obvious that it would make sense to try to playtest it beforehand this time. Instead of running the game in the pub for colleagues after the event, why not get them together to try it out first? Before, it all seemed terribly serious at the Convention, and was depriving people who'd chosen it of another game that they might have much preferred.

I'm just about capable of marshalling thousands of words and large amounts of *Traveller* reference material; that feels straightforward. It's my time, my materials and it's just a question of plugging away until you get there. Wasn't it Mao who said the journey of a 1000 miles begins with a single step? [Actually, it's variously attributed to Confucius or Lao Tzu -Ed.] The 30,000 words or so of last year's effort seems like a lot, but it's only a few hundred words a night. Organising people, however...! Getting seven people together for an evening is clearly well beyond my capabilities. For a start, it was only three work colleagues close to hand; the other three people would be a former work colleague from another city, and an actual *Traveller* enthusiast, T, from the convention would bring along his Dad. At least, that's the set up we'd had for my first game, and it had been weird, but it had worked. Besides which, I

didn't know anyone else who was interested despite asking around a little.

I suggested a few possible dates although it was always going to be difficult with Christmas on the horizon. One player was in an amateur dramatic production which limited his evenings, and others were limited by transport options. But we finally settled on a potential date and marked it in our diaries. Then one had a change in scheduling which meant dropping out; one got a new job in Oman which ruled him out (the lengths he went to to avoid it!); I was getting cold feet as well as not being too sure how it would run with just three or four people. In short, between us we decided we'd abandon that date and see if we could reconvene after Christmas, but I knew it was going to be problematic and indeed now another of our number is in Thailand for several weeks... I mean, just *tell* me you don't want to play!

I also realise that there is quite a large chunk of me that doesn't want to reveal my 'secrets' (both plot and some hopefully fun live-action elements) until the Convention itself. I'm sure T wouldn't spoil the fun, but there is a strong desire—perhaps selfish—to spring various surprises on the Convention and see what they make of them. Or not. The snag with not running a play-test is that I really don't know how it's going to be received. The success of last year might have been a one-off fluke. ❁

Beam Dancing

by Jeff Zeitlin

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine website in 2002.

Beam dancing started out as a techno-fad in colleges on Terra. It rapidly spread throughout the Solomani Rim and the Domain of Sol, and from there into the rest of the Imperium. Today, it is considered a mainstream art form throughout the Imperium, and it is not unknown outside it

In beam dancing, the performer stands upon a mirrored stage floor, with a set of low-power lasers and sensors in an overhead unit. The lasers, which may use frequencies running from near infrared through near ultraviolet, form a network of beams that the performer will interrupt in the course of the performance. This causes the sensor to send a signal to a connected audiosynthesizer's computer, which acts on its program to generate an audible response.

Beam dance stages are available in a wide range of sizes and configurations. For the occasional home-use dilettante, a basic stage is square, 1.5m on a side, with a combined overhead beam projector/sensor array, and programming console. Any number of this type of unit can be linked together to form larger units (for multiple simultaneous dancers), for use at (for example) parties or where the unit cannot be left set up permanently. A multiple-unit array can be programmed from a single console, or each unit can be programmed individually from its own console. Nightclubs and dance-halls, or other locations where the stage can be left standing

permanently, can generally obtain custom-designed units, usually including vertically mounted sensors and projectors and a custom console. These custom units are generally programmable to allow variation of the projector frequencies and to permit differing responses from sensors when different frequencies (or none at all) are detected.

Some beam dancers will wear fully- or partially-mirrored clothing, from just sequined gloves all the way to full-body coverage. Often, the projectors will be configured to use visible light, allowing the performer to couple a light show with sound.

Most professional beam dancers program the stage themselves or hire beam console programming specialists to do it to their specifications, often with highly customized programs. There is, however, a wide range of preprogrammed console packages for dancers without the skill to do their own stage programming, or the money to hire a professional.

By far, the majority of professional beam dancers are solo performers. Most multiple-dancer performances are "complementary solos", where each performer is effectively dancing on a separate stage, with complementary programs for each performer. Such complementary solos have been known to have as many as six performers. Much more difficult, technically, but yielding a richer performance, are the interactive multiples, where all performers dance on the same stage, with the same program, and interact with each other. Few dancers, even at the professional level, have the skill to consistently turn out good performances in this mode, and those that do are guaranteed to have sellout crowds. ☼

Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 25

As provisions and things were put in their places, the black gang spent their time pre-liftoff going over the Casimir maneuver drive, to make sure the

Waffles had every maneuver G possible when called on, and checking the twin Garabaldi-Singhs to make sure they would generate maximum energy.

Getting clearance from Heimdall System Control, the *Waffles* lifted off from its ferrocrete pad at 0800 local time, following a course worked up by the ship's quiet navigator, Tower, with a projected two hours twenty-seven minutes to Transition point.

(Continued from page 8)

As the engineering crew monitored the twin plants, readying for the Crossing, Gibby had decided that he was not going to spend another Transition lying sedated in the Med Bay, so when the green doctor commed him about there being a bed ready for him, Gibby told Doctor Wong "I'm not going to be a lab rat for some damned vivisectionist!" and instead locked himself in the Spares Locker on the Engineering Deck, which also doubled as one of the Ship's Lockers, which held any number of lethal weapons, and could be locked from inside.

"Mr. Wyeth," Dr. Wong said, "I have no idea what you are talking about. I am no vivisectionist, but rather a surgeon, assembled at the Heimdall factory on Heimdall to provide cutting edge medical care to those in need." He sounded like an ad.

"You did something to my brain while I was out, Doc! I know it!" the agitated Gibby yelled over the comm.

"Mr. Wyeth," Wong continued, "I monitored your brain activity during the *Waffles'* last Crossing. Your Grand Mal seizures seems to be a product of being exposed to Transitional energies. While an exceedingly rare condition, I see that from your files you've been identified as a 'Sensitive'..."

"I just want them to stop, Doc! I been an Engineer for almost thirty years and prone to migraines, that's all! Now I'm having seizures! And visions I can't half remember! I'm just sick of it *all!*"

The rattling sound of some weapon being loaded could be heard over the comm while Gibby yelled.

"A regimen of the proper anti-seizure medications should take care of any problems you may be having, Mr. Wyeth," Doctor Wong said. "Together we'll find an answer, Gibby."

Gibby yelled and fired a shotgun in the confined space. The gun roaring as a load of heavy shot caromed off walls, miraculously missing Wyeth.

A few of the black gang pounded on the door to Gibby's hideyhole; screaming through the wall at the Chief Engineer to see if he was alright.

"Leave me alone!" he screamed back.

Listening in from the bridge, Captain Fyyg contacted Yohan Geisel, one of the *Waffles'* black gang, on a different channel.

"Geisel."

"Yohan, that lunatic must be gotten out of there. How do you propose we do it?" the Captain asked.

"Well," Geisel began, rubbing the stubble on his chin, "ordinarily I'd suggest the Anti-Hijacking protocols—Modulate the grav plates to slam the subject into the deck at several Gees. But we can't do that, as the black gang must stay on station until Transition. Don't wanna beat your entire Engineering Staff unconscious."

"No, that obviously wouldn't work," replied Fyyg. "How about gas?"

"No," replied Geisel. "Same problem. It'd take out all of Engineering."

"If only we could isolate the Locker from the rest of Engineering..." Fyyg mused.

"Even though the Locker seems to be cut off from the rest of the *Waffles*, it really isn't, Captain," said Yohan. "The air Gibby is breathing comes from *somewhere*."

"Right through the air vent on the port wall, Yohan," Captain Fyyg said.

"Yessir," Yohan agreed.

Within an hour, Geisel had been to the Ship's Locker on the bridge, withdrew a grenade and several shotshells loaded with 'Brick', improvised an explosive device, and mounted it to the air vent access to Gibby.

The Captain came down, rapping lightly on the door to Wyeth's hidey-hole. "Gibraltar?" he asked, then continued, "It's me, Nordel. Dr. Wong is up in Medical right now, so no need to worry about him.

"I've got a couple of cold ones here, Gibby. Maybe you could come out and we could discuss this like grown ups." Fyyg opened a bottle and took a long pull.

"My, but that's good!" he said.

(Continued from page 9)

Gibby admitted a cold one would be good right about now.

At a signal from the Captain, Geisel activated the device, shooting several cubic meters of heavy 'Brick' into the locked room. Big Gibby Wyeth hit the deck several seconds later like a poleaxed hog.

"Well, he's out," said Geisel. "But still in."

Handing the crewman the cold beer he'd meant for Wyeth, Captain Fyyg ordered, "Get a few of your Flints on the job, Yohan. Cut him out of there, and confine him to the brig until further notice."

Yohan popped the beer and took a swig. "Yessir, Captain."

"And step it up. I want that lunatic caged before we make Transition!" the Captain ordered.

At Yohan's direction, the small mob of Flints swarmed the thick hatch; removing the hinges and lock in under a half hour.

The entire contents of the Spares Locker was covered in a fine, brick-red powder, as was Gibby's massive face-down and unconscious form.

Another of the black gang held a Netgun ready, should Gibby still be in a mood to make trouble. Fortunately, the engineer lay there drooling on the deck until Doctor Wong arrived with his grav-stretcher team.

Wong checked Wyeth's vital signs before the stretcher team placed him on the bunk in the brig, with only some fifteen or sixteen minutes remaining before Transition.

At seventeen hours into Transition, Gibby apparently woke to use the fresher, but didn't remember it; not coming to his senses-proper until some twenty eight hours total had passed since he'd been hit with the 'brick'.

Waving at the security monitor, Gibby yelled, "Hey, lemme out! This has gotta be some sorta mistake!"

The 'Professor', who was standing watch on the bridge, answered him. "Sorry, Gib. You went off yer

nut. You stay locked up 'til Captain says." To avoid an argument, he switched off the monitor's sound.

When it was time for shift change, Brodie came to the bridge with Salome holding his hand.

As the 'Professor' got up to go, he nodded toward the security feed, saying, "He's been doing that for three hours now, Brodie."

"Oh ya?" the big ape said, as he sat down. Salome sat down in a chair nearby, and the two of them watched Wyeth in the brig. First he'd shake the bars of the brig until he got tired, then take a break, as, panting, he'd regain enough energy to make another go at the bars again.

Brodie, who'd been in the brig a few more times than he'd like to admit, flipped on the monitor's speaker. "You need to quit all this nonsense, Wyeth; you'll hurt yourself," the chimp said.

"Look, I'll call the Captain in a few minutes and let you know what's what. Until then, I think you ought to just sit there and relax."

Calling the Captain in his office, Brodie found he was away from his comm. In all likelihood, Fyyg was spending the evening with Ilsa in their cabin.

Lying to Wyeth, Brodie told him the Captain would be by first thing in the morning. A tiny lie, but a harmless one if it'd allow the poor chump to quit rattling around and get some rest.

After sitting down on the bunk, Gibby realized that he was dead tired, and lay back, arms crossed above his head, dropping off almost immediately into a deep, dreamless sleep.

On the bridge until morning, and with no one around but the two of them, Salome sat on Brodie's lap and kissed him; fingers running through the thick fur on his head as she took his hat and tossed it away to land on the bowl of fruit nearby. Brodie nibbled on her neck as he squeezed her large breasts.

As the pair groped on the deck, Salome got up on all fours and pulled her dress up, urging the ape

Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 10)

to come and get her as she spanked her big butt, then propped herself against the Sensor board to provide the big chimp with more leverage.

The battered Serverbot; the old egg-shaped, wheeled one that'd come aboard the *Waffles* with Captain Peel, woke itself up at 0245 as it always did, to provide Captain Fyyg with his first cup of coffee of the day. Captain Peel had been a woman who liked her coffee black and strong, at 0530, with a shot of bourbon in it. Captain Fyyg was a man who liked his Bicerin at 0300, but with a bit more chocolate.

Stepping from the shower, Fyyg took the coffee and thanked the robot as he always did.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, he offered some to Ilsa.

"Take that wretched liquid away from me!" she snapped, "And, Shiva, let me sleep until 0700, Nordel, Please!"

At 0315, the Captain not wanting any more Bicerin, the Serverbot shut itself down again.

Nordel got dressed, and from 0400 to 0515 he read through an old Pre-Atomic comic strip, Gaso-

line Alley. At 0515 he put away his reader and went down to the brig.

"You're lucky, you know," the Captain started, "that no one was hurt earlier, Gibby."

Gibby woke, bleary, agreeing with Fyyg, "Right. No one was hurt."

"Because had anyone been injured, you'd have found yourself floating home, Herr Wyeth."

"As for what we do now, Gibby: You'll cheerfully undergo whatever regimen Herr Doktor Wong has worked up for you, or you come back to the brig until we can find a habitable world—any habitable world—to drop you. Is that clear?" said the Captain.

"Yessir," said Wyeth, saluting.

"Until we have any more trouble out of you—which we won't—you'll be released on your own recognizance," explained the Captain.

"Thank you, Captain," said the Chief Engineer as the men shook hands through the bars.

"Mr. Le Boucherre," the Captain called through the comm.

"Yessir!" replied the ape.

"Open the brig, if you please," Fyyg asked.

At the flip of a switch the magnetic bolt was thrown, and the brig became an empty cage once more. ❁

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

September 2013

- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Seal Class Submersible*, *Starships Book IIII0I: Viribus Unitis Class*, *Helicopter Sky Crane*, and *Starships Book IIII0: Taxi Cab*.
- **BITS** has released *101 Cargos*.
- **Avalon Game Company** has released *Kitbag #5, Close Assault Weapons*.
- **Zozer Games** has released *Planetary Toolkit 3: Mazandaran*, and *Planetary Toolkit 4: Antioch*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Solomani Rim Map Pack*, *Deneb Sector Map Pack*, and *Reft Sector Map Pack*.
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released *d66 Names of Famous Space Battles*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Ships of Clement Sector 1: Kiviat*.
- **Spica Publishing** has released *Through the Veil Part 5*. ❁



Aliens of the Rim

reviewed by Rob Prior

Aliens of the Rim. "B." David Nilsen and Loren Wiseman
Game Designers' Workshop <http://www.farfuture.net>
123pp., currently available in PDF only as part of TNE CD.
US\$35

*Editor's note: This review was originally posted to the pre-magazine
Freelance Traveller website in 1995, and is reprinted with permission.
The original review did not include a cover picture or publication data.*

I've just picked up *Aliens of the Rim* and, frankly, I don't think it deserves all the abuse heaped on it.

I don't understand Dave's sense of humour, but then I don't understand most American comedy programs anyway. Or maybe I'm just getting old. Leaving aside the in-jokes, what's left is a reasonable piece of work.

Artwork is OK-to-good, and certainly better than in several recent products.

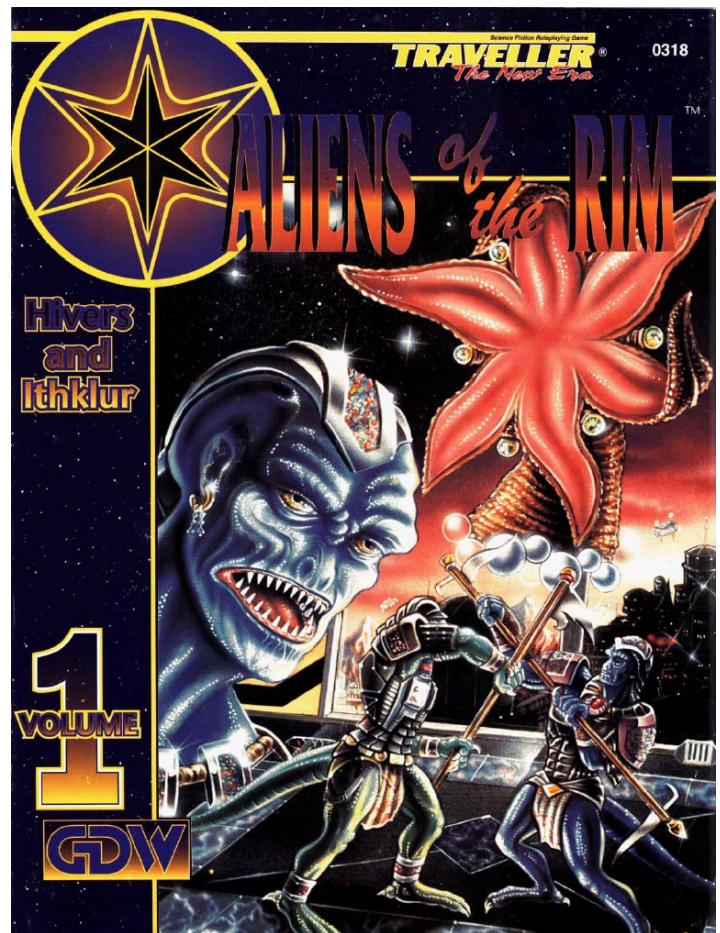
Writing and production is better than many GDW products. I caught a couple of typos, but back in the early days of *MegaTraveller* this would have been an amazingly well-done book.

The multiple views of history are canonical. Even back in Classic *Traveller* times we had multiple views of alien races. (The Zhodani module was CT, not MT.) This just adds one more example to the list. Dave and Loren have managed to convey a deeper sense of the variety of social viewpoints in the Federation than the previous module did (while also plugging a few weak spots from that module).

As to the Ithklur fascination with old Terran motifs, this is a literary technique often used in science fiction. If you can accept the vast stability of the Imperial universe then this shouldn't be a problem.


Regarding the "humans in rubber suits" issue: I didn't get this impression. Instead, I thought that Dave/Loren is saying that although you might try to play an alien you are still a human, and so everything you see/think/do is filtered through your human viewpoint.

Given the arguments I've had with people (some here, some elsewhere) concerning human cultures I



think this is optimistic: most people don't really understand other human cultures.

The game rules are useful and mercifully brief. Character generation is fully covered. Suggestions for roleplaying are useful. I particularly liked the NPC motivations.

Well worth the money I paid. 

The Freelance Traveller Forums

Our connectivity issues appear to be mostly resolved; the main issue at this point is having the time to put everything together. 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.

About 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.

A System for Character Improvement

by Ken Bearden

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 1999.

Experience Points

Player-characters are awarded Experience Points (XP) at the end of every game session. When a character uses a skill in such a way as to have an impact on the session's events, the referee should award the character 1XP. Skill use that has a major impact on the session's events may, at the referee's discretion, be awarded additional XP, but awarding as many as 3XP for a skill use should be rare. Players are encouraged to point out which skills should be awarded XP, but the referee's decision is always final.

XP are noted next to the appropriate skill. If a character does not actually have the skill in question, but has earned experience against that skill, note the skill on the character sheet in parentheses.

Bonus Experience Points

At the referee's discretion, characters can be awarded bonus XP for such things as good role playing and great ideas during the session. These points can be applied towards any skill the player wishes, with the referee's approval. This simulates characters studying skills in their spare time and *Eureka!* moments with regard to skill improvement. Players can use these points to direct character development.

Applying "Experience" to Characteristics

XP may be applied to characteristics as well. Record these by writing the characteristic name in parentheses and placing the earned XP next to it.

Upgrading Skills and Characteristics

At the beginning of each game session, PCs are allowed to roll for skill and characteristic improvement. Any skill or characteristic that has earned enough prerequisite XP may be improved via rolling dice as described below. In order to roll for improvement, the PC must have earned XP equal to the target skill or characteristic level. It is not possible to

upgrade any skill or characteristic by more than one level per game session. For example:

- To go from Pistol-0 to Pistol-1 requires 1 XP.
- To go from Pilot-4 to Pilot-5 requires 5 XP.
- To go from STR 7 to STR 8 requires 8 XP.

The Improvement Roll

To actually improve a skill or characteristic, a roll of all-sixes must be made. The number of dice to be rolled is determined by the target skill level or characteristic level:

- To go from Pistol-1 to Pistol-2 requires rolling 2D, and succeeds on a roll of 12.
- To go from Mechanical-3 to Mechanical-4 requires rolling 4D, and succeeds on a roll of 24.
- To go from STR 6 to STR 7 requires rolling 7D, and succeeds on a roll of 42.

The roll can be modified based on the character's current INT characteristic and/or expending extra XP. See the Modifiers section below.

Only one attempt per game session may be made to increase a particular skill or characteristic, but a player may attempt to increase as many skills or characteristics as he has sufficient XP for.

Modifiers

Modifiers apply to the roll needed for success, not to the number of XP required or to the number of dice thrown.

INT Bonuses: Players with sufficiently high INT scores receive a modifier on all rolls. This includes throws for improving all characteristics, including INT. Use the following modifiers:

- +1 DM if INT 5-9.
- +2 DM if INT 10-14.
- +3 DM if INT 15.

- On the Pistol roll above, success occurs on a 11 or 12 if the character has INT 7.
- On the Mechanical roll above, success occurs on a total of 22+ if the character has INT 13.
- On the STR throw above, success occurs on a total of 39+ if the character has INT 15.

XP Bonuses: Bonuses to the roll can also be obtained by spending extra XP. For each +1DM on the

Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 13)

throw, XP equal to the target skill level are required. That is, using double the amount of required XP nets a +1 DM on the roll; using triple the amount of required XP nets a +2 DM on the roll, and so on.

- On the Pistol throw above, the player can earn +1DM for each additional 2 Pistol XP he has and wishes to expend.
- On the Pilot throw above, the player can earn +1 DM for each additional 4 Pilot XP he has and wishes to expend.
- On the STR throw above, the player can earn +1 DM for each additional 7 STR XP he has and wishes to expend.

Cost of Trying: Every time a skill or characteristic increase is attempted and fails, the cost for trying is 1 XP from that skill's or characteristic's total. All other XP are kept. If a skill is improved, all XP for that skill or characteristic are wiped out, even if they were not applied to the throw. The new skill begins anew sans any XP from the previous level (i.e., the player now has 0 XP in the skill or characteristic just improved).

Level 0 Skills: If an attempt made to gain a skill at level 1 fails, a second throw for improvement is

allowed free of cost. If this second attempt is successful, the PC gains the skill at level 0. (Only attempts for level 1 skills).

Experience Limit: We use a modification of the Maximum Skills rule on p. 30 of the *MegaTraveller Players' Manual*.

If a character's total skill levels do not exceed (INT + EDU), then prerequisite points remain as stated above.

If a character's total skill levels exceed (INT + EDU), but do not exceed $2 \times (\text{INT} + \text{EDU})$, then prerequisite points are doubled.

If a character's total skill levels exceed $2 \times (\text{INT} + \text{EDU})$, but do not exceed $3 \times (\text{INT} + \text{EDU})$, then prerequisite points are tripled, and so on.

Bonuses derived from additional XP are subject to the same adjustment, but INT bonuses remain the same.

Since it gets harder to improve the more skills a character earns, Players should be strategic in throwing for improvement for specific skills. In this fashion, players can mold their characters, and some skills will remain unimproved while XP build up (potential is there for the PC to improve, but he is not applying himself in that direction). ☼

Active Measures

The Bellona Intrigue

by Michael Brown

Synopsis: A reformed terrorist engages the heroes to prevent an assassination attempt on her lover, a planetary official, by her past comrades.

Setting: Initially, any Imperial world; another world with a Type A starport two parsecs away.

Players' Information

The team is approached by a woman who is trying hard not to be noticed in the crowd. Lireyn Niikesh makes no bones about her former line of work (her government considers her a terrorist; she calls herself a freedom fighter) but claims it is all be-

hind her. She wants to hire the group to find her lover, Arpesh Shalimak, an official of the planet's lower house of parliament. She had been assigned to assassinate him, but they instead fell in love. The two carried on a brief relationship before Lireyn's comrades realized that she had no intention of carrying out her orders. In response, they made plans to kill both paramours. A first attempt on Lireyn's life alerted her to the plot; she escaped her assailants and is now trying to warn Shalimak of the plot against him. Not wanting to lead the villains to him, she asks the PCs to undertake the task of finding him and either warning him or protecting him. As payment, she is willing to reveal the location of a large cache of valuables the terrorists have collected, worth at least

(Continued from page 14)

Cr50,000. But she will only do so once she knows her lover is safe.

Lireyn knows that Shalimak has left the planet for a nearby system on business, but she's not sure which one. The terrorists have the means to go after him, using their own (stolen) starship. She turns over a description of Shalimak's Type Y Yacht, the *Kimikir Giraam*; a secure commlink to contact her with once they have completed their mission (they will be unable to do so until then, as she will be in hiding); and a personal item (referee's choice) they are to show him to prove that she sent them.

Referee's Information

Shalimak left the world for a system with a Type A starport 2 parsecs away. Data from the originating starport should allow them to make a good guess as to which system he was headed for. The *Kimikir Giraam* has only a Jump-1 rating, so it will take him two weeks to get there. If the PCs have access to a starship with a higher jump rating, they can get there ahead of him. Depending on how much tension the referee wants to build into the plot, the extremists may also have a high Jump rating and thus arrive perhaps a few hours behind the PCs.

When the PCs make port, they will have to find a way to locate Shalimak. Hampering them is the fact that since his yacht is unstreamlined, it cannot land on-planet; he will dock at the highport and take a shuttle to the downport. The adventurers will not know which shuttle he is on. Worse, the downport is large enough that their ship and Shalimak's shuttle may be kilometers apart. And unfortunately, the day on which the PCs make port is unfortunately an unusually busy one. The port is jammed with people of every stripe who have chosen that day to travel through the system and the crowds are phenomenal. The group can locate him on a throw of 11+ (DMs: former service as Navy or Rogue, +1; Liaison skill) made twice a day. If they have arrived ahead of him, their task is far easier; they will have time to search

shuttle schedules and scout out likely hotels. The terrorists will have the same chances to find Shalimak, but at -1 since they cannot operate as openly as the heroes.

Upon arrival, Shalimak quickly checks into a hotel and gets right down to business. He is an energetic man who stays on the move; he wants to complete his errands and get back to Lireyn. He is accompanied by a single bodyguard (discreetly armed to the planet's Law Level) who will view anyone approaching Shalimak uninvited with suspicion. Shalimak himself will react to the heroes at -2, viewing them—at least at first—as obstacles to his work. Showing him Lireyn's personal item will soften his animosity toward them. If they can subsequently convince him that he is in danger, he will promise to be careful, but not abandon his tasks. He will invite them to accompany him as long as they don't get in the way and they defer to the bodyguard.


The heroes will be hard-pressed to watch for danger in the ever-present crowds. Roll the chances for surprise per the rules in *Book 1: Characters and Combat*, except the terrorists will neither avoid nor retreat from the adventurers.

As soon as the terrorists spot Shalimak, they will try to kill him. The number of heavies will be half the number of PCs, plus 1 (round up), equipped with whatever weapons will get the job done (guns, knives, explosives, etc.) despite the Law Level. The criminals are fanatical enough to take on long odds to complete their mission and will not be deterred by the presence of witnesses. When the adventurers and the bodyguard engage the terrorists, another group of the rogues will be hanging back, observing intently. What they learn of the heroes will give them a +1 to another assassination attempt, which will not come for at least 24 hours after the first. They will be certain to wait until the PCs' party is alone and/or distracted. Also, another throw to locate Shalimak will be unnecessary, as they will have kept him under surveillance. As always, the referee may vary the opponents' numbers or equipment if the PCs prove to be especially competent.

(Continued from page 15)

If the heroes are successful in keeping Shalimak from harm, he will gratefully offer them the same pay as his bodyguard (Cr2,500 each). Lireyn will make good on her promise, divulging the location of the terrorist cell's cache. The referee can designate

the contents of that treasure, where it is hidden, and how it is guarded. Retrieving it may lead to a subsequent adventure. Finally, the group will be invited to the couple's wedding in one month's time, as Shalimak will propose to Lireyn at first opportunity.

The referee should determine the flow of subsequent events. 

In A Store Near You

The Showroom

Luderitz-class Undersea Mining Trawler

designed by Ewan Quibell

CraftID: Luderitz-class Mining Trawler, TL10, Cr19,366,337
Hull: 450/1125, Disp=500, Config=4USL, Armour=40E, Unloaded=2689.522 tons, Loaded=7408.408 tons
Power: 1/2, Fusion=40 Mw, Duration=120/360, P/W=5.4
Loco: 9/18, Tracks, Road=65kph, Offroad=6.5 kph
Comm: Radio=System×2, Laser=System×1,
Sensors: ActEMS=Region, PasEMS=Cont, Mag=VDist×2, Rad=VDist×2, Environ×2; ActObjScan=Diff, ActObjPin=Diff, PasEngScan=Form
Off: Missile=xx1
 Batt 1
 Bear 1
Def: DefDM=+1
Control: Computer=0bis×2, Panel=DynLink×16, Environ=BasicEnv, BasicLS, ExtLS, Spec=HUD×4
Accom: Crew=4, (Bridge=2, Engineer=1, Steward=1), Small Staterooms=50, Seats=Adequate×10, Airlock×2, Magazine=10 Battery Rounds Missile
Other: Cargo=4712.838 k1, Fuel=86.4 k1, Heavy Robot Arms×2, Fuel Purification Plant (purifies tanks in 1.8989 hrs), Ore Processing Plant (45.5 k1/hour), ObjSize=Average, Fuel Scoops (fill tanks in 59 minutes), EmLevel=Faint, Battery Round=1 Missile
Comment: Single Turret Missile Construction Time=96 weeks single, 72 weeks multiple


The *Luderitz*-class Undersea Mining Trawler is collaborative project between Walisak LCC and Gosery LCC following a tender specification for a long duration underwater mining platform from Luderitz HLC. Walisak led the bid, bringing in Gosery for the specialist vehicle aspects of the design. It was the innovative design around a starship hull with specialised vehicular adaptations that drew Luderitz to choose this as the winning bid.

While the *Luderitz* is rated with a 120 day duration its effective duration is unlimited. Sea water can

be scooped and purified with the onboard equipment quicker than it can be used by the power plant. The resulting oxygen generated is also used in preference to purchased life-support consumables, as is the desalinated water that is also produced. The limiting factor on the *Luderitz*'s duration is the food supply of the crew.

The main purpose of the design is underwater ore and mineral extraction and processing from the oceans of Home. The four-person crew moves the trawler to known mineral and ore deposits before the 46 miners mine and processing their finds, all the while scanning the sea bed for additional resources to exploit. Captains of *Luderitzes* have also been known to produce and package sea salt from the desalinisation process when the trawler is moving between locations, or when they are stationary for a significant period of time and they are receiving regular supply runs, in order to increase profits or offset the running costs when not mining. This can be done when there are no miners on board and the steward has little else to occupy his time.

The single missile turret is used as an underwater probe launcher, although it is not unknown for the odd standard HE missile to be in the magazine for defence, or breaking into a significant deposit of ore as needed. Underwater probes are sent out to gain a different perspective on possible ore and mineral deposits than the sensors of the trawler.

Four *Luderitz*-class Undersea Mining Trawlers have been constructed to date, and there are an additional 6 on the order books. At present Luderitz HLC has not invoked its option to have the remaining vessels built in parallel. 

Derelict Starships

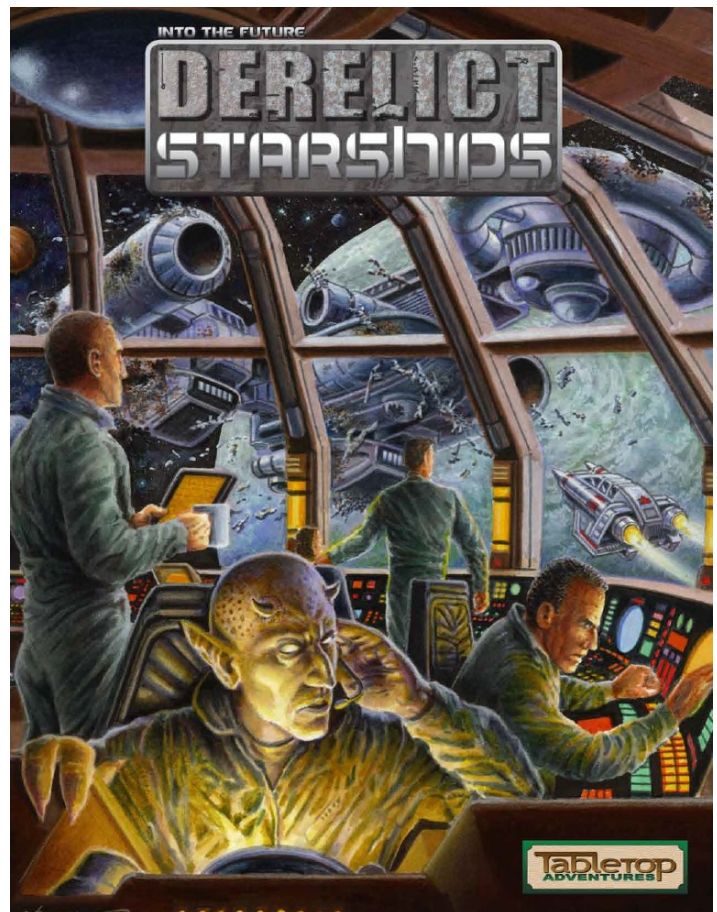
reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Derelict Starships. Multiple Contributing Authors.
Tabletop Adventures <http://www.tabletopadventures.com>
64pp., PDF
US\$11.95/UK£7.55

Tabletop Adventures has created a useful system-agnostic supplement for referees who find themselves at a descriptive loss. *Derelict Starships* does not, as might be implied by its title, provide entire abandoned or damaged or destroyed starships complete with statblocks and deckplans, but instead provides one-paragraph descriptions, similar to what one might encounter in a text adventure/interactive fiction, of what might be encountered by PCs while exploring such a starship.

The supplement is divided into five parts. The first part, "Bits of Starships", provides 100 generic descriptions that could be applied to almost any area of a starship, rather than being tied to specific rooms or specific types of rooms—and most of the descriptions could be applied to derelict space stations, asteroid bases, or even planetary ground installations. Each description has bold text that is read to the PCs, and unbolded text that provides the referee with information needed to adjust the description based on the presence or absence of gravity or air, whether the PCs choose to explore further or just pass by a partly-observed scene, and so on. Some referee information concerns possible minor tasks, such as DEX checks to keep one's footing when walking on wet or oily decks. The occasional found object is noted as well. Most of the descriptions are generic enough, but the referee should be careful about occasional mentions of technology which may be inappropriate to a particular *Traveller* universe. This section is copied, reformatted to fit on cards (six per page), as the fifth section of the book.

The next section, "Derelict Shards", provides 110 descriptions that are tied to specific types of areas of the ship, beginning with #1, a description as you approach a ship from outside, perhaps in a ship's boat.



The descriptions are grouped by area. Other than being specifically for e.g., a personal cabin, the medbay, the bridge, etc., these are much like the descriptions found in "Bits". Occasional veiled references to SF classics may be found in this section.

The third section, "Skeletons in Space", discusses the decay process that the human body undergoes. The process in normal Earthlike conditions is outlined first. This is followed by discussion of how differences in gravity, atmosphere, and presence or absence of insects, microbes, or other vermin affects the process. The section ends with three paragraphs of advice for referees and some bibliographic references that a referee so inclined could investigate for further information on human decomposition.

The fourth section is an index; each entry points to a description by Bit number or Shard number.

This is most definitely not a supplement for players; it is very definitely aimed solely at the referee. Whether it's worth the price is going to depend on how often the derelict starship, space station, or base features in your adventures.


Cargo Lifter

designed by Ewan Quibell

CraftID: Cargo Lifter, TL9, Cr 8,641
Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.25, Conf=0USL, Armour=4D,
Loaded=0.706915 tons, Unloaded=0.703065 tons
Power: 1/2, Battery=0.0399 Mw, Duration=8.5 hours
Loco: 1/2, Legs×2, P/W=56.44, Road=100kph,
OffRoad=80kph
Comm: Radio=VDist (50km), Interface=Power
Sensors: LightAmp, Headlight×2, Touch×2
Off: Hardpoints=1
Def: +2
Control: Panel=Electronic×2
Accom: Crew=1 (Operator), Seats=Cramped×1
Other: Heavy Robot Arm×2, Cargo=0.00385k1,
ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faint
Comment: Cost in Quantity=Cr 6,913; Can lift 2.187
tons

The Daud Enterprises Cargo Lifter can be found across Home County moving loads wherever they need to be moved with considerable precision and speed.

The operator is secured and locked into the upright standing/seating position with a 4 harness seat belt and an open metal frame leaving the arms free to access the controls on each arm. The light amplification visor can be brought down over the operators head as needed. The touch sensors on each arm ensure that whatever is lifted is not crushed by applying too much pressure.

Whilst lifting the maximum load the performance of the powered exoskeleton is reduced to 40 kph on the road and 24 kph off. 



Active Measures

Getting Off the Ground

The Color of Monks' Robes

by Dwayne Walstrom

Setting: An Imperial world of TL 5-7 with a breathable atmosphere and hydrographics rating 4+.

PC Required Skills: Stealth, Recon; Science skills (Chemistry, Biology) may also prove useful.

The PCs are approached by an individual who indicates that he believes that they are suitable for a job that his principal is seeking to have done. A large sum is mentioned. Are they interested, and willing to meet with his principal?

If the PCs agree to the meeting, they are brought to an apartment in a well-to-do area of the city. It is well-appointed, but shows nothing of the personality of the resident. The principal is a middle-aged man of aristocratic bearing; he introduces himself as the Baron of and Imperial representative on a nearby world. The local government there has been dealing with terrorism directed against Imperial interests and their supporters for the last decade. Recently, public opinion has turned against the rebels, and they have been stepping up their 'cowardly' tactics against the local populace, trying to increase anti-Imperial sentiments in an effort to drive Imperial

interests off their world. The local government has not indicated a willingness to request Imperial assistance, so the Baron feels that he can't call for intervention by the Imperial Marines. At the same time, the Imperial corporate interests that the terrorists have been targeting are putting pressure on the Baron to "do something". He thinks he may have found something to do:

A prophecy in the local religion states [in translation]: "When the Great River turns the color of monks' robes [a bright orange], there will be peace in the land." The Baron believes if this event were to occur, the local populace (including most of the rebel force) would lay down their weapons and negotiate peacefully. However unlikely this seems, he's willing to give it a try, in order to prevent greater bloodshed. The job offered to the PCs would be to find a way to change the color of the river (if only temporarily), and do so within a month. The pay is Cr 1,000,000. Are they interested?

Referee's Information

The Dashary is over 1000 km in length, with heavy traffic and numerous bridges. It is a major route for local traffic, and the rebel forces use it as well. The lower (southern) regions are more heavily

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

populated, with the middle regions being farmland, and mountainous/jungle headwaters. For the scheme to work, the players should effect the color change in a region where the change will be noticed.

It is not specifically mentioned (unless the players ask), but the players should strive to do as little ecological damage as possible. (Major ecological damage will likely bring the Imperium down on their heads, regardless of how well they perform the mission...)

And, as always, the situation may not be as initially presented. Some possible directions to take the adventure:

1. All is as stated. The PCs will encounter no significant problems, as long as they use sufficient planning and caution. The Baron will be greatly pleased with the outcome, and could be a source of future contracts.
2. The PCs succeed in changing the color of the river, but it happens while a rebel attack is in progress. This will be interpreted as an omen favorable to the rebels' cause, and public opinion will swing somewhat against the Imperial presence on the world. There will be no upsurge in violence. The Baron will be unhappy, and will attempt to renege on payment.
3. The changing of the river's color will work as expected. However, shortly after peace is suc-

cessfully concluded, evidence of environmental damage will surface. The PCs are blamed, and Imperial environmentalists will be after them.

4. In the process of seeking a method to change the river's color, the PCs turn up evidence of illegalities by one of the Imperial companies. The company covered it up, but in the process provoked the group that eventually became the nucleus of the rebels. They (the rebels) have a justifiable grievance, if only the Baron would listen.
5. The Baron has misrepresented the translation of the prophecy to the PCs, and knows that when the PCs succeed, the rebellion will become general instead of limited to the terrorists. He has come to despise the local culture, and wants them to rise in rebellion. Once this occurs he has legal recourse to send in the Imperial Marines to restore order, preferably (in his eyes) with as much damage as possible.
6. An incompetent translator has gotten the translation completely wrong. When the river changes color, it will be taken as heralding apocalyptic "end times", and the entire Imperial presence will have to flee—or a massive Marine force called in—to avoid being killed in the orgy of mutual destruction.

Subsequent events, as always, are to be determined by the referee (and player actions). 🎲



Jump Destination: Tanna-Sheru, Alkaidin System

by Ken Pick

This article originally appeared on the Freelance Traveller website in 2008.

Alkaidin system is a typical frontier colony system, abnormal only in having both a Navy and Scout base in the system.

Alkaidin ("The Bases") is a typical M2V red dwarf star with three planets and an asteroid belt. The sun is a blood-red cinder of a star, speckled with black and orange sunspots, about 40% Solar mass with only 3% Solar luminosity, emitting mostly in the infrared.

That is, unless there's a flare. Though not large enough to qualify Alkaidin as a true flare star, solar flares of brilliant white erupt at irregular intervals over a period of days to weeks, lasting hours to

(Continued from page 19)

days. Though only increasing brightness by a few percent, the increase is mostly UV, effectively changing the star's spectrum for a short interval.

Alkaidin I (Orbit 0) is a double planet, Tanna (B6A72M7-A) and Sheru (B563411-C). This double main world has a total population of around 50,000, mostly on Sheru. These are the only bodies in the system with official names.

Alkaidin Belt (E000312-B, Orbits 1-2) is a medium-density double asteroid belt scattered between the first two planets. With a population of 6000 belt-ers, it is the only other "inhabited world" in the system and a mainstay of the system's economy.

Alkaidin II (VLGG, 1000 T-mass, Orbit 3) is a Very Large Gas Giant with a thin ring and twelve moons at about 1 AU. At three Jupiter masses, Alkaidin II has too high a surface gravity, too strong a magnetosphere, and too violent an atmosphere to be suitable for fuel skimming. Massive upwellings contaminate the atmosphere with impurities from the depths, giving the planet the appearance of "Jupiter with Smallpox". The twelve moons cluster in three main orbital groupings:

- In close orbits: a small rockball, two "Ios" (Size 1 and 2) turning themselves inside-out megavolcanically, two "Super-Europas" (Size 4 and 5) with tidal-melted ice oceans and thin inert atmospheres, and one nondescript Size 2 iceball bake within their primary's Van Allen belts.
- In mid-range orbits: a single Size 3 Titaniform with a methane-and-nitrogen atmosphere casting its haze over mountains of ice and small seas of hydrocarbons.
- In far orbits: at least five miscellaneous captured asteroids, with more constantly being captured and released.

Alkaidin III (LGG, 100 T-mass, Orbits 4-6) is a smaller but still Large Gas Giant in an eccentric resonance orbit that sweeps the outer system from 2 to 5 AU. A "ringless Saturn" with three large moons, its color varies over time; Saturn-yellow with some

white cloud bands at perihelion, and featureless Uranus-cyan at aphelion. Its size and calm atmosphere make Alkaidin III the preferred choice for fuel skimming. The outermost and largest moon is of interest: a Size 6 "Super-Triton" with a thin inert atmosphere, continents of ice, and oceans of liquid nitrogen (freezing over at aphelion), its retrograde orbit marks it as a capture from further out.

Alkaidin III's eccentric orbit has swept a clear zone out to 10 AU from the sun (and probably caused massive planetesimal/asteroid/comet bombardments in the system's early history). Beyond this, some iceballs may remain undiscovered and a thin Kupier belt hints at the extreme age of the system; all other asteroids and comets have been swept out by Alkaidin III or eaten by Alkaidin II.

Tanna-Sheru (Alkaidin Ia & Ib)

Named after a legendary pair of lovers, Tanna and Sheru form a double planet with an orbital period and tidal-locked day of about 100 hours, with a year of only 12.2 local days. Temperature variations are extreme, warming to temperate/warm over the fifty hours of ruddy daylight, followed by fifty hours of freezing night. Tidal stress from the nearby sun (three times that of the Earth/Moon system) ensures both worlds are seismically and volcanically active, with spectacular mountains.

Both worlds have similar gravity—about 0.75G—and similar atmospheric pressure—about that of Earth at 1500m altitude.

The red dwarf sun looms huge in the dark indigo sky of both worlds, a dull speckled red disk edged by visible prominences, over three times "normal" size but casting only a dull red twilight (at least to human eyes—a species that can see infrared will find the daylight much brighter, if still limited in color). UV emissions are so low that a human on either world's surface can stare at the sun for several minutes without eye injury, studying the ever-changing patterns of convection cells speckling the surface.

The only exception to the dull red light is during a solar flare, where the color shifts to a more

(Continued from page 20)

“normal” tone for hours to days and the sun cannot be stared at safely.

And over half of each world looms its companion world, filling six full degrees of sky, four times the apparent diameter of the sun. From Sheru, Tanna would be dull dirty white and frost-greys if it weren't tinted red by the sunlight. From Tanna, Sheru is more colorful—with darker patches and continents below the clouds and between the large polar icecaps, still color-shifted by the sunlight. Sheru's small landlocked oceans are a bit more interesting; at the morning terminator they are iced over, red-tinted frost-grey; as the day sweeps across the surface the ice cracks and melts; first tidal crackings like on the gas giant's moons, then splitting off into giant icebergs (visible from orbit) amid lines of blue-black which grow until at the evening terminator the oceans are the blue-black of open water.

Alkaidin II and III also stand out in the night sky as bright reddish-orange planets (changing color to white and yellowish during solar flares); the largest moons of both gas giants are visible to the naked eye.

Tanna (Alkaidin I-A) B6A72M7-A Poor/NonInd/ NonAg Navy Base

Tanna is a “snowball world”, with an almost all-nitrogen atmosphere and frozen-over oceans despite its volcanic activity—from orbit, the world looks like a dirty iceball with dark volcanic fallout plumes marking the locations of landmasses. Though frozen on the surface, the deep oceans are kept liquid by tidal-fueled geothermal heat, the enormous tides cracking the ice to the surface and pulling up water in upwellings that sink and re-freeze as the tide drops. The resulting temporary open water absorbs enough greenhouse gases from the atmosphere that the planet will probably not thaw for several million years. There is no known indigenous life, though deep-ocean microbes are possible around geothermal vents.

The only settlement on Tanna is Alkaidin Navy Base, with a permanent population of only 300 (Navy dependents and small Startown) but a transient population of maybe ten times that number. The base serves a local patrol squadron of destroyer-sized ships and acts as a logistics way station. The base has a reputation as a “bad posting”—not unpleasant, just boring. Confined to the base complex by the unbreathable atmosphere (requires O2 tanks and mask), with outside temperatures never above freezing, and some mountain crags on the horizon the only scenery other than a permafrost plain, the only alternative is shore leave on Sheru, which is barely surface-habitable and not much more settled.

Sheru (Alkaidin I-B) B563411-C Poor/NonInd Scout Base

The slightly-smaller half of the double planet, Sheru is a cold borderline-habitable world with a thin breathable atmosphere and enough greenhouse gases in its atmosphere to keep from snowballing like its companion. The main difference is Sheru is more volcanically active and is a life-bearing world—primitive multicellular life, but still life.

Sea life is primarily algae, sponges, and plankton both uni- and multi-cellular; the most advanced form large black algae mat colonies that drift through the seas. The most advanced land life are lichens and a para-crystalline colony bug similar to Mithril's “Crystallice”. All photosynthetic life (plants, such as the algae and lichen) are black or maroon to maximize light capture from the red dwarf sun. Almost all land life has a very fast life-cycle, growing during the fifty-hour day and then either encysting or sporating and dying off during the fifty-hour night in the manner of Mithril's “Ephemeral Glades”. Solar flares have been known to stimulate exaggerated growth and bring to life some normally-dormant forms. All known life-forms are asexual, reproducing by fission or budding/sporating.

(The encounter tables from the double-adventure scenario Mission to Mithril will work for

(Continued from page 21)

Sheru, with the exceptions that the “ephemeral glades” run through their life-cycle entirely within a local day. Local “vegetation” would only be mosses and lichens instead of Mithril’s true plants, and there would be no “animals” large enough to see with the naked eye.)

Sheruvian geography is primarily rugged tundra and maroon-lichened treeless savanna with a few landlocked “oceans” (Hydro 30%); about half the seas are connected by rift-valley “tidal-bore rivers” whose flow can reverse due to the massive sun-tide. Despite the drab terrain, the world has some spectacular glacier-carved mountains and active volcanic fields; some of the larger shield volcanoes rise up out of the breathable atmosphere, and the most violent eruptions can shoot debris into orbit.

The settled areas on Sheru all hug the equator, as this is where the temperature is the most tolerable (at least in the daytime). Above about 30° N and S latitude, the climate becomes too cold for permanent settlements.

Peculiarities

Safe Jump distance from Alkaidin is 0.45 AU (100 solar diameters)—approximately the outer edge of Alkaidin Belt, about 70 million km outside Tanna-Sheru’s orbit. Boosting out this far takes 45 hours for a 1-G ship to 22 hours for a 6-G ship, giving Alkaidin Base about one standard day’s early warning of any attack—and a similar time to intercept anyone (like player-characters) trying to flee the system.

Every Tanna-Sheru day (four standard days) roll 2D for the chance of solar flare; on a natural 2 or 12, there is a flare whose effects last for 1D standard days (1D/4 Tanna-Sheru days). Effects of a flare are:

- The sun brightens by a few percent as a brilliant white flare bursts from its dim red surface; the sunlight seems much brighter as the flare shifts its spectrum into a range more visible to human eyes. The flare grows and dissipates over its 1D standard day lifetime.

- On Tanna-Sheru, the temperature increases by a few (1D/2) degrees for one local day for every standard day of the flare.
- On lifeless Tanna, there is little change other than strong auroral activity and an increase in UV to the point of severe sunburn/eyeburn hazard - that is, if anyone would go outside the domes without being bundled/suited up.
- On life-bearing Sheru, the local life goes crazy from the extra UV getting through the ozone layer. Thawing happens a little earlier in the day, and weather conditions become a bit more violent, but the main effect is a massive increase in the daily growth cycle; ephemeral glades form more quickly and grow more rapidly to a larger size. New forms of native lichen called “clumping lichen”, which require the high UV of a flare to trigger their life cycle, grow into fist- to pillow-sized clumps of dark yellow, green, and purple, leaving fragile collapsed “skeletons” after the flare ends.
- Outside atmosphere, a massive increase in radio noise & background radiation in general—EMS sensors and radio communications have their effective range cut by 1D x 5%. Though most starships and spacecraft can shield against this level of background radiation, EVA in vacc suits or non-rated ship’s vehicles is not recommended for more than a few minutes from Alkaidin Belt inward.

On Sheru, there is little organic material outside of lichens and molds; except for basic foodstuffs, all other organic materials must be imported. Sheruport and other “company towns” are built under dome-roofs; similar but cheaper “inflatable greenhouses” cover the local agricultural land. Outside of these towns (such as on homesteads), architecture is either imported prefabs or local masonry (unmortared stone or rammed-earth), heavily-insulated against the freezing 50-hour nights. Most homesteaders will go outside only during the

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

"warm" daytime; at night, they stay inside unless absolutely necessary.

Cautions and Hazards

Tanna's atmosphere is unbreathable (not poisonous per se, but has no free oxygen), and the surface temperature is below freezing except for a few hours during the hottest part of the day.

Sheru is habitable, but temperatures usually drop well below freezing during the fifty-hour night—if caught in the open at night without cold-weather gear or a way to keep warm for two standard days, you will freeze to death. (A temporary "igloo" snow shelter and a portable heater will provide enough shelter except during blizzard conditions; making a slow fire of dried native lichens is a desperation move only because of the resulting stench and irritating smoke.) In addition, the daily thawing can cause ice-dam flash floods; these are a constant hazard on watercourses in the late afternoon.

Several varieties of local lichen have become a mold/mildew nuisance—the warmer colony/building interiors trigger their "ephemeral glade" life-cycle nonstop; any spores or fragments tracked in grow rapidly into a form of mildew which is a major nuisance. This can come as a surprise to offworld visitors.

Also, three of the native life forms—two unicellular microbes and one multicellular—are pathogenic to humans.

The two microbes are analogous to anthrax, causing fatal necrosis (flesh-eating) and sepsis (blood poisoning) upon infection. Called "Black Blood" and "Black Crater" from the visible effects, both these diseases are fatal (99+%) if untreated but like true anthrax are not casually contagious; though common on Sheru where they are endemic, there has never been an offworld case of the disease or a case of contagion once removed from the planetary environment. There is an effective vaccine available.

(Treat either of these diseases as anthrax in effects; infection can be cutaneous (skin), pneumonic (lung inhalation), or intestinal (digestive), with similar effects and progression to true anthrax.)

Because of these two diseases, all visitors to Alkaidin system must first put in at the Highport stations, be vaccinated against the twin diseases, and wait 24 hours for the immunity to take before continuing on-planet.

Compared to these, the multicellular pathogen is only a serious nuisance, though it can still put you in a hospital. The pathogen is a microscopic multicellular colony-creature that encysts itself through the long night and becomes active and reproduces asexually during the day. Looking like a faint sparkling dust, it burrows into sources of warmth (like a human body) to reproduce, causing massive skin irritation and rash like a souped-up scabies. (Treat as "crystallice" from *Mission on Mithril*.)

Because of the red dwarf sun, long-term visitors can get used to looking directly at the sun for short periods (a few minutes) without harmful effects. This can set them up for eye damage (retinal burns) if they do the same during a solar flare.

History & Population

At the time of its first survey, about 150 years ago, the system had no name—just a catalog number, a typical red dwarf (like 80% of all stars) with a VLGG whose only peculiarity was a double snowball in close orbit. The Scout Service did mark this particular red dwarf as a possible site for settlement, due to the lack of flare activity and one of the two close-in snowballs being life-bearing.

So the matter stood until a little over 50 years ago, when the system was selected for both a minor Navy and Scout base. Renamed "Alkaidin" ("the bases" in a language with Semitic roots), the double main world was also given names and divided between Navy (on Tanna) and Scouts (on Sheru). Detailed Scout survey also discovered Sheru's two lethal diseases and nuisance parasite, and soon developed a vaccine against the former.

(Continued from page 23)

With the local pathogens under control, the world was now clear for settlement; that is, if anyone would be interested in such a harsh world. This was remedied by the continuing survey, which had found several interesting organic compounds in the local lichen and plankton—interesting enough to attract the attention of a megacorp.

Leasing Sheru as a company world, the megacorp began developing and exploiting the organic compounds, harvesting lichen and farming plankton blooms for the organic compounds. Over the past 50 years, this has provided modest but steady returns, enough to attract a population of 50,000—Scouts and dependents, starport staff, base/starport support town (and Startown), corpos, and independent homesteaders (most of them franchise-subcontracted to the corpos).

Once the Scout base was operational and a permanent population established in system, the local asteroid belt attracted the attention of belters. These started prospecting the carbonaceous chondrites of Alkaidin Belt for hydrocarbons and metals, finding enough to attract the attention of another megacorp. This megacorp leased major claims in Alkaidin Belt, grudgingly accepting the existing belters as subcontractors and freelancers while starting more organized mining and exploitation. Though still small-scale compared to belts in major systems, the corporate and independent operations are enough to support a population of about 6000, centered around the main corporate station (a hollowed-out asteroid from the first wave of prospecting).

Both independent homesteaders and Belters include among their number some “crazy hermit” types who have as little to do with the outside world as possible. Even without the crazy hermits, there is often a rift between the corporate-affiliate types and the true frontier-attitude independents.

Within the independents and homesteaders, there is a tradition of extending hospitality to strangers seeking shelter overnight or in a blizzard-

storm. This hospitality customarily lasts for only one night or the duration of the storm, after which the visitors are expected to be on their way.

Economy and Trade

Alkaidin System is classified as Poor/Non-industrial, with an Eaglestone Trade Index of 2. This translates to a maximum of 100 passengers and 1500 tons of freight per week, much of that Navy and Scout Base support.

The system economy is based on resource extraction—organics from Sheru and hydrocarbons and metals from the Belt—with some base support and through-ship servicing. Not much to hang an economy on; both megacorps consider their in-system holdings as backwaters, and if they were ever to pull out, the colony would pretty much go bust.

Megacorp-run “lichen plantations” grow the commercially-viable species of lichen around-the-clock, using floodlights and heaters to simulate ephemeral glade conditions through the night. The lichens are harvested and processed daily; outside the lit and heated areas, the lichens die off/go dormant during the night, preventing runaways; to shut down a plantation that is growing out of control, just turn off the lights and heaters and the crop will die back.

Offworld trade of the “cash crops” and major imports is largely handled by the megacorps or megacorp-contracted carriers. Free-traders have a niche for secondary items too small or too inconvenient for the megacorp shipments, and for independent scheduling between the regular (and infrequent) corporate shipment dates.

The system does have enough agriculture to feed itself, though the local climate and sunlight don't grow human-edible crops very well. Much of the agriculture is based on mutant crop plants grown in artificially-lit greenhouses and under clear inflatable “valley roofs” using artificial soils fertilized by treated sewage. Locally-produced foodstuffs are adequate but monotonous; there is always a market for seasonings or exotic imported foodstuffs.

(Continued on page 25)

(Continued from page 24)

Ports and Facilities

Most of the port facilities are at the two Downports—Alkaidin Base on Tanna and Sheruport on Sheru. Both are rated as Class B Starports, except Tanna's is restricted to military and emergency traffic. Though both ports are rated Class B and have all the amenities of such, they are both very small.

Refined fuel is readily available, skimmed from Alkaidin III by fuel lighters and refined enroute. (Alkaidin II has too high a surface gravity to be skimmable and too contaminated an atmosphere to be practically refinable.) The three fuel lighters are all technically Navy, though one of the three is on (unofficial) long-term loan to the Scout Service and handles the Scout/civilian facilities at Sheru Highport.

Both ports have minimal highport facilities, basically small space stations at the L4 and L5 points, forming a rosette with the two worlds. The military highport (consisting of about 1/3 of the base) exists primarily to service unstreamlined ships and provide Zero-G repair facilities; the smaller civilian highport (rotating population of about 300) primarily serves as a customs point and vaccination site for all visitors, and secondarily for service and maintenance of Scout and civilian ships. Sheru Highport's shipyard facilities are scaled around Scout Service needs, and can fit only ships of up to 400 tons (Scout-configured Type Ts); the Navy base's yards are scaled for frontier escorts and patrol craft, with a size limit of around 2-3000 tons (such as *Longsword*, *Kanin*, or *Krupny*-class light DDs).

Surrounding Sheru Downport is Sheruport, the only "city" on the planet (permanent population about 15,000), built under a series of overlapping geodesic domes for climate control during the long day-night cycle.

Government

The system has no single government. Tanna and its highport are a military reservation auxiliary

to the Navy base, and Sheru and Alkaidin Belt are corporate holdings of two different megacorps, ruling their holdings according to different charters.

Megacorps vary in how they govern. Though they are there to make as much money as they can from the world's resources, they usually don't follow the activists/media's portrayal of the Rich Corporate Overlords exploiting the Poor Defenseless Locals who only have Us Concerned Activists for help—such neo-feudal attitudes have gotten megacorps run off the planet, sabotaged, and/or resisted in real life. Wars, unrest, and resentment from the locals are bad for business in the long run—that is, unless you're a mercenary company. There is some exploitation - in the sense that the corp does get the better end of the deal whenever it can—but not to the level generally thought.

Armed Forces

There are no indigenous armed forces *per se*. The Navy base and its attached system defenses and Marine contingent fill the function. Marines also provide security at both highports and Sheru Downport.

System defenses run about 1500 tons of dedicated SDBs and fighters from the Navy base, plus whatever Navy starships are in-system at the time.

In addition, the Corporation on Sheru maintains its own security forces, the paramilitary (as opposed to police) elements of which total somewhere around a reinforced company, equipped to TL10-12. Due to the local environment, these elements are grav-mobile (G-carriers), trained for search and rescue as well as combat, and equipped for Arctic conditions.

Scenario Nuggets

Sheru and Alkaidin Belt are chartered and held by different, possibly rival megacorps. There is always the possibility of friction and conflict between them. Though the Navy/Marine presence would inhibit outright local tradewar, there could be industrial espionage or just plain non-cooperation as each corp protects its turf from the other.

(Continued from page 25)

In addition, one or both megacorps might be casting an eye on expanding their operations to Tanna, subleasing from the Navy. Or a third megacorp might be interested in Tanna if there's something found there to exploit. Though most of the action would be outside the system - lobbying efforts in the local capital—there is still the possibility of a corporate “bootleg” operation with the tacit approval (or at least non-objection) of the Navy Base commander. (Probably under the cover of a corporate exploration/scouting/mapping project with all information forwarded to the Navy.) Tanna's a big place, and a total population of a few hundred Navy personnel can only effectively control the area of the surface base itself and most of the approach routes.

And there is always the possibility of friction between the megacorps and the locals. Belters and “crazy hermit” frontier colonists are notoriously independent, and one “pointy-haired” planetary manager can spark a lot of trouble from “uppity frost-heads”. Free-traders, as equally-independent spacers, often get dragged into this.

Note: For the classic “crazy hermit” lifestyle, think Unabomber without the bombs. Small insulated “cabin” with most of the space taken up by storage of supplies, a couple dug-in inflatable greenhouses to grow food, occasional trips to “town”, otherwise minimal facilities, and the attitude of a “Mountain Man”.

A world of only 50,000 (most of those concentrated in Sheruport and scattered corporate enclaves) and settled for less than 100 years has a lot of unexplored territory. There is always the possibility that some hitherto-unknown life-form or local condition could be the basis for a whole new industry. Or adventure.

Accordingly, the megacorp(s) do sponsor exploration teams, either corporate or (more often) independent contractors.

Travellers going overland on Sheru (or forced down by a blizzard-storm) could be trapped during the freezing night for an arctic-survival adventure. Taking shelter in a homestead could cause problems with the locals—there is an unwritten custom of hospitality to strangers during the night/storm, but there is also something called Cabin Fever. Or you could end up holed up in a homestead-cabin with a real Crazy Hermit... ❄️

In A Store Near You

The Showroom

Holmes-class Air/Raft

designed by Ewan Quibell

CraftID: Holmes Air/Raft, TL9, Cr 17,965
Hull: 1/2, Disp=1, Conf=4USL Open, Armor=1B, Loaded=5.9663 tons, Unloaded=1.6987 tons
Power: 1/2, MHD Turbine=0.885 Mw, Duration=5/15
Loco: 1/2, Standard Grav=7 ton, MaxAcel=1.134 G, NOE=40 kph, Cruise=225 kph, Top=300 kph,
Comm: Radio=Regional
Sensors: Radar=Distant, Headlights x2
Off: Hardpoints=1
Def: +2
Control: Panel=Electronic x2
Accom: Crew=1 (Driver), Seats=Cramped x4, Open Topped
Other: Fuel=2.7936 kliters, Cargo=1.294 kliters, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faint

The *Holmes* is the first Air/Raft offering from Inness Corporation from Pawel in the Home system. While the technology used is mature by Home standards the revelation is the use of a hydrocarbon turbine for the power source only made affordable due to the increased provision of biodiesel from New Home. While the fuel may be moderately expensive the cost of the *Holmes* is not.

Inness targets the *Holmes* at the family market where the freedom of an air/raft license gives the ability to travel around Home as needed, visiting relatives, going on holiday, or the daily commute.

Inness offer a no-frills version of the *Holmes* without the radio or the radar for Cr 16,265. ❄️

Denizens II: Biaxial System

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Denizens II: Biaxial System. Travis Leichssenring et alia.

K Studio http://dtrpg.com?manufacturers_id=2843

96pp., PDF

US\$14.00/UK£8.75

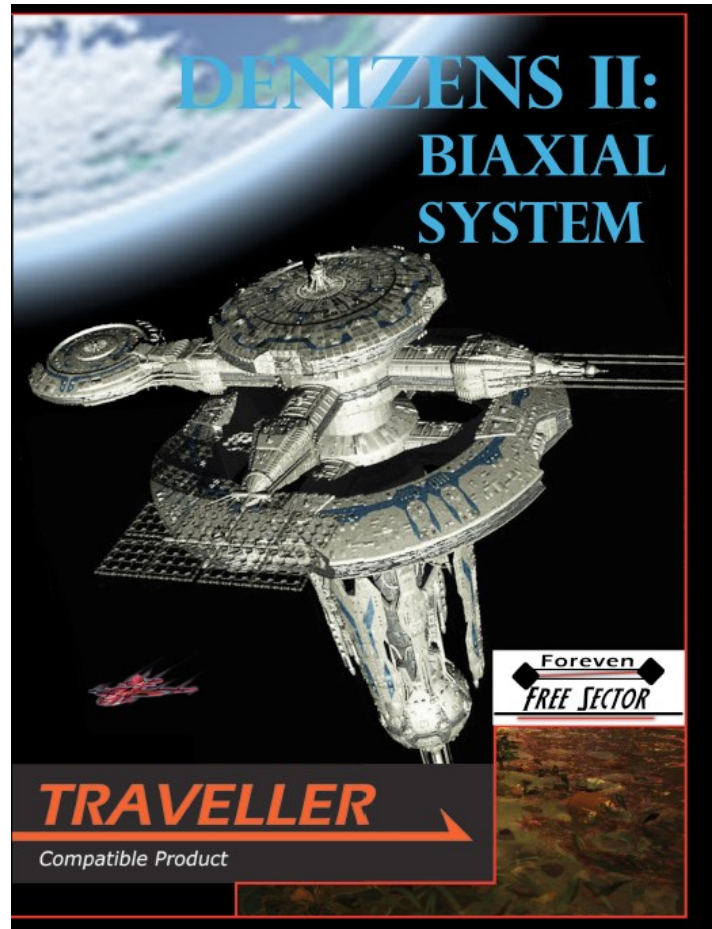
Denizens II: Biaxial System details a single world in Foreven Sector. It is written for Mongoose *Traveller*, but can easily be adapted for other editions.

K Studio's previous volume in this series, *Denizens I*, focused on characters. Despite the implications of "Denizens II" in the title, the focus in this work is not on characters; rather, this is a sourcebook providing an overview of the world of Biaxial and its highport. You get a reasonably good overview of the culture and history of the world, certainly enough to provide good 'flavor' for an adventure, with details left to the referee to suit the needs of the campaign. There are some organizational problems with the writing; several topics that should reasonably be separate paragraphs are often run together and/or intermixed in a single paragraph.

Profiles of two characters are provided. A standard résumé and picture are provided for each, along with color text similar to what you might find in the original *JTAS* "Casual Encounter" section, or *Free-lance Traveller's* "Up Close and Personal" section.

The Library Data section makes for interesting reading, and provides a few useful animal encounters. Some extensive entries on two martial arts and an order of warrior monks make up the bulk of this section. As interesting as this section is, it somehow left me feeling unsatisfied; perhaps more entries would have helped.

The bulk of the volume is the section on ships, which is really a section on Biaxial Highport. Plenty of information is provided, without turning it into a stifling and restrictive setting, and leaving enough detail unspecified so that a referee could customize it to the needs of his own campaign—which need not be set at Biaxial. Some of it reads like a tourist brochure, but you do get a sense of what you might



expect to find in such a place, from living quarters to entertainments. Some of the text, such as the section on the Ranatu, might have been better included in the Library Data section. Complete deckplans are provided, along with specs and plans for two small craft, a 20-dton launch and a 90-dton shuttle. The detailed deck plans for the highport take up just about half of the section.

Many of the illustrations have that not-quite-photographic look that has come to signal a lot of time spent on modeling for high-quality renders—well-spent, in this case; they add to the product.

Overall, a nice supplement, worth having even if you don't play at Biaxial; most of the information here can easily be tweaked to fit the needs of virtually any campaign. The authors have clearly put a lot of thought into the development of the world as a setting, and presented it well. Some professional editing help would have improved the product, but that's true of most products in an industry that operates on shoestring margins. ❁

Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
- what you think of the articles we publish
- how we can make our magazine better
- how we can make our website better
- what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
- what you think of our look
- how we can make it better

Please, give us your opinion! We've provided several ways you can do so:

- e-mail: feedback@freelancetraveller.com.

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.
- Forums:
Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg-discussion.net/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.

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!

You can also run "play-by-IRC" game sessions in either channel; please stop in and ask one of the channel operators (FreeTrav or EMT_Hawk) to schedule it, so we can ensure that the 'bridge' and the 'bartender' are set into a nondisruptive mode.

Please watch the Traveller Mailing List, the Mongoose Traveller forum, and the Lone Star section of the Citizens of the Imperium forum for announcements of Topical Talks!

Information Center: Request for Information

Here is a list of all of those publishers that we are aware of that are currently putting out material for *Traveller* (any version) or *Traveller*-compatible material not specifically for *Traveller* (this list is based on products that the editor owns, and notifications from "follow your favorites" from DriveThruRPG). If you know of others, or if any of those on this list are not in fact currently operating/publishing, please write and let us know. We'd also appreciate either lists or pointers to lists of all of the *Traveller* and *Traveller*-compatible material put out by any of these companies, or any companies that we may have omitted from the list. If you have contact information, we'd appreciate that as well.

List of Traveller/compatible Publishers

3Hombres Games
Avalon Game Company
Avenger Enterprises
Christian Hollnbuchner
D.B. Design Bureau
DSL Ironworks
Expeditious Retreat Press

FarFuture Enterprises
Forever People
Game Designers' Workshop(!)
Gorgon Press
Gypsy Knights Games
Jon Brazer Enterprises
K-Studio
Loren Wiseman Enterprises
Mongoose Publishing
Postmortem Studios
QuikLink Interactive
Samardan Press
Sceaptune Games
Scrying Eye Games
Spellbook Software and Games
Spica Publishing
Steve Jackson Games
Terra/Sol Games
Toxic Bag Productions
Zoyer Games

Submission Guidelines

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

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

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

What about ...

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

...Hyperlite?

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

... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” or supported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold

the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

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

What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

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

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

If you're submitting a graphic that you'd like to see us use for a cover of an issue, please make sure that it will fit nicely on both US Letter and ISO A4 pages—we'll crop the picture to fit, to avoid distorting shapes, so please leave reasonable “margins”; don't run “critical” imagery right to the edge where it will look bad if we crop it. A good resolution is 100 dpi or more.

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

How do I get it to you?

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

