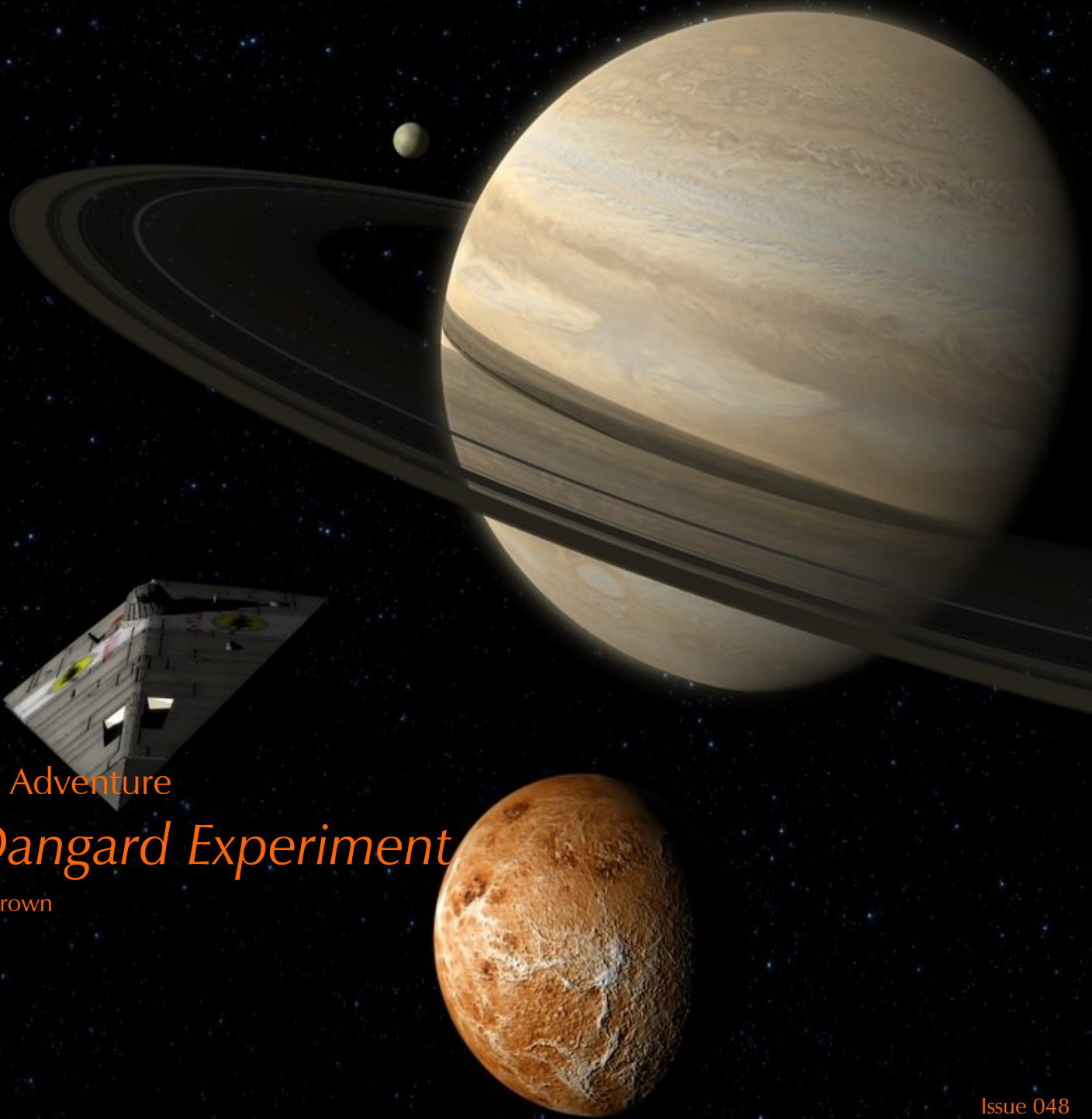




FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured Adventure

The Dangard Experiment

by Michael Brown

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.

The title and heading typeface is ZapfHumanist BT, a Bitstream adaptation of Hermann Zapf's digital redesign of his 'hot lead' typeface Optima, chosen as a 'tie-back' to the title typeface of the original edition of *Traveller*. The black-and-orange of the section headings is also a tie-back to *Traveller's* origins, though we felt that the 'correct' red was too dark. The heading sizes vary from 12 to 16 points. Body text is set in Palatino Linotype, also designed by Hermann Zapf, and is set at 11 points for most body text, giving approximately the same text spacing as Times New Roman at 12 point (which was the original *Freelance Traveller* body text), but a lighter 'color'. Palatino Linotype also 'balances' better as a body text typeface to Optima as a titling typeface.

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Freelance Traveller #048: December 2013

Editor

Jeff Zeitlin

Contributors

Jeff Zeitlin, “kafka”, Timothy Collinson, Michael Brown, Ian Malcomson, Dan Long, Keith Tims, Ken Murphy, Ewan Quibell

Artwork

Cover: *Andrew Boulton*

From the Editor: *Jeff Zeitlin*

The Shipyard: *Keith Tims*

Critics' Corner: *Mongoose Publishing*.

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From the Editor



Last month, I discussed “New Wave” SF, the phenomenon of the “Mary-Sue”, asserted that the player-character in any RPG was, in a sense, ‘the ultimate “Mary-Sue”’, and closed by saying that *Traveller* gives the player more leeway to play a character whose prior career conformed more closely to the player’s tastes and inclinations.

The leeway comes from the very design of *Traveller's* character generation system; the point is less to build a “Scout character” (or a character specifically from any other service, including ‘Other’) than it is to build a set of skills. Careers offer more than that—they serve as a framework to hang a character biography on, for example—but it’s principally the skills that are used in play, and if you get into a situation where using a handgun is necessary to salvage the operation, it doesn’t matter whether you got the handgun skill from being a Marine or being a Law Enforcer.

The conformance to the player’s tastes also comes from the design of the system—it is normally the player who chooses the character’s career, and often the specific track through the career. Sometimes, house rules can even grant the player extra control over specific skills gained, and then, of course, there are the wide variety of third-party and ‘house’ careers as well. All this, taken together, enables the ‘ultimate “Mary-Sue”-ness’ of characters.

So how is the player-character ‘the ultimate “Mary-Sue”’? “Mary-Sue” characters are most often seen when authors insert themselves into badly-written fan fiction, usually as the character that manages to heroically solve the problems, or at least deliver the key insight and earn the eternal gratitude of the hero. Player-characters are in the campaign to solve problems—the campaign is, after all, a series of problems seeking solutions. I have known very few campaigns where the players could and would take the time to analyze how the character would



Supplement 13: Starport Encounters

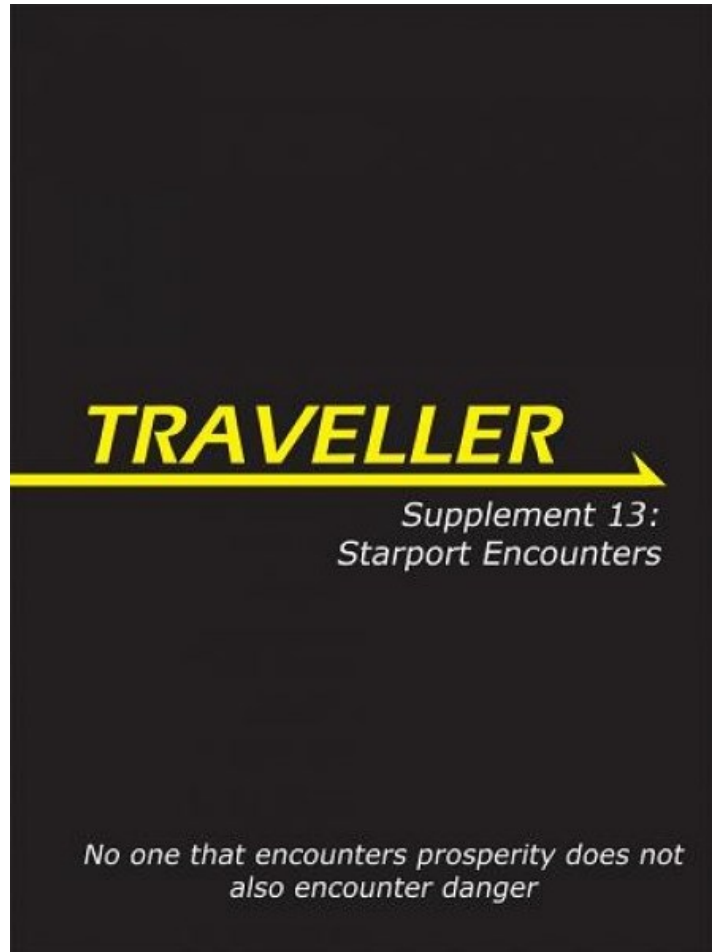
reviewed by Timothy Collinson

Supplement 13: *Starport Encounters*. Andy and Sarah Lilly.
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
125pp.
US\$24.99/UK£16.99

This could reasonably have been called *303 Starport Encounters* as it's essentially a reprint of the three BITS books, *101 Starcrews*, *101 Cargos*, and *101 Travellers*. Full marks to the authors, husband-and-wife team Andy and Sarah, for bringing back into publication such a massively useful volume; not so many marks to Mongoose Publishing for failing to mention its heritage either online before purchase, or even within the volume itself. The only clue to its origin is the copyright statement. Buyer beware!

Given that there's little content change, it would be easy to simply point to previous reviews of these books and leave it at that. For reference, see my own reviews *Freelance Traveller* reviews for *101 Cargos* or *101 Travellers*, or Ewan Quibell's *JTAS* review of *101 Starcrews*, or Robert Prior's joint *JTAS* review of *101 Cargos* and *101 Travellers* (note that these last two are behind a paywall). However, there are some useful things to be said about this latest incarnation and this review will look at the PDF version of the book. [Note: The prices above are for the print edition, which appears to be hardbound.]

Starting with the cover, this fits into the Mongoose supplement series with an all-black cover and yellow lettering and stripe. It is Supplement 13 and the strapline is the rather unwieldy and not very true: 'No one that encounters prosperity does not also encounter danger'. Of course, one of the things that is lost in translation are the three covers of the original BITS books. This isn't hugely important or unexpected, but it's a shame that one of this reviewer's favourite *Traveller* illustrations is thereby lost! (A dodgy looking crew if ever there was one, in Blix Highport looking as if they mean business. For those who don't know it—and it's worth checking out—it is a cleverly costumed and photoshopped image of



the authors' game group.) There is no formal back cover in the PDF.

The text itself is divided into five sections: a one page introduction and a four page collection of Library Data sandwiching the three main chapters. First up is *Starcrews*, which is the largest section at 41 pages and covers 101 crews of a variety of starships. The original division of scouts/couriers (28 examples), traders (49), other ships (9) and naval ships (15) is maintained and this provides lots of examples of the kinds of vessels characters are most likely to meet. Each entry lists the crew with their name and position on the ship. (One of the oddest features of this new edition is that quite often the order the crew is presented in has been revised for no very apparent reason. By far the most changes involve engineers who've either been promoted or demoted.) Then we're told how many passengers there are of each kind (high, middle, low), what cargo is likely to be on board, and a description of the exterior of the vessel. Referee notes then give details

(Continued from page 2)

on the ship and its crew and a varying number of adventure seeds. Where other *Traveller* books might have focussed on the ship stats and roll-playing, this is clearly focussed on role-playing and adventure possibilities which is to be welcomed. Where there are variations on the 'standard' *Traveller* ships, these are mentioned in the Referees' notes. The original BITS version used icons to mark crew, passengers, cargo, etc., and a lot of abbreviations to conserve space. This larger Mongoose version dispenses with the icons and uses text instead and expands the crew position titles and ship name shortenings found in the text. This does make it all easier to read although the gender icons have gone so many names are ambiguous enough that the Referee will have to decide on male or female. The other piece of information no longer present is an icon indicating the general skill level of the crew member (elite, veteran, experienced or novice), which was a useful distinction, although some descriptions of the crew give certain clues as to their abilities. Other details can also be fleshed out using the handy tables at the start of the section, such as age, appearance, mentality, personality, honesty, and interests. One thing not been carried over from the original publication is the rather useful ship type summary table (as well as the index).

The second major section of the book changes the original BITS spelling of 'cargos' to 'cargoes' throughout, but contains the contents of the 2nd edition BITS book aside from the short section of Milieu 0 background material and a couple of examples of creating an adventure from a cargo. This section is 21 pages long and divides the cargos into Natural (18 examples), Processed (29) and Manufactured Resources (26), Information (20), and Novelties (11). Each cargo, and the sharp-eyed will note there are 104, simply consists of a title and a note of whether it's a major lot, minor lot or incidental cargo; whether there are any hazards associated with it; and then a paragraph or three describing the cargo and related issues or adventure possibilities. Like the

Starcrews section, the descriptions focus on game play value rather than getting bogged down in unnecessary statistics. The cargo section is preceded by some rules and tables for generating adventure ideas connected with the cargos and a system for generating shipping codes for marking cargos and their containers. It would have been good to see a handful of examples of shipping codes, but the system is easy enough to use and well described. The section concludes with tables for generating cargos randomly. Whether generating a cargo on the fly with the tables, or using the pre-generated ones, the Referee will find it very easy to quickly answer PC (or character) questions about what's available for shipping.

The third major section is Fellow Travellers, which takes 33 pages and divides into Middle Passengers (62 entries) and High Passengers (39). Each of those is further divided into individuals (41 mid/25 high), 2-4 individuals (12/7), and groups (9/7). Each entry gives a name or names, job, UPP, race, gender and age, equipment and cash, skills, a short introduction, a background, and 'play options'. Very occasionally these latter don't amount to very much, as the Xia and Helven Art-Nodul entries demonstrate. The skills, of course, have been revised from *Marc Miller's Traveller* to *Mongoose Traveller*, which means that their levels have been reduced accordingly and they've been modified where appropriate (e.g. Perception to Recon), but on occasion some seem to get lost in translation or perhaps just aren't considered appropriate (for example Grfuzg Gdenz losing any battledress ability). There aren't many, but when tasks are provided, these have also been changed to Mongoose rules.

Finally, Library Data collects various references from the book which give a little more background for some of the entries. If trade features in your campaign, these entries allow a little more description to flesh out certain people, corporation, animals and the like, regardless of setting or milieu. It also allows a shorthand mention of certain entities that are referred to more than once in various entries. What's more, one advantage of the three BITS books being

brought together is that there is more synergy in some of the crossovers from certain entries and this gives a nice connection which threads through the otherwise separate sections. Examples include Hot & Spicy, Hypnagene and the Dancing Insects of Thrarg. Hypnagene, as it happens, has also had its entry expanded from the older books.


All of the 306 entries make the book easy to pick up and use either in-game when the Referee needs something quickly to respond to a player question, or in preparing games when inspiration might be lacking. The introduction suggests that this kind of work can make a Referee appear “world class” to players asking the unexpected question mid-game and it certainly provides a vital help in this area. It's difficult to read the book for any length of time without wanting to try out an idea at the next gaming session or to come up with ways in which the brief material here might be developed.

Throughout the book there are 16 illustrations, recycled from previous Mongoose books such as *760 Patrons 2nd edition*, *Book 7: Merchant Prince, 2300AD*, and others. They're relevant to the text they appear beside, break up the text block and are well chosen.

Unfortunately the opportunity has not always been taken to correct the very occasional error in the original BITS books such as the repeated text in Thom Yood's entry, Lora Rurny's typo in his skills, two of the crews all having the same names (which seems unlikely even in an infinite universe) or the two identical ship descriptions (which does seem relatively possible). Even more unfortunately, some errors have been introduced such as *Beauty's Beast* gaining ten extra passengers or the 'Plagiwasp' entry in the Library Data section being out of alphabetical order—after the fashion of the library data in Little Black Book 9. Some entries manage both at once as in the Sun Lancer where 'Scout Corp' gets corrected to 'Scout Service' but an errant apostrophe has been introduced to 'ops'. Perhaps worse are the couple of crew members who appear to have gone AWOL in the intervening years or have been sacked: the owner/purser of the *Tux* and a steward on the

Danotzbe. Hopefully all of this can be corrected before the printed version.

Throughout there have been some stylistic changes from the original books. 'PC' has been revised to 'player' throughout despite not being the same thing at all. On the upside, a lot of 'quotes' have been removed which does improve readability but sometimes changes the meaning or loses some of the innuendo that was being implied. Exclamation marks have been considerably reduced which is perhaps no bad thing and unnecessary underlining has gone away. In the odd entry there has been a textual change, almost always a deletion. One thing that has been lost more significantly are the page number cross-references to other entries within the book and a couple of cross-references to other BITS books, which is perhaps understandable.

Those who own the original books will find nothing new here and should only buy this if they want the material in one handy volume, or perhaps want to encourage the authors to produce more in a similar vein. They may also want to keep the older books for subtle detail regarding starcrew genders and skill levels. Although this new book is generally aimed at referees, some players might find it helpful if they're running an 'Automatic campaign' for themselves as outlined in *Supplement 9: Campaign Guide* when this could easily generate ideas to pursue and adventures to be had. For Referees who've not seen the originals they will find this an invaluable source of ideas and inspiration. Whether used on-the-fly as a game progresses or whether you're planning ahead and just need a quick, pre-generated idea to save time or when inspiration fails to strike, there's much here to use, to delight, and even to amuse. If nothing else, it can be used as a source of *Traveller*-style names of humans, Vilani, Aslan and Vargr. While I won't be getting rid of my “little white books” anytime soon, I'll be keeping Supplement 13 close when writing or running an adventure and can only hope that this marks the start of Mongoose collecting other examples of the out-of-print BITS books. 



Redefining Hull Characteristics for Traveller: The New Era

by Ian Malcomson

The assumptions made in the descriptive text do not tally with the figures shown on the Hull Size table in *Fire, Fusion, and Steel* p.11. The relationship between Rate (tons of displaced liquid hydrogen) and Volume (cubic metres, or kilolitres) is obviously correct, for it assumes a simple equation (Rate × the volume of 1 ton of liquid hydrogen). But beyond this, the table fails.

For example, taking a Rate of 1, where 1 ton of liquid hydrogen occupies 14m³, gives a total internal volume of, obviously, 14m³. All calculations for material use and so forth assume a shell 1cm thick.

Thus the length (diameter) of a spherical hull should be equal to the diameter required to produce 14m³ in volume, plus 2cm. The following formulae are required:

$$Vol = \frac{4\pi r^3}{3} \quad r = \sqrt[3]{\frac{3 \times Vol}{4\pi}}$$

Where:

Vol is the volume of the sphere

r is the radius of the sphere

π is a constant equal to 3.142 (rounded)

Thus the length *L* of a sphere required to enclose 14m³ is 2.99m. Adding on the 1cm shell gives a grand total for the length of a spherical hull of 3.01m (rounded). Therein lies the first problem: the value of *L* listed for a hull rate of 1 is 3.2m, which would require a hull thickness of 10cm to achieve.

To calculate the material volume *MV*, the diameter of the hull (inclusive of the shell) is fed back into the spherical volume formula, and the enclosed volume is subtracted from the result. Using a diameter of 3.01, *MV* is thus calculated to be 0.28m³. If the initial calculation for the diameter of the enclosed hull is rounded from 2.99m to 3m (thus giving an overall value of *L* of 3.02m), then the value of *MV* would be 0.4m³ (rounding to one decimal place)—providing the value indicated on the table.

If the given value of *L* is used, *MV* comes to 3.16m—a far cry from that listed for *MV*.

MegaTraveller Compatibility

The *MegaTraveller* design sequences assume that one ton of liquid hydrogen occupies not 14m³, but 13.5m³ (a vessel with a UCP hull rating of 100 has an internal volume of 1,350m³—see the *Referee's Manual*). For those looking for better design compatibility between *Traveller: The New Era* and *MegaTraveller* (particularly useful when re-engineering *MegaTraveller* equipment under *Traveller: The New Era* rules), I suggest using this value of 13.5m³ in place of 14m³ when dealing with *Fire, Fusion, & Steel* volumes. For simplicity's sake, multiply all volume calculations expressed in terms of liquid hydrogen (including the volume of hydrogen fuel etc.) by 0.96 before applying it to your design.

The Formulaic Approach

Two approaches to the design of hulls can be used: the formulaic approach, providing more accurate results, or the table approach (coupled with interpolation) for a more easily referenced angle.

For the formulaic approach, start with the desired hull rate, then apply the following formulae:

$$Vol = 14 \times Rate$$

$$(Vol = 13.5 \times Rate \text{ for } MegaTraveller \text{ compatibility})$$

$$L = \left(2 \times \sqrt[3]{\frac{3 \times Vol}{4\pi}} \right) + 0.02$$

$$MV = \frac{4\pi \left(\frac{L}{2}\right)^3}{3} - Vol$$

$$VehicleMV = MV \times 1.7$$

The Table Approach

This approach follows the same manner as the published *Fire, Fusion, & Steel* rules, but replace the standard table with those on the next page.

Two tables are provided. One uses 14m³ *Traveller: The New Era* compatibility, the second 13.5m³ *MegaTraveller* compatibility. Vehicle *MV* is provided as an alternative to the Chassis Size table, *Fire, Fusion, and Steel* p.17.

Doing It My Way

Hull Size (1 ton LH ₂ =14m ³)						
Rate	Vol	MV	L	Vehicle_MV		
	1	14	0.28	3.01	0.48	
	2	28	0.45	3.79	0.76	
	3	42	0.59	4.33	1.00	
	4	56	0.71	4.77	1.21	
	5	70	0.82	5.13	1.40	
	6	84	0.93	5.45	1.58	
	7	98	1.03	5.74	1.75	
	8	112	1.13	6.00	1.92	
	9	126	1.22	6.24	2.07	
	10	140	1.31	6.46	2.22	
	15	210	1.71	7.39	2.91	
	20	280	2.08	8.14	3.53	
	25	350	2.41	8.76	4.09	
	30	420	2.72	9.31	4.62	
	35	490	3.01	9.80	5.12	
	40	560	3.29	10.25	5.60	
	45	630	3.56	10.65	6.05	
	50	700	3.82	11.03	6.49	
	55	770	4.07	11.39	6.92	
	60	840	4.31	11.72	7.33	
	65	910	4.55	12.04	7.73	
	70	980	4.78	12.34	8.13	
	75	1,050	5.00	12.63	8.51	
	80	1,120	5.22	12.90	8.88	
	85	1,190	5.44	13.17	9.25	
	90	1,260	5.65	13.42	9.61	
	95	1,330	5.86	13.66	9.96	
	100	1,400	6.06	13.90	10.30	
	200	2,800	9.62	17.50	16.35	
	300	4,200	12.60	20.04	21.43	
	400	5,600	15.27	22.05	25.95	
	500	7,000	17.71	23.75	30.11	
	600	8,400	20.00	25.24	34.00	
	700	9,800	22.17	26.57	37.68	
	800	11,200	24.23	27.78	41.19	
	900	12,600	26.21	28.89	44.55	
	1,000	14,000	28.11	29.92	47.79	
	2,000	28,000	44.62	37.69	75.86	
	3,000	42,000	58.47	43.14	99.39	
	4,000	56,000	70.82	47.48	120.40	
	5,000	70,000	82.18	51.15	139.71	
	6,000	84,000	92.80	54.35	157.76	
	7,000	98,000	102.84	57.21	174.83	
	8,000	112,000	112.42	59.82	191.11	
	9,000	126,000	121.60	62.21	206.72	
	10,000	140,000	130.45	64.43	221.76	
	20,000	280,000	207.06	81.18	352.00	
	30,000	420,000	271.31	92.92	461.23	
	40,000	560,000	328.66	102.27	558.73	
	50,000	700,000	381.38	110.17	648.34	
	60,000	840,000	430.66	117.07	732.12	
	70,000	980,000	477.27	123.24	811.36	
	80,000	1,120,000	521.70	128.85	886.89	
	90,000	1,260,000	564.31	134.01	959.33	
	100,000	1,400,000	605.37	138.80	1,029.14	
	200,000	2,800,000	960.94	174.87	1,633.60	
	300,000	4,200,000	1,259.17	200.17	2,140.59	
	400,000	5,600,000	1,525.37	220.32	2,593.12	
	500,000	7,000,000	1,770.02	237.33	3,009.03	
	600,000	8,400,000	1,998.77	252.19	3,397.91	
	700,000	9,800,000	2,215.10	265.49	3,765.66	
	800,000	11,200,000	2,421.32	277.57	4,116.25	
	900,000	12,600,000	2,619.10	288.69	4,452.48	
	1,000,000	14,000,000	2,809.68	299.01	4,776.46	

Hull Size (1 ton LH ₂ =13.5m ³)						
Rate	Vol	MV	L	Vehicle_MV		
	1	13.50	0.28	2.97	0.47	
	2	27.00	0.44	3.74	0.74	
	3	40.50	0.57	4.28	0.97	
	4	54.00	0.69	4.71	1.18	
	5	67.50	0.81	5.07	1.37	
	6	81.00	0.91	5.39	1.55	
	7	94.50	1.01	5.67	1.71	
	8	108.00	1.10	5.93	1.87	
	9	121.50	1.19	6.16	2.02	
	10	135.00	1.28	6.38	2.17	
	15	202.50	1.67	7.30	2.84	
	20	270.00	2.03	8.04	3.44	
	25	337.50	2.35	8.66	3.99	
	30	405.00	2.65	9.20	4.51	
	35	472.50	2.94	9.68	5.00	
	40	540.00	3.21	10.12	5.46	
	45	607.50	3.48	10.53	5.91	
	50	675.00	3.73	10.90	6.34	
	55	742.50	3.97	11.25	6.75	
	60	810.00	4.21	11.58	7.16	
	65	877.50	4.44	11.90	7.55	
	70	945.00	4.67	12.19	7.93	
	75	1,012.50	4.88	12.48	8.30	
	80	1,080.00	5.10	12.75	8.67	
	85	1,147.50	5.31	13.01	9.03	
	90	1,215.00	5.52	13.26	9.38	
	95	1,282.50	5.72	13.50	9.72	
	100	1,350.00	5.92	13.73	10.06	
	200	2,700.00	9.39	17.29	15.96	
	300	4,050.00	12.30	19.79	20.91	
	400	5,400.00	14.90	21.78	25.33	
	500	6,750.00	17.29	23.46	29.39	
	600	8,100.00	19.52	24.93	33.19	
	700	9,450.00	21.64	26.25	36.78	
	800	10,800.00	23.65	27.44	40.20	
	900	12,150.00	25.58	28.54	43.49	
	1,000	13,500.00	27.44	29.56	46.65	
	2,000	27,000.00	43.55	37.24	74.04	
	3,000	40,500.00	57.07	42.62	97.01	
	4,000	54,000.00	69.13	46.91	117.52	
	5,000	67,500.00	80.21	50.53	136.36	
	6,000	81,000.00	90.58	53.69	153.98	
	7,000	94,500.00	100.38	56.52	170.65	
	8,000	108,000.00	109.72	59.10	186.53	
	9,000	121,500.00	118.69	61.46	201.77	
	10,000	135,000.00	127.32	63.66	216.45	
	20,000	270,000.00	202.10	80.20	343.56	
	30,000	405,000.00	264.81	91.80	450.18	
	40,000	540,000.00	320.79	101.04	545.35	
	50,000	675,000.00	372.24	108.84	632.81	
	60,000	810,000.00	420.35	115.66	714.59	
	70,000	945,000.00	465.84	121.76	791.92	
	80,000	1,080,000.00	509.21	127.30	865.65	
	90,000	1,215,000.00	550.80	132.39	936.36	
	100,000	1,350,000.00	590.87	137.13	1,004.49	
	200,000	2,700,000.00	937.93	172.76	1,594.47	
	300,000	4,050,000.00	1,229.01	197.76	2,089.32	
	400,000	5,400,000.00	1,488.83	217.66	2,531.01	
	500,000	6,750,000.00	1,727.62	234.47	2,936.96	
	600,000	8,100,000.00	1,950.90	249.16	3,316.52	
	700,000	9,450,000.00	2,162.04	262.29	3,675.47	
	800,000	10,800,000.00	2,363.32	274.23	4,017.65	
	900,000	12,150,000.00	2,556.37	285.21	4,345.83	
	1,000,000	13,500,000.00	2,742.38	295.40	4,662.05	

Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 5)

In both preceding tables:

Rate is the displacement of the enclosed volume of the hull, in tons of liquid hydrogen

Vol is the volume of enclosed hull, useable for installation of equipment, in m^3

MV is the material volume of the hull's shell, assuming a shell thickness of 1cm, in m^3

L is the length of the hull (diameter for spheres), in m

Vehicle MV is the material volume of a vehicle's chassis, assuming a material volume multiplier MVM of 1.7

Material Volume and Hull Volume Usage

Because a hull thickness of 1cm has already been taken into consideration, through the formulae and the values on the tables, do not subtract total hull volume from the useable volume of the vessel if the hull has a thickness of 1cm.

Because additional hull plating does not affect a vessel's length, it is assumed to be added inside the useable volume of the vessel. Calculate the volume occupied by additional plating by working out the total volume of the hull as per the standard *Fire, Fusion, and Steel* rules, then subtract from this the volume of material required to plate the hull in a 1cm shell (basically, $MV \times$ hull configuration MVM). ☀



Active Measures

The Dangard Experiment

by Michael Brown

Synopsis: The PCs must locate the long-lost sibling of a dying noblewoman.

Setting: Initially, any Imperial world in the Spinward Marches with a trade classification of Rich and a nearby world classified as Industrial. The action moves across the subsector and culminates on an isolated, backwater world designated by the referee (see below).

Equipment and Skills Required: A starship.

Act I: Observation

The PCs have made the acquaintance of an elegant and friendly noblewoman. Baroness Adamira Dangard is known planetwide for her generous charitable funding. During the conversation, she takes note of the team's obvious skills and talents and asks if she can take them into her confidence, as she has need of a capable group. She discloses that she has contracted a rare but deadly disease that under normal circumstances is treatable. Unfortunately, she is allergic to the drugs commonly used in the treatment. Her doctors have informed her that there is an alternative: if a close relative can be found, the necessary compounds can be synthesized from their

cells. The problem is that her only known living relative, her younger brother Stevvin, left home to pursue a career in the biosciences over 20 years ago and has not returned. The Baroness wants to hire the crew to find him and persuade him to come home. He would need to in any case—if anything happens to her, he is the only heir to the estate.

If the PCs agree, the Baroness pays a total of MCr1, deposited directly into the ship's account; this is intended to cover the crew's salaries (at standard rates; see *Book 2: Starships*), ship's operations, and expenses for a number of weeks. That number will depend on the type of ship: 43 weeks for a Type R fat trader; 58 weeks for a Type A free trader or Type A2 far trader; or 75 weeks for a Type S scout/courier. Expenses for other ship classes can be calculated per *Book 2*. The heroes are free to supplement the money through normal operations. If they return Stevvin alive, they may keep the balance of the account and enjoy a bonus of Cr250,000. If he is dead, and they can locate his remains, they should bring back whatever tissues samples they can; in that case, the Baroness pays half the bonus.

She urges the team to move quickly. Her doctors have been able to buy her time so far with outdated treatment methods, but they are running out of ide-

Active Measures

(Continued from page 7)

as and time. They can confirm that the Baroness is entering the last stages of the disease. A series of medical crises can occur at any time.

Each week, the referee throws 5+ to maintain her health. On an ordinary failure, she loses 1 END permanently. On a natural 2, she loses 2 END and must throw her original END or less to avoid a medical crisis. Crisis also occurs automatically once she has lost 1/2 of her original END in this manner. If she goes into crisis, the doctors stabilize her on a maintenance throw as above. Any failure at this point means the end of their effectiveness; afterwards, the Baroness automatically takes 1 hit to each STR, DEX and END per week until she dies. Since she is not accompanying the heroes, she is not detailed; the referee may set her END at whatever level fits the plot.

The referee can forego the entire procedure if the Baroness' passing is felt to be too dark for the adventure or she declines too quickly to suit the plot.

Before the team leaves, the Baroness' Chief of Staff, Varian Berghardt, supplies them with the only clues the Baroness has: some 20-year-old letters on a biotech company's letterhead. He adds confidentially that his own investigations have shown that Stevvin is most likely dead, and they are simply wasting their time. He has not told the Baroness because he did not want to trouble her further. Nevertheless, he wishes them good luck.

Act II: Variables

The letters are on the letterhead of Kasai-Shimara Amalgamated (KShA), a biotech company based on a nearby industrial world. The correspondences carry little information per se; just breezy updates of the younger Dangard's journey to the world, his settling into his new job, and observations of life on his new home. Medical-3+ can detect a subtle but dark undertone to some of the letters, hinting at some sort of inner turmoil.

KShA is a shadow of its former self. Once a player in the subsector's biotech industry, large swaths of it were bought up or plowed under by larger competitors such as SuSAG. KShA now owns only a few factories and its headquarters campus, all local.

If the group tries to speak to someone at KShA, the receptionist is polite, but has no knowledge of events that occurred before she was hired and sorry, they cannot view confidential company files. If they insist on speaking with her supervisor, they will get much the same response from him before they are hustled out of the office (by Security if necessary). As they leave, some of the heroes may (on a throw of 10+) see the supervisor place a comm call...

The group may try to get information by other means; the referee must determine the success of their efforts. Speaking with employees requires Reaction throws and means of access. $(1D+3) \times 10\%$ of Dangard's contemporaries have either passed away or moved offworld; the remainder may not remember details. Breaking into the building or the computer system carries the usual risks of encounters with guards and police. The PCs may learn the following:

- Dangard was initially assigned to the company's Medical Products division, and was later transferred to the Bioweapons division.
- There are indications that a large amount of computer files were deleted. Some can be rebuilt (throw 15+, DM: Computer, takes 7D hours) and point to expenditures from a black fund totaling in the hundreds of thousands. Others were itemized invoices for that could be used to maintain a neural controller (see below).
- An encrypted file (throw as above for rebuilding files to break the encryption) reveals a confidential psychological evaluation of Dangard. The examiner recommended that the company take Dangard off of confidential projects, citing his probability of a security risk.

If the team pursues their investigation by these means, they suffer an assault by ruffians as described at the end of Act II; even if a throw indicates

Active Measures

(Continued from page 8)

an attack would already take place that week; it simply counts as additional violence. The team may accuse the supervisor at KShA of it, but he is innocent (he was calling Personnel Records to make sure Dangard's records had been purged.) Under duress, he admits that Dangard was growing dangerously unbalanced. Repeated disciplinary actions were useless, so Dangard was terminated. The company took him to court; the files should be available in the planetary capital (supply Rumor R below.)

As the adventurers proceed in their mission, they may pick up information that helps point them to their goal, leads them astray or gets them in trouble. Each week, the group hears a rumor on 7+; if successful, a throw of 1D+1D on the table below determines what they learn. Not all the data is true; some are outright lies, and others are highly subjective. Each clue or rumor should only be used once, except for the General rumors, which may be used multiple times, changed slightly with each use:

Rumor Selection Table						
White (2nd) Die	Red (1st) Die					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	A	B	C	D	E	F
2	G	U	U	W	W	H
3	I	U	Y	Y	W	J
4	K	X	Z	Z	V	L
5	M	X	X	V	V	N
6	O	P	Q	R	S	T

DMs (red die only): Ex-Rogue, -2; ex-Pirate or Streetwise skill, -1; if in Imperial space, +1.

Specific Rumors (Use Once Only)

- A. Several rough-looking individuals at a table in a Startown bar are overheard discussing the exploits of a smuggler named Rolf Thanhsson and his final fate. If asked, the barflies may regale the group with tales of Thanhsson and his ship, the *Devil Kathleen*.
- B. During the Fifth Frontier War, smuggling in the Marches hit an all-time high. After the war,

some otherwise-honest ship captains discovered the "small package trade" often helped maintain ship budgets.

- C. Despite having long ago been tamed, the Marches still have a lot of places where it's easy to avoid Imperial entanglements. Astrographically isolated or sparsely populated worlds are ideal.
- D. An Imperial bulletin is still active for sightings of the far trader *Devil Kathleen*, last seen in the Rashev (Foreven 3230) system.
- E. A listing of ships declared missing lists several that have been listed for more than 15 years: *Kestrel*, *Ashtoreth Voyager*, *Devil Kathleen*, *Gatekeeper*, *Orca Princess*, and *Gladiator's Heart*.
- F. A ratty-looking youth heard the party is looking for someone named Dangard and claims he can show them where he is. The youth instead leads the PCs into a robbery attempt. The number of thugs equals the number of PCs plus 3, all armed with knives.
- G. Foreven is the sector immediately spinward of the Marches. One of the systems, Alenzar, is the origin of the dreaded chamax.
- H. A book recounting the experience of a past adventuring crew with the chamax is found in an old bookstore. The story is a combination of the ones found in *Double Adventure 5: The Chamax Plague/Horde*. Tucked inside the work is an old Imperial bulletin briefing citizens on spotting signs of chamax infestation.
- I. The *Devil Kathleen* was seen most often seven years ago in the rimward half of the Darrian Subsector. Her captain seemed to base out of Kardin (Spinward Marches 0429) for a while.
- J. A recipient of an implanted neural controller (who is obviously addicted to its use) swears to their harmlessness. The Imperial government's reaction to them is all just an attempt to control the citizens' rights.
- K. "Small package trade" is slang for smuggling.
- L. Library Data: Agglutithel (see below)

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Active Measures

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- M. Certain creatures possess specialized biological mechanisms sensitive to certain radio frequencies. The best-known are the chamax, the deadly arachnoid creatures from Chamax, a world in the Alenzar system (Foreven 3229).
- N. Kardin (Spinward Marches 0429) is a poor, non-industrial world in the backwater rimward portion of Darrian subsector with a population of less than 100 people.
- O. A retired naval officer who on Raschev (Foreven 3230) during the Chamax Invasion exasperatingly declares that someone should find out where the bugs came from and nuke the place until it turns to glass.
- P. Most biotech companies have at some point tried to develop new and more effective bioweapons. Despite the horrible consequences of unleashing such weapons on civilization, they are very lucrative.
- Q. The crew discovers an old Traveller News Service account of the lawsuit against Dangard. The article is short on specifics, but mentions the charges and the fact that he fled the planet on a merchant ship before his trial.
- R. Court records show that Kasai-Shiimara sued Dangard for misappropriation of company property (a biosynthetic substance called Agglutithel) and malfeasance (for using research funds to pay for smuggling activities.) Charges of industrial espionage and threatening violence were pending, but Dangard fled before trial.
- S. Several worlds near the Imperium's spinward borders have reported problems with young people becoming addicted to illegal neural controllers smuggled in from outside Imperial space.
- T. The group discovers a copy of an old Imperial bulletin. The active hunt for Dangard expired ten years ago, but the reward is probably still payable (Cr5000) if new information is offered.

General Rumors (Multiple Uses)

- U. Cross-border smuggling is a big problem in the Marches. Many ship captains have fallen for the allure of making extra credits in the "small package" trade.
- V. The problem with smugglers has been way overblown. Since the end of the Fifth Frontier War, Imperial authorities have been too busy with reconstruction to chase after petty contraband runners.
- W. Library Data: Chamax (see below).
- X. The Foreven Sector is spinward of Imperial space. About one-third of the sector is claimed by either the Zhodani Consulate or the Avalar Consulate.
- Y. After the near-destruction of Raschev (Foreven 3230) by chamax, the Imperium instituted protocols calling for the destruction of the creatures on sight by any able-bodied citizen.
- Z. The Imperial Navy is ignoring backwater systems in favor of patrolling more settled portions of the sector with an eye toward more closely monitoring free trade.

The referee may grant the group additional knowledge as he or she sees fit; either extra rumors from the table or by generating new rumors that fit the goals of the adventure.

Also, each week beginning on the week after the team leaves the Baroness' world, the referee should throw 9+ for the group to be beaten up by 1D+3 thugs armed in deadliness to the planetary Law Level-1 (cudgels at a minimum). The cause is an x-boat message from Berghardt to criminal elements on the world the PCs are likely to visit. In each instance, the assailants conceal their identities and have no knowledge of who hired them. They do not kill the group, but anything short of that goes, and they deliver the same message each time: "Mind your own business," or similar. If the PCs win, surviving attackers disperse.

After six weeks, use the encounter in Act III below instead of the throw to determine an assault.

Act III: Trials

Active Measures

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After six weeks, the group should be getting a pretty good idea of what Dangard was up to and what happened to him. It is also when a new figure enters the proceedings, having failed to quietly derail the PCs' investigation.

An attack by thugs occurs automatically that week, but this time the number of assailants is double the indicated number. Presiding over the violence is a familiar figure: Varian Berghardt. He explains that the PCs are wrecking his efforts to gain control of Baroness Dangard's estate. Her brother's disappearance forced her to rewrite her will; since she has no heirs, she left everything to her faithful Chief of Staff. But if Stevvin Dangard were to turn up alive, under Imperial law the estate would automatically go to him. Berghardt is not about to let this happen.

Still, he does not want a murder charge. Obviously if the baroness were to meet with foul play, evidence would eventually doom him to a prison planet. By the same token, he cannot simply do the travelers in. Instead, he has his hooligans drug them with hypos and smuggle them to the starport in a cargo container. The idea is to ship them to a remote world. By the time they get themselves out of the situation, the Baroness will doubtless have passed away and Berghardt will have the estate.

Berghardt's goons will hustle the team onto an outbound freighter locked in a cargo container of electronics parts. The powerful drugs given them keep them out for 8 hours. Each hour afterward, they may throw END or less to come to. By this time, there is two hours until the ship takes off; they have that long to escape. Shouts for help are unlikely to be heard, but they have the electronic parts, and hopefully PCs with Electronic skill. There is also the chance that Berghardt did not capture all of the adventurers, which gives them outside help. Other ideas may occur to the players.

If the team fails to escape the container in time, they find themselves sidetracked by a week-long

jump to a backwater world and also a freighter crew understandably upset at finding a band of stowaways aboard their vessel.

If the PCs break out of the trap in time, they will not catch up to Berghardt right away; he is already on his way back to the Baroness' side. Their best bet to defeat him is to locate Dangard as soon as possible.

Act IV: Constants

For the endgame, the referee should designate a world with the following parameters: Atmosphere 5-9, Hydrographics 5+, Population 4-, and starport type E or X. Preferably the world should be an isolated backwater which is not a member of an interstellar state. It can be interdicted, although the referee will have to determine the particulars of the interdiction.

While in orbit, the ship's sensors will detect a power source and a high concentration of refined metals in an extensive swamp. No other such readings are in the area. Thick vegetation makes it impossible for the team to land their ship nearby. The nearest suitable space is 1D kilometers away. Of course, the group could simply fly over the site and launch an auxiliary vehicle to be picked up later.

During the journey, the referee is encouraged to create an animal encounter table per the rules in *Book 3* and check for such.

Even through the choking undergrowth, the team should recognize the lines of a Type A2 Far Trader. Plants and muck have obscured most of the markings, but the words "Devil Kathleen" are just barely visible near the bow. The airlock has been kept clear of obstructions.

The immediate area is scattered with pieces of broken equipment, piles of trash, and small animal carcasses in varying stages of decomposition. Observant PCs note that some of the surrounding vegetation has suffered severe acid damage at times, and there is evidence of laser burns in various places.

As the team explores the area, two battered warbots (see below) attack them. These devices constantly patrol the site and are programmed to attack anything massing 65 kg or larger. The robots do not

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Active Measures

(Continued from page 11)

treat and fight until they or their opponents are destroyed. The battle is heard inside the ship on a 9+ (DM: +4 if explosives are involved) and the element of surprise is lost.

The team must decide how they get into the ship; they should consider that most methods used to force open an iris valve involve a certain amount of noise.

Inside, the layout is of a typical Far Trader, with deviations noted below. The referee will need to refer to a set of deck plans:

Staterooms: Several have literally not been entered in years. Their contents have been left in their previous states; the team may find a small amount of valuables at the referee's discretion. The Captain's stateroom is the exception: it has obviously been lived in, with personal possessions, handwritten notes, clothing and small pieces of equipment scattered about. A digital diary belonging to Stevvin Dangard is on the night table, containing entries up until the previous day. According to the diary, for the past five years he has been pursuing several avenues of research involving some dangerous but unidentified creature, and is apparently close to success.

Bridge: This area has been entered only sporadically, and has only received the level of maintenance a novice using the ship's manual would render. The referee must determine if this adds up to a detrimental level of neglect, and whether it is irreparable.

Cargo Hold: Part of the hold is occupied by extra fuel tankage; the rest has been converted into a laboratory. Although the equipment is somewhat outdated, it appears to be capable of some very sophisticated biological research and bioengineering.

Along the bulkheads are 20 low berths, of the type intended for the transport of pets or small livestock, containing vaguely arachnid creatures with toothed maws. Any PC may throw INT or less to have heard news reports about the chamax (see below).

A quick examination of the low berth controls reveals that the low berths are functioning properly and are keeping the beasts in stasis. Half of the berths are rigged for simultaneous quick-release, with heating elements attached that sends the temperature in the berths to 27 °C in a matter of seconds. The modifications are easy to disconnect, if desired.

If the team maintains the element of surprise, they find Dangard in the lab. At the first opportunity, he uses a remote control to summon his robots (if they have not been disabled) and release the chamax from their berths, although they will not be under computer control. If they do not surprise him, he prepares for them by moving to the engine room, where he accesses a computer link to awaken the chamax and activate their computer control. The bugs' behavior (tactical, rather than mindless), may clue in astute PCs that a computer is involved. Jamming the radio signals or disrupting the computer itself returns the beasts' behavior to normal.

If the PCs capture Dangard, they quickly realize that he is quite insane. He holds no feeling for his sister, but he gladly rants to anyone who will listen about "the work" and about how "those blind fools will finally acknowledge my brilliance!"

Act V: Conclusion

With Dangard's capture, all that is left is to return him to the Baroness' estate. The Baroness, if she is still alive, is overjoyed to see her brother again (although he will not acknowledge her) and will gladly pay off as promised. There are other rewards the group can collect: the Baroness may become a source of employment for the group in the future, and will certainly recommend them to others in her circle with need of their skills. The reward for information leading to Dangard's arrest (Rumor T above) is still payable, although the Baroness will offer double that for them to forego collecting it. The Devil Kathleen can be made spaceworthy with a few weeks' hard work, but the group may have trouble cashing in on it; she is still listed as missing in offi-

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Active Measures

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cial astrotime reports and technically she is a crime scene. The authorities will have many questions.

Dangard had little in the way of valuables, and even his equipment is years out of date. His bioengineering notes and computer records are valuable to certain biotech firms (primarily SuSAG), but anyone with a sense of morality would destroy such items. The galaxy is not ready for the concept of chamax as weapons.

Berghardt disappears once he discovers that his plot has fallen apart. The Baroness expresses regret for his actions and makes good on whatever damage he caused them. If the adventure is part of an ongoing campaign, he may become a recurring enemy for the adventurers.

Supplemental Data

NPCs

Varian Berghardt 6768B5; 6 terms; Age 42; Cr80,000
Bureaucrat; Chief of Staff, House Dangard
Admin-4, Recruiting-1, Air/raft-1, Brawling-2, Body
Pistol-1

Stevvin Dangard 665EDB; 7 terms; Age 53; Cr52,000
Scientist
Computer-2, Electronic-1, Auto Pistol-1, Medical-1,
Air/raft-1
Auto Pistol

Brilliant but insane, Dangard's years of living alone in the swamp have taken a toll on his health. He carries his auto pistol on him at all times; he even keeps it under his pillow while sleeping.

Dangard's Story: While working in KShA's Bio-weapons division, Dangard had an idea to use the chamax as a controlled weapon. He was confident he could fit the creatures with implants that would allow them to be controlled by a tactical computer. The implants are illegal wireless neural interfaces (see Library Data below), smuggled in from a non-Imperial world by Rolf Thanhsson on the *Devil Kathleen* and coated in Agglutithel, a synthetic biomaterial developed by KShA that negates tissue rejection.

The company, appalled at the moral implications of the project, sacked Dangard and took him to court. Dangard skipped the planet before trial. Reestablishing his operations on Kardin to take advantage of its large isolated areas, he forged ahead using Thanhsson to obtain more neural controllers and more chamax samples from the nearby world of Rashev. When Imperial agents investigating neural controller smuggling got too close, Dangard packed up and moved to a backwater world in a neighboring sub-sector. With his work nearing the final stages, and no longer needing Thanhsson and his crew, Dangard tricked them into hiding the ship and then killed them. He has been hidden ever since, slowly descending further into madness and obsession with his deadly charges. His work is nearly finished, but he has another, even more sinister research project planned: creating a species of smart chamax! According to his notes, he is getting promising preliminary results.

Other Encounters

Zhodani Warbots (Tech Level F) CDD200

Laser Rifle-1, Tactics-1

Laser Rifle (200 shots); equivalent of Mesh Armor

Dangard uses two battered Zhodani warbots that belonged to Thanhsson's crew as bodyguards. While capable of some degree of autonomy, they must be extensively reprogrammed to perform anything more than basic attack and defense. The stats above reflect the robots' current condition, not top-of-the-line models. More information can be found in *Alien Module 4: Zhodani*.

Chamax: Chamax are mindless, rapacious creatures that were responsible for the destruction of their homeworld and the invasion of a neighboring world. Chamax are among of the deadliest creatures known. Aggressive Hunters seek out and consume any organic matter, also using it to feed their queen, or Maternal. They attack by grasping victims with large claws; then delivering a bite with their toothed maw; and on subsequent rounds, ejecting a jet of acid. The acid hits automatically and does 1D cumulative

Active Measures

(Continued from page 13)

tive per round until the animal or its prey is dead. Hunters also use their acid attack to destroy barriers between them and intended prey.

	Mass	Hits	Armor	Wounds & Weapons
Chamax Hunter	50kg	12*/0	Cloth	2D-3 teeth, acid (above) A2F0S2

*Due to spongy tissue, chamax are only killed by attacks delivering 12+ points of damage at once. Such attacks rupture the creatures' acid sacs, causing an explosion of acid doing 3D to nearby creatures.

Created by J. Andrew Keith and William H. Keith, Jr. Information above from Double Adventure 5: The Chamax Plague/Horde, (GDW, 1981)

Library Data

Agglutithel: A biosynthetic tissue developed originally by Kasai-Shiimara Amalgamated (KShA) as a universal transplant and integumentary healing medium. While still undergoing clinical trials, the

project was scrapped when SuSAG bought out many of KShA's facilities and patents.

Chamax: A now-dead world in the Alenzar system (Foreven 3229), and the name of destructive life forms that originate from there. A now-extinct race of sophonts which lived there was destroyed when an extermination program wiped out a species of carnivore that kept a rapacious arachnid animal in check. The resulting infestation by the "bugs" wiped out all life on the planet. The animals briefly threatened a neighboring world, having spread there on sublight arks, before being stopped.

Neural Controller: An implanted device that allows the user to control computer systems without use of an input device such as a keyboard or holographic interface. The user uses neural impulses to manipulate computer functions. Some models allow this to be done wirelessly. Neural controllers are illegal in the Imperium for their proven use in criminal activity and for their uncomfortable resemblance to Zhodani psionic technology. 🌐

Confessions of a Newbie Referee

Timothy Collinson

#6: Handouts

by Timothy Collinson

Last month I mentioned the handouts I'd produced for the Second Scions' Society adventure: Noble dilettantes—second sons and daughters of Counts and Countesses—and what happened at one of their get-togethers.

I'd put together six double-sided character sheets (standard Mongoose form on one side, biography, servant details, and PC relationships on the reverse). A page on roleplaying nobles, a page for one PC on Vilani. A page on servants. A page on clothing. A page on duelling (just in case!). A map of Core sector marking 91 counties. A map from Core sector of the six PC counties and the adventure setting. A sheet of Library Data. A page of 'things to do' for character actions between the main scenes (I'd refrained from turning each paragraph into ac-

tual tourist brochures which was possible and tempting!). Table-sized deckplan of a noble yacht part of the adventure would be set on. A booklet of yacht description so the relevant scion could give a tour. Three standard yacht deckplans for other PCs (not strictly relevant). A booklet describing the main highport setting. Four sided booklet of plants* that the highport was known for (some PCs were tasked with collecting a rare plant). An auction room floorplan. Three days of stock market prices for those with share portfolios. A terrorist 'statement'. A menu. Three sets (news, social and servant) of six rumours. And of course *the* handout—a 40-page glossy auction catalogue of 66 auction lots, a biography of their former owner and maps of his travels and exploration.

Now, not all of this was given to the players at the start, some appeared as the game progressed. But a fair bit was in the initial set up and I must ad-

Confessions of a Newbie Referee

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mit that it was somewhat overwhelming for them. Experienced referees would have seen this coming a mile off but it only dawned me as players began to react to the wealth of information. Indeed, one was brave enough to admit that he wasn't a great reader and would have loved all this—but a week before! It probably would have worked quite well in a campaign where some of it (characters and role playing notes for example) would have been well known previously, but in a Convention game of six hours it was difficult. Logistically preparing them all and keeping track of them nearly overwhelmed me as

well. (And I needed two sets to run the game twice—I hate asking for character sheets back).

However, near the start I'd planned a bit of live-action for each PC in turn, and as they took their turns it gave a chance to graze through the paperwork. That probably saved the day. Also a bonus, the players, once settled down, had a great sense of presence and the feel of a 'real' world. I should say that the auction catalogue went down very well with all twelve players taking theirs away. But all told: never again!

* One experienced referee took one look at this and said "this will supply all the plants I'll need for Traveller games for the rest of my life". ☼



Critics' Corner

The Third Imperium: Solomani Rim

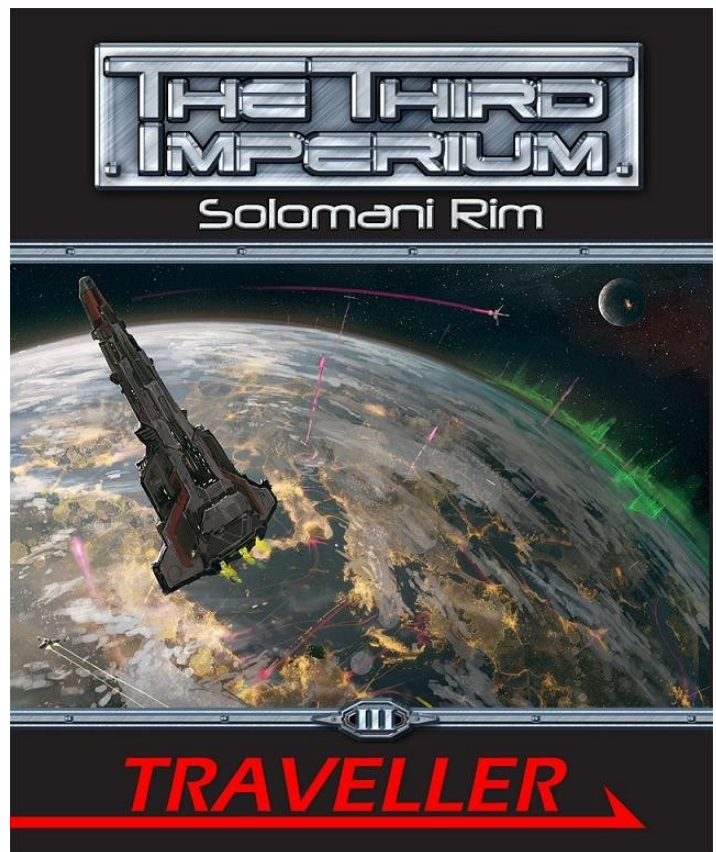
reviewed by "kafka"

The Third Imperium: Solomani Rim. David L. Pulver
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
118pp.
US\$24.99/UK£16.99

This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in October 2012, and is reprinted with permission.

This sector book occupies a special place in my heart, as do all books that deal with Earth in the future. Humanity has moved on in the *Traveller* universe. However, Earth is not a backwater planet amid the stars that make up this sector but a flash point between two great interstellar polities: the Third Imperium and the Solomani Confederation.

So what does this book contain that *Alien Module 5: Solomani* does not? First and foremost, a point of view that is not from the clouded perspective of the Solomani as much of the Sector is under Imperial occupation—the worlds are hotbeds of strife and submerged conflicts between the two powers. Thus, what we get is a lot of history revolving around the two central antagonists: Vilani and Solomani. This is certainly one view of history shared by the Solomani—a racial *Kulturkampf* that echoes throughout the history of the Imperial Campaign. However, there is



another narrative that is touched upon: the struggle for political dominance in the realm of ideas. This gets a cursory mention with greater detail in the *Alien Module*; however, it is here that I expected to see more of that battle of ideas being played out in real terms in the ideological war. Second, one would expect to see more details how the different spy agen-

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cies view the Rim. If anything, the Cold War that exists between the Imperium and Solomani Confederation is more akin to the conflict between the US and China (détente with many reciprocal bonds forming across a porous border), rather than the USSR-USA or Nazi Germany-USA conflict. And, very little of that is expressed in the official history that this supplement is written to tell.

We see the players of the Sector striving predominantly in political and espionage terms, which is perhaps the greatest strength of the supplement. Thus, we get not just the level of Imperial Navy fleet strength but rather what the Navy is actually doing in the Rim. So, while both the Imperium and Solomani are actively engaged in Power Projection, their armed forces are more concerned with reconstruction and winning the Hearts-and-Minds campaigns. Similarly, description of the nobility is as actual NPCs rather than remote figureheads representing distant Imperial authority—one could actually see them as patrons and players coming to interact with them. Then there are the different corporate influences, some of which foreshadow great Classic *Traveller* adventures that take place in the Rim.

Next is the section of worlds; only one full system is profiled: that of Terra, which, I guess, is understandable. Much of what is written has been seen before in different *Traveller* supplements, so it traces over familiar descriptions but does the time machine a bit from Classic *Traveller* and certainly from *GURPS Traveller (Rim of Fire)*. Like all Mongoose products, it has been stripped of stellar data (though sometimes world descriptions have it) to avoid the problem that plagues *Traveller* of realism versus actual game play. I tend to side with realism, but that would require a rewrite of many other *Traveller* products, not to mention stretching credulity to the hilt when compared to what we know about contemporary planetary formation theories.

How does this compare to other products dealing with the Solomani Rim? The GDW offerings

were rather sparse and did not divorce themselves adequately from *Alien Module 6: Solomani*. DGP's *MegaTraveller Alien* modules are heralded as the gold standard for alien modules, and the Solomani write-up in *Solomani and Aslan* was especially good, as it broke ranks with the common perception of the Solomani as Space Nazis and showed them to be rounded full individuals and a polity that may lapse into prejudice and racism but not one founded upon those principles. *GURPS Traveller's Rim of Fire* and *Interstellar Wars*, contain many points that can be contested; however, they still brought many new concepts forward, and I think that David Pulver has done an admirable job in connecting this book with that vision of the future. Material from *Traveller: The New Era* does not figure prominently in this book, but that's hardly surprising, as the events described there are 200 years into a possible future timeline. David Pulver has done a great job in setting down the dots that future supplements will draw lines between the different points.

The Referee's section provides an ample array of campaign types that players and referees can design their own adventures catered to life in the Rim. Naturally, espionage is but one type; there are plenty of others and the worlds section contains seeds to carry out those adventures. David Pulver has done a great job in bringing together *Alien Module 5: Solomani* and *Solomani Rim* as a whole that exceeds the sum of its parts, but either stands well on its own. Kudos on a job well done... If there would be any criticism of this book, it would be in the lack of art; I would have wanted to see more art but not at the expense of the text, so I do understand Mongoose's decision. Thankfully, the art is fairly uniform and for the most part attractive. Anyone wishing to adventure in the Rim ought to check this volume out. Mongoose certainly has made a quality product here and I look forward to more Sector books, hopefully authored by the likes of David. So, how about the Hinterworlds or better yet Old Expanses next... I am looking for updates on all these classic (note: not Classic) sectors to get a Mongoose treatment. 🌌

Pierreich-Fenac-class Orbital Security/ Sensor Boat (OSB-11)

Statistics

Mission(s):	Logistics, Command, Border Security, Police, Science, Survey
Hull:	200 tons, Distributed Configuration (7.9Mcr)
Armor:	Crystaliron 15% (12 pts.), Reflec Coating (30 tons) (4.32Mcr) (20Mcr)
M-Drive:	A (2 tons) (4Mcr)
J-Drive:	None
Power Plant:	A (4 tons) (8Mcr)
Computer:	Model 3/fib (Advanced Electronics, Fire Control/3, Long Distance Scanning, Planetary Survey, Surveillance Software) (Redundant)(20 tons) (19Mcr)
Armaments:	3 Triple Turrets, Beam Lasers standard (3 tons) (12Mcr)
Fuel:	30 tons (210 days operation)
Crew:	13 (Captain, Navigator, 2×Sciences/Electronics, Engineer, Medic, Crew Chief, 3×Gunner/Security, 3×Crew) (32 tons) (4.5Mcr)
Small Craft:	Ship's Boat (30 tons) (16Mcr)
Cargo:	24 tons
Tech Level:	11
Cost:	91,400,000Cr

Overview

The OSB-11 is a maneuverable boat designed to orbit a planet and remain in operation for weeks or months at a time. It is capable of fulfilling a variety of missions and can be refit and staffed accordingly. It is built with advanced sensor packages and a redundant Model 3/fib computer, and typically runs advanced software for increasing the efficacy of its sensors (Visual, Thermal, EM, Lidar, Densitometer. Reduce Range by a factor of 1 to determine level of detail. Additional cost 1Mcr.) In addition, by removing the jump drive and reconfiguring the hull, the OSB sports a third hardpoint. (Additional cost: 10% basic hull.) Coupled with crystaliron armor and Reflec coating, the OSB can be a tough nut to crack. Often, it is deployed to keep tabs on system borders, either in high orbit around a world or near a jump point to watch for ships arriving and leaving the system. The OSB is also useful in planetary defense, where it can serve as a command center, logistics station, or communications hub. Some governments deploy the OSB in lower orbits and use them as surveillance and law enforcement tools against the pop-

ulation on the surface. Lastly, the OSB can take on a purely scientific mission for long-term study of a world or moon, though getting to that world may require a Jump carrier. It is designed for long-term self-sufficiency, with room for its crew of 13, plenty of fuel, and cargo space for supplies. It is also equipped to receive visitors with two docking bridges aft, which can be installed or removed in a few hours if necessary. The avionics array is underneath, along with the docking ring for the Ship's Boat. The OSB-11's cost means that only planetary governments or scientific research megacorporations will invest in a non-Jump vessel like this; however, versatility, durability, and longevity make it worth it.

Adventure Ideas

Distress Call: The players receive a mayday from a nearby OSB, under attack by local enemies. The OSB is owned by either the local government (which will be grateful for the player's assistance and make life easier on the world for a while, along with a cash reward), or by a scientific research company, which will not only reward the players by become a contact/source for other adventure ideas in the future. ("Since you all did such a good job driving off those dissidents, maybe you'd be interested in checking out these strange readings for us...")

Fight the System: The players are hired by a local group of rebels/dissidents/underground who are trying to bring down the government. An OSB in orbit over a major city has been able to track their movements and coordinate police response. The players are to either destroy the OSB (very unlikely; it will have police and navy ships backing it up) or board and sabotage it. (Possible, if the players can find a reason to be invited on board first...)

Ghost Town: The players encounter an OSB in a slowly decaying orbit over a remote world in the system. There doesn't seem to be anyone on board, nor any sign of damage. Breaking into the ship's computer will show increasingly erratic crew behavior recorded in logs, and the flight plan of the missing Ship's Boat, leading down to the surface...

The Shipyard

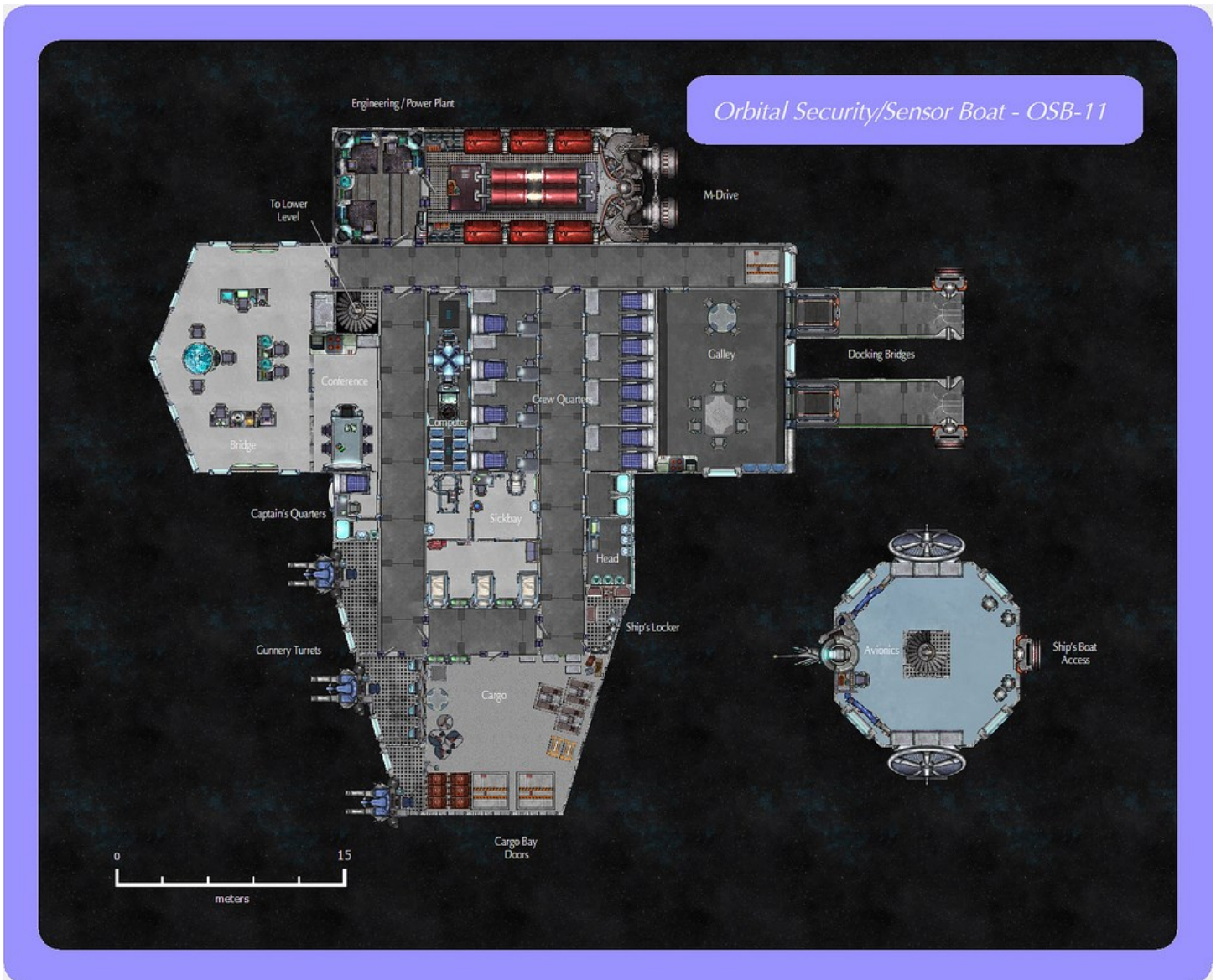
(Continued from page 17)

To the Battlements: While their ship is in dock for a long refit, the players are hired by the understaffed local colony militia to fill in on the colony's main defense, an OSB for a couple of weeks. (Maybe an epidemic of some sort has put most of the trained personnel in the hospital.) The colony's main enemy (a rival colony, pirates, hostile species, etc.) has been launching sorties on the colony lately and the OSB must be staffed! Here comes the first wave!

Mad Scientist: The players are hired by an eccentric academic who has managed to procure an OSB and has it in orbit around a world of interest, using it to methodically map and study the surface.

The problem is that for some reason his hires keep quitting on him, and he needs crew. The academic is rather vague about what he is looking for, is demanding, abrasive, and unpleasant. The OSB is undersupplied, squalid, and in need of an overhaul. But work is work... (Little do the players know the academic has enemies tracking him who want what he's looking for...)

Bug Hunt: A research team based on an OSB is taking fauna samples from a world calls for help. It seems that one of their samples has escaped and is now causing havoc in the ship, hiding and attacking crew. And it's also growing. And perhaps even multiplying... ☼





Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

Part 26

The *Waffles* had dropped out of Transition almost right on the pin, with an official Crossing of Six Days, 17 Hours and thirty nine Minutes; only a few hours difference from Astrogator Tower's projection.

Coming out at a little more than three AU Outsystem from the brightly lit red subdwarf, DM-45 5378, the *Waffles* was orbiting eighty-eight degrees off the System Plain at a mere one hundred million kilometers, at minimal power and thrust, and using passive sensors, when using them at all—sneaking along.

Kalifra's information from the old sweat had been accurate. The system they saw was filled in all directions with the ruins of probably two hundred combat ships scattered everywhere; some remaining in almost pristine condition; others in recognizable pieces and hunks of various types and size, and some scattered in smashed pieces with origins hard to determine; all orbiting around the subdwarf accompanied by a broken field of deadly flotsam, human bodies and debris traveling from a few hundred meters to several thousand kilometers per second; and making for the possibility of a fierce rain for anyone attempting EVA in the red star's light.

Orbiting amongst the wreckage at 1 AU, was the largest object in the system, the Imperial Navy's Fuel Purification Station which had been hammered to shreds and which, at some point in the battle, had been rammed through and through, by the remains of a mangled Rebel Cruiser.

"Gods' Blood!" Brodie gasped as he first looked at the carnage through the front viewport, then through the Scanners.

Most everyone on the *Waffles* was just plain mesmerised by the scale of the slaughter. The majority of the crew had battled with pirates before, losing a few shipmates who were plain too unlucky.

But the colossal scale of the destruction here, with tumbling hulks and shrapnel near at hand, and mangled bodies everywhere you looked, was awful and terrifying, and few there were aboard, except First Officer Milo Hertzog (who'd been a Naval Tactician) and Kalifra Donaldson (who'd lived through a number of such actions as a Marine), who could truthfully say they'd seen it before, and could suggest one stay steely in such a time of crisis.

One of the largest pieces of flotsam that kept passing nearby was a frigate; snapped in two just abaft of the bridge, and coming by within about 10 kilometers of the *Waffles*. Twenty eight hours later, on the frigate's third pass. the Captain ordered 'the Professor' to close with it. At about half a kilometer the Captain ordered Boarding Pikes away, and in a wrenching blast, most of the dozen lined, heavy pikes struck home.

An order was given and heavy winches deployed to hoist away; pulling the *Waffles* closer and closer to the ruined ship, until the smaller merchant was within the shadow of the larger frigate, the *Aaron Burr*.

At a distance of some twenty meters, the *Waffles'* airlock wormed its way forward, extending until it was in contact with the *Burr*, powerful magnets holding the access tube in place. A heavy laser cutter built into the docking mechanism quickly burned its way through the *Burr's* hull; a solid 'KLUNK' attesting to the breach, and a signal on the atmosphere sensor letting the giant chimp who was manning the sensors aboard *Waffles* know that all was green: a positive lock and positive atmosphere.

Standing in the the airlock waiting for the word was Kalifra, in a battered patchwork of Combat Armor; the helmet of which had been replaced with an Aretiusian helmet designed to resemble an ancient, crested, Corinthian helmet. In addition to her New Texas Ironmongery automatic rifle, she carried a boarding pike with her figure eight shield.

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Next to and a little behind her stood Tam in a surplus Navy combat suit. Her kit consisted of a pair of cross-draw holsters sporting a pair of Artisan 7mm needlers. In a cut-away holster low on her right thigh was a Singh-Iwane 20mm flamer. Her salmon greaves with magnetic boots were, of course, on. The suit's helmet had been replaced with an Are-tiusian combat helmet designed to resemble an ancient, Attic helmet, which Tam found pretty.

Milo Hertzog, Number One, wore a worn suit of full combat armor with a chipped finish from his days in the Navy, and carried a heavy Koenig-Herzog 8-gauge autoshotgun and a boarding axe.

The fourth in the group was Dave Trajillo. He was wearing a Combat Suit under loose-fitting robes, and carried a superdense Haligan Tool, and several breaching charges.

Last into the airlock was Kelowna Brewster, wearing the breastplate and open-faced helmet from an old set of combat armor over a new combat suit, and carrying a stun rifle, a computer repair kit, and a carpet bag full of electronic odds and ends.

When the airlock doors opened, a scrap of paper was blown into the *Waffles* from the *Burr*. "Alright, people, we have atmosphere from here over to somewhere in the *Burr*," said Number One.

"Damned Ghost Ship!" Ilsa grumbled from the Big Chair over on the *Waffles*.

"Mmmm," mumbled Tam, "I guess that was the Official Word, then?"

At a motion from Hertzog, Kalifra went into the *Burr* first; followed by Number One as they entered a ramshackle crew bunkroom; and found the large room empty, except for eleven dessicated crew; six still in their bunks.

"Number One?" Ilsa asked from the *Waffles*, following a bit more silence than she'd been comfortable with.

"Aye, Ilsa," Hertzog reported. "Cleared our first room. Bunkroom. eleven corpses."

As Hertzog talked, a sudden slamming, hammering shocked the First Officer into firing off his K&H Heavy on full-auto; boiling away five rounds in a second and a half of three-round bursts as he sought cover behind a very large, broken, Refusebot.

Kalifra was down on one knee, behind a wide column; rifle ready to fire.

"Its nothing!" she cried. "Hold your fire!"

Hertzog waited.

Ilsa waited.

Everyone waited.

After a few minutes of waiting, a sudden slamming, which turned into a long hammering, could be heard pounding against the plasteel viewport and hull wall in the bunk room.

"Damn! It's a swarm of fragments! Shrapnel from Outside!" Hertzog said over the comm, feeling like the Dumbest Monkey on Monkey Mountain.

"Brother, do I hate salvage," Tam said from the bottom rack in which she had jammed herself, belly down; flamer in hand.

"Room Clear," Milo announced over the comm.

"Roger that, Hertzog: Room Clear," Number Two repeated back.

For awhile, the metal slamming into the plasteel interested everyone, until Hertzog picked up his rifle and asked Kalifra, "Ready?" as they made ready to clear the second room; the others holding back until they received the word everything was alright.

The second room was a long Mess Hall, with food storage and preparation along the port wall behind the serving line; the rest of the room being made up of a now jumbled mass of short and long tables with scores of chairs scattered about.

Once identified as Clear, the *Waffles'* group gave the Mess the once over; checking the pantry over to find the rations that were still viable, ancient cans of Major Strong's Iron Rations and crates of Everfresh sandwiches among a plethora of other items. And, of course, the best find in the Mess: the spirits, both brewed and distilled.

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Once found, everyone but Dave took a slug of something.

As Number One coughed after taking a second pull of some bottle, he said, "This stuff is very fine, no doubt. But the best, like on all ships," he laughed, "will be found, like the safe, in the Captain's Quarters."

As the gang went about listing and talking about assorted goods, both with each other and the others back on the *Waffles*, Captain Fyyg and Frieland checked through the 5600's newly upgraded database. Not very long later, deckplans common with their treasure trove, the ancient frigate, as well as the frigate that was somewhere out there patrolling, were found.

Ilsa read over the plans and directed the group to where Fyyg wanted them to go.

Sucking it up, Kalistra went first up the ladder that lead to the forward starboard quarter of the Fuel & Quarters Deck—Officer Country.

Securing the hatch, the others were called up into a wide passageway that ran between a wall of fuel tanks with access hatches, and the warren that was the Officers' area.

Lying at the warren's entrance was a burnt body in a burnt pressure suit; seeming not as old as the dessicated bodies found earlier. Dave was of the opinion that this one was a more recent addition to the ship. Probably a scavenger bent on salvage until...something.

They switched up and Hertzog went first, followed up by Donaldson as they moved around corners and down halls indicated by Ilsa's directions. Milo stealthfully took a right corner; 'slicing the pie' and finding a wide shouldered, neckless Warbot, bristling with hardware and hovering about a half-meter off the deck.

Milo squeezed off several bursts at the ancient robot—the heavy slugs mainly producing dents and slight damage to the thing's carapace, though the sudden impacts had managed to knock the Warbot

back—as the menacing thing fired a white-hot, jagged stream of boiling energy toward Hertzog.

"DOWN!" Milo screamed as he dove for the deck; the spattering plasma blowing through the corner Milo had just come around and the one behind him where Kalifra squatted holding her high-powered rifle; the molten slag splashing them, and continuing along the robot's line of fire, burning through wall panels and corners to finally hit the Port hull with a sizzling, sun-bright explosion.

As the explosion of plasma flashed, Tam grabbed Kelowna and turned her toward the opened hatch behind them—their access to this deck—and yelled, "RUN!" Punching Dave Trajillo in the shoulder, she pointed toward the hatch and yelled, "RUN!" again.

Watching Dave and Kelowna run, Tam thought, was like watching statues run. Or cows, like on Olde Earth. Or statues of cows. *God! How could they be so slow?* she wondered.

Then it came to her that she didn't know what to do. Should she run or should she stay, she wondered. Run?...Stay?...Run?...Stay?...

Kalifra, in her smoldering armor had already unloaded the heavy autorifle's load of Heavy Uranium slugs into the oncoming robot once—the rounds knocking holes through even the Warbot's heavy armor—and was loading a fresh magazine into the weapon when, only a few meters from Milo, the Warbot swung a double saw-arm.

Hertzog, in his suit of smoldering armor, parried with his firearm, blocking the robot's strikes but destroying his own weapon in the process; the dual saws filling the air with shrapnel before they themselves ceased to operate.

Swinging its damaged double-arm in a fierce up-percut, the Warbot connected with Hertzog; folding him in half over its large forearm, and easily hurling him up over its left shoulder, to be slammed senseless against a wall before falling to the deck; boarding axe still slung over his shoulder.

Kalifra fired from a squatting position, rapidly emptying the second magazine into the thing and then jamming a third magazine into the weapon.

As she retreated, the Warbot raised its arm again—the one that'd fired the plasma bolt at them a lifetime before. For a brief second, Kalifra looked into the bore of the ancient robot's plasma gun, expectantly. Then nothing happened. Maybe the robot's age, or one of the Uranium rounds had shorted something; making it impossible for the thing to generate any more high energy plasma.

The next second, the robotic killer altered its aim slightly, and poured a stream of liquid fire at Donaldson; enveloping her in flames.

Kalifra's combat armor, however, was proof against flames, and she continued to concentrate heavy rifle fire on the robot.

The Warbot closed, and with one of its heavy arms, made a wide-jawed grasp for the human with one of its large, smashing hands; barely missing snipping off the Aretuisian's head as the woman threw herself back; rifle dropping.

A tentacle slithered from the bot and quickly snatched up Kalifra's heavy rifle, aiming it at her and firing. Unfortunately finding the weapon empty.

As the big blond scrambled to get out of the robot's way, the tentacle swung and brought the rifle down across the woman's shoulder blades; sending her forward to slam into a corner; shaken, as the robot closed to bludgeon her to death.

Suddenly from behind the Warbot was a flash of energy as First Officer Hertzog buried the boarding axe he'd carried deep into the robot's back, right at the junction where its head and wide shoulders met. The robot lurched sideways, wrenching the axe handle from Milo's grip as the device tottered forward and dropped to the deck.

Pulling the axe free with a great effort, Hertzog chopped the thing's tentacle off with a single stroke. Dropping the axe, he picked up Donaldson's heavy rifle, then stepping over to Kalifra herself, he pulled

a magazine of the heavy ammo from her equipment belt and loaded the weapon.

Hertzog emptied the entire clip into the damaged robot's head at point-blank range; the rounds blowing its brains to mangled, ruined bits of metal and silica.

And then the half minute—or minute—long fire-fight was over just like that, the combatants now only really able to communicate at length with the *Waffles*.

Kalifra had been reduced to her cutlass, and the last magazine of her combat load for the heavy rifle, while Milo was in possession of the empty 15mm autorifle. Their combat armor was no longer smoldering when Tam finally reached them.

Sitting on the chassis of the ruined robot, Kalifra handed her last mag over to Hertzog, then, looking up at Tam, asked, "Loan me one of your 7mms, Little Sister?"

Tam pulled the right handed needler and handed it over to the big blond. Then, digging free three magazines for the needler, she passed them over to Kalifra as well.

"Good," the blond said to the other two. "Now I feel less naked."

On the comm, Donaldson asked the Second Officer, "So, which way to get to the Captain's Quarters from here, Ilsa?"

"It's like a maze, hon'!" interrupted Tam. "Stick to the right hand wall going in. So we do that!" the little brunette offered. "I don't know if it's true, but that's what I've always heard."

"Sorry to burst your bubble, love..." Hertzog began, only to be interrupted by Ilsa with proper directions to the Captain's Quarters.

"Lets get it done," Kalistra said.

Maneuvering down T halls, and slicing tight corners, the trio finally made it to their objective; several quick butt strokes of the rifle laying open the Captain's desk to them.

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Clearing out the desk, everything went into Kalifra's backpack, from Ship's Papers, down to paper-clips. At the bottom drawer, Tam pulled out a thick-cut, old bottle of Newton & McCenna single-malt Scotch. When the others saw it they smiled.

"Captain Fyyg," Tam called over the comm, "you can pour that bottle of Old Newshound down the fresher, sweetie. We've found you the white whale."

"From which you're more than welcome to have a shot, providing you are able to crack the ship's safe!" Fyyg replied.

Checking the cabin wall behind the desk with the augmented sensors of his combat armor, Milo stared close at the panel; seeing the lock and hinge-placement for the safe's door. Pulling a piece of chalk from his kit, Hertzog marked the wall at the safe's outer edges, as well as hinge and locking mechanism locations before passing the rifle over to Kalifra.

"You're the marksman, I've been told," Number One said, taking the needle pistol.

They all retreated into the hall, and Kalifra quietly aimed around the corner at the marked spots; smoothly firing in turn at hinges and lock with the heavy Uranium rounds. As the sound of the rounds echoed, the heavy door teetered, then fell forward, smashing the desk to pieces.

Checking the walk-in safe, a dozen crates of pharmaceuticals were found stored, half of which were likely well-past their indicated shelf life.

In addition was collected more than eighteen and a half million Ducats in Principality currency. Which today might be worth as much as seven hundred thousand in Imperial Credits.

But the safe's content, really, was just the icing on the cake when compared to the raw salvage value associated with the wrecked Principality ship—the drives, the trio of powerplants, turret and barbette weapons, missiles, Ship's Vehicles, even the vessel's wiring could be sold off, as free and clear profit.

Not a bad haul for a few minutes of being shot at, they figured. ☸

In A Store Near You

The Showroom

Donnington-class Motorcycle

designed by Ewan Quibell

CraftID: Donnington Motorcycle, TL5, Cr445
Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.056, Conf=7USL Open, Armour=1A, Unloaded=0.45814 tons, Loaded=0.51124 tons
Power: 1/2, Internal Combustion=0.0125 Mw, Duration=34 hours
Loco: 1/2, Wheels×2, P/W=24.4, Road=90 kph, Off-road=27 kph
Comm: -
Sensors: Headlight=1
Off: Hardpoints=1
Def: -
Control: Panel=Basic Mech×1
Accom: Crew=1 (Rider), Seat=Open
Other: Fuel=0.051 klitres, Cargo=0.002 klitres, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Moderate
Comment: Price in quantity=Cr356

This TL5 Motorcycle is a passenger vehicle that can be found on almost any low tech planet.

The operator sits astride the engine and petrol tank and uses handlebars to direct the vehicle, while using other controls on the handlebars and by their feet to speed and slow the vehicle. As there is no enclosure the operator is usually dressed in clothing suitable to the weather and road conditions. The minimal cargo capacity is limited to a small luggage rack and a small compartment beneath the operator's seat; additional cargo capacity may be added in the form of permanent or removable saddlebags, but these can adversely affect the vehicle's performance due to the change in mass and wind profile. ☸



Calendars in Charted Space

by Jeff Zeitlin

This article was originally posted to Freelance Traveller's website in 2002.

Calendars are a major part of our lives, and have been for millennia. For the most part, they began with agricultural societies, and crude observations of stars, seasons, and tides. From there, they progressed to more refined observations, and often took on religious significance as well. Further refinement and social progress led to use of calendars for advance planning, and fiscal accounting—but the calendar is always there.

In spite of the large number of cultures that developed independently on Terra, there has been a remarkable similarity among the calendars, with the same numbers appearing time and again. Many of these numbers are tied to natural rhythms or other Terran phenomena; others have mystical significance due to mathematical properties. But what if you're not starting on Terra?

This article looks at other calendars. We don't try to analyze the reasons behind them, only to give the rules governing the count of days in them. It is up to the referee, or background author, to develop the history of the calendars and of the societies.

It is necessary to define some terms that will be used in the rest of the article, to reduce confusion. The term 'day' is reserved for the standard Imperial day of 24 hours; a local planetary rotational cycle, regardless of length, will be referred to as a 'sol'. Similarly, the term 'year' is reserved for the standard Imperial year of 365 days; a local planetary revolutionary cycle will be referred to as an 'anno'.

All of the information here is derived from published material generally held to be canonical, from GDW and DGP, during the Classic *Traveller* and *MegaTraveller* eras.

Imperial Calendar

The first calendar we will look at is the Imperial calendar itself: this calendar is based on a year of

365 days. Each day is subdivided into 24 hours, each of which is divided into 60 minutes, and each of those is divided into 60 seconds. The days are numbered sequentially from 1 to 365. There is a semi-formal subdivision called a 'week', consisting of seven days; the days are named Oneday, Twoday, Threeday, Fourday, Fiveday, Sixday, and Sevenday; these are normally elided into Wonday, Tудay, Thriday, Forday, Fiday, Sixday, and Senday. There are exactly 52 'weeks' in a year; day 001 is not part of any week, and is traditionally a holiday, called "Holiday". Day 002 of any year always falls on the first Oneday. Dates are normally written in the form '001-1105'; the number before the hyphen is the day number; the number after is the year number. 001-0000 is the date of the founding of the Third Imperium by Cleon Zhunastu, and corresponds to the Gregorian calendar date January 1, 4521.

Vilani Calendar

There has been some confusion about the structure of the Vilani calendar; two different lengths for both the sol and the anno have been given by different sources. When information given about Vland is checked against the formulæ given in *World Builder's Handbook*, it is found that the 'best fit' is for a sol of 32 hours, and an anno of 500 sols. The sol is divided into four quarters, or ten tenths; each tenth is further divided into 100 mils. Traditionally, the Vilani count the dawn-to-dusk period (*dran*) separate from the dusk-to-dawn period (*dir*). Thus, there are 1000 half-sols (*drandir*) in a Vilani anno. The anno is considered to start at dawn; this is *drandir* 000 of the year; at dusk, *drandir* 000 ends, and *drandir* 001 begins. Dates are written in the form '3882.001'; the anno number is before the decimal point; the number of the half-sol is after. There are two correspondences given; both cannot be correct: either Imperial year -4045 is Vilani anno 1, or Imperial year 1120 is Vilani anno 3882. Vilani anno 1 is the date of founding of the Vilani Grand Empire of the Stars (*Ziru Sirka*). An exact match between specific dates on the Imperial and Vilani calendars has not been given; for sim-

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plicity, assume that the beginning of the corresponding year (whichever one is chosen) matches on both calendars.

Solomani Calendar

The Solomani dating system is a close match in terms of sol and anno lengths to the Imperial and Sylean systems. The sol is equivalent to the day, and divided similarly; the anno is generally 365 sols. However, the Solomani calendar is still closely tied to astronomical phenomena on Terra, and, as the Terran anno is not exactly 365 Terran sols, some adjustment to the calendar is needed. There is a complex rule that adds an extra (intercalary) sol to the calendar in 97 out of every 400 annos. The anno is divided into 12 'months' of varying but roughly equal lengths; each month has a name and a fixed number of sols. The month names, in order from the beginning of the year, and the number of sols in each, are: January (31), February (28), March (31), April (30), May (31), June (30), July (31), August (31), September (30), October (31), November (30), December (31). The extra sol, when needed, is added to February. Sols are counted sequentially from 1 in each month. There are several common forms for writing dates, some of which are potentially ambiguous. The two most common unambiguous forms are 'January 1, 5641' and '1 Jan 5641'; the year is the last number, and the month name may be abbreviated to its first three letters. 1 Jan 0001 is held to be the traditional date for the religious initiation of a significant religious figure on Terra. The Solomani date 1 Jan 4521 corresponds with the Imperial date 001-0000.

Zhodani Calendar

Less is known of the Zhodani calendar than of others. The Zhodani sol is 27.02 hours in length, but how it is subdivided is unknown. The anno is 244.44 sols in length. The anno is divided into six named 'seasons', each of 40 sols. Within a season, sols are

both named and numbered, although the names are not generally used. There are also four sols that are not part of any season, and are individually named. Each group of three annos is called (in translation) an 'olympiad'; the third anno of each olympiad has an intercalary sol added, and the third anno of each third olympiad has an additional intercalary sol added. The translated names of the seasons and extraseasonal sols, in order from the beginning of the anno, are Sunbright (sol), Rain, Moon Day (sol), Heat, Sunflight (sol), Waning, Harvest, Thanksgiving (sol), Chill, Olympiad Day (intercalary sol), Double Olympiad day (second intercalary sol), Thaw. Dates are generally written '3471.1 Rain 1'; the number before the point is the olympiad number, the number following the point is the year number within the olympiad, the name of the season or extraseasonal sol follows, then, at the end, the number of the sol within the season (omitted following an extraseasonal sol). It is known that 3471.1 Sunbright corresponds to Imperial date 289-1112. 1.1 Sunbright is simply the date that the olympiad system of dating was instituted.

Aslan Calendar

The Aslan calendar is based on a sol of 36 hours and an anno of 212.2 sols. The sol is divided into 16 parts, each of which is further divided into 8 parts, each of which is further divided into 64 parts, each of which is divided into 8 parts. The anno adds an intercalary sol every fifth anno. Each sol is named, but for simplicity in dealing with extra-Hierate operations, number the sols from 1 at the start of each anno. No standard format for writing dates is known; it is generally accepted to write the dates following the Imperial format, but with the letter 'A' or the word 'Aslan' following. 001-0001A is held to be the date on which the Aslan Council of Twenty-Nine convened for the first time. Aslan anno 3644 is held to correspond to Imperial year 1111, but no exact date correspondence is given.

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K'kree Calendar

The K'kree sol is 28.6 hours long, with 368 sols in an anno. The sol is divided into four 'watches' or ten parts, each of which is further divided into tenths, hundredths, and thousandths. The anno is divided into ten parts of 37 sols each; the fourth part contains only 35 sols. Part-annos are numbered from 1. Sols are numbered within a part starting with 1. No exact match of Imperial and K'kree dates is given; it is generally held that K'kree anno 7713 corresponds to Imperial year 1110. The K'kree have not objected to the common Imperial practice of writing the date

as '7713.5 23'; the number of the anno is placed before the point, the specific tenth-part of the anno is placed after, and then the number of the sol within the part is given. Note that as tenth-parts of the anno are numbered from 1, 7713.1 1 is not the same as 7713.10 1.

Hiver Calendar

The Hive Federation calendar is based on a 30 hour sol, subdivided into 6 intervals. There are 143 sols in an anno, numbered from 1. Dates are written '1401/001' with the anno number before a slash and the sol number after. 0001/001 is the date of the selection of Glea as the administrative center of the Hive Federation. Hiver anno 1401 corresponds to Imperial year 1111, with no exact match given. ☼



Active Measures

Getting Off The Ground

Cadre Ticket

by Dan Long

Synopsis: The PCs are tasked with training a local military force on newly-acquired Imperial hardware.

Location: Initially, an important world one jump from a balkanized world; the actual contract is on the balkanized world.

Skills: A mix of military skills is optimal.

The PCs, recently mustered out of Imperial military service, are contacted individually; a factor on their current planet is hiring recent vets (and other qualified personnel) for a one-year ticket as maintenance and training cadre for one of the national governments on a nearby balkanized world. They will be required to train up the nation's forces on their shiny new high-tech Imperial surplus purchases.

The contract is initially for one year, with mildly better-than-standard pay and benefits, substantial performance bonuses, and renewable by mutual agreement. The PCs will train operators, train maintainers, perform maintenance, train unit commanders on strategy and tactics to best take advantage of their new equipment's capabilities, etc.

Possible Directions to Take This Scenario

1. All is as presented. Generally easy duty, and bonuses are entirely within reach.
2. The locals are less educated and starting from a lower tech baseline than presented, but motivated to learn. Earning the bonuses will be difficult, but not impossible; there should be no problem meeting the baseline goals of the contract.
3. The locals are less educated and starting from a lower tech baseline than presented, related to the ruling party, and resentful of authority. Meeting the baseline goals should be barely possible; bonuses are almost certainly out of reach.
4. Neighbors are itching for a fight. Roll 10+ on 2d each month for neighbors to raid the compound of the high-tech force and attempt to wreck the equipment. The referee may decide that the neighbors are aggressive, and raid on 9+ instead.
5. As #4, but goal will be to capture/ransom the training cadre rather than wreck the equipment.
6. Sabotage. One of the locals is a saboteur. Roll 10+ on 2d every week for something to fail in a spectacular and dangerous manner, until the saboteur is caught. ☼

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

November 2013

- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Starships Book I0000I: Q-M-40 Fighter Drone, Hover Landingcraft, Starships Book I000IO: Hive Light Carrier, Rigid Hull Recon Airship*
- **BITS** has released *101 Corporations* and *101 Governments*
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Peel Colonies*
- **Moon Toad Publishing** has released *Ship Record Sheets*
- **Spica Publishing** has released *Through the Veil Part 6*
- **Stygian Fox** has released *Colonial Times #3*



Consolidated Listing

This listing is by section; an individual article is listed giving its name, and the article author's name in parentheses, followed by the issue and page number, separated by a colon. For example, in Critics' Corner, the review of *Buch 0: Eine Einführung* was written by Timothy Collinson, and appears on page 2 of issue 045 (September 2013). Issue 001 was the January 2010 issue, and subsequent issues are numbered sequentially.

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From the Editor

act, divorcing the decision from themselves; rather, the general case was that the *player* was reacting, and using the character as an ‘alter-ego’—not really asking “how would a trained and experienced Marine react in this situation?”, but “how would *I* react if I had these skills in this situation?” That’s the essence of the “Mary-Sue”—self-insertion—and I’d say that it’s both inevitable, and necessary if the game session is going to be fun.

I’ve discussed this as though *Traveller* is unique in allowing this. To some extent, *all* role-playing games have the “Mary-Sue” factor, but what really

makes *Traveller* the game that stands out in this respect—in my opinion, anyway—is the whole ‘plausible realism’ thing. More so than in other games, it’s possible for the player to visualize himself in the situation, and apply not just the character’s skills, but the player’s own *direct* experience and knowledge—even though you’re ‘not supposed’ to do that if the character wouldn’t have that knowledge or experience. Doing so, though, makes the *Traveller* experience even more ‘immersive’—it’s *you* that’s doing it, not your character—which also adds to the fun. 🌟

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
Screaming Eye Games
Spellbook Software and Games
Spica Publishing
Steve Jackson Games
Terra/Sol Games
Toxic Bag Productions
Zozzer 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”.

