



FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource

Featured Article:

Modifying Miniatures for Traveller

by Robert DeVoe

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April/May 2015

A Note About Production

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

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From the Editor



We'd posted publicly that there would be no April issue; this was because the editor had some medical issues to deal with. (Note: kidney stones are Not Fun.) However, he bounced back pretty fast, and while it really was too late to get an April issue out, converting the partially-done April issue into a combined April/May issue was feasible, and the decision was made to do so.

We're still running short of material in several sections; as noted last month, this makes it difficult to put together a reasonably well-rounded issue. Please give some thought to trying your hand at ma-

terial for Less Dangerous Game, Kurishdam (any subsection), In A Store Near You (especially Handle With Care, The Promenade, and The Arms Bazaar), articles for the "Cruise" theme issue, and anything for 2300AD.

Having said that, a reminder: *Freelance Traveller* encourages authors and potential authors to consider paying venues for their work—if you get an expression of interest in your work from Mongoose, SJGames, or some other *Traveller* publisher, and they're willing to pay, go for it. We can't pay, so we don't feel we have any sort of claim on you or your work.



Adventure 1: Beltstrike

Reviewed by Megan Robertson

Mongoose Traveller Adventure 1: Beltstrike. Lawrence Whittaker
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
softbound, 96pp
US\$24.99/UK£16.99

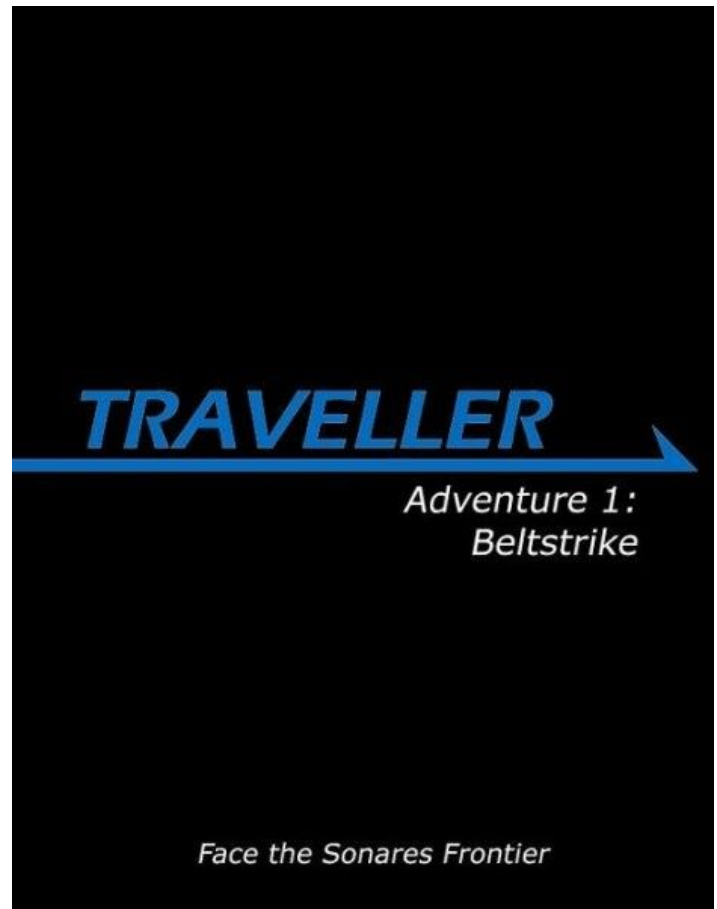
This review originally appeared on rpg-resource.org.uk in September 2012, and is reprinted here with permission.

This is a whole lot more than an 'adventure'—as well as a complete campaign, there's a wealth of information about asteroid belts, those hazardous and chaotic assemblies of loose rocks that are a feature of many star systems. There are notes on generating Belter characters, on mining operations in space, the ships and equipment you need and more.

First up, *Asteroid Belts* covers their astronomical and astrophysical nature—and it's a pretty accurate account. In the far future, planet-dwellers regard them as the dumping ground of their solar system whilst others regard them as treasure-troves, ripe for mining for resources. Oh, and despite all the stories, they are nowhere the hazard to astrogation that most people think, in fact it can take careful and precise navigation to intersect with one you actually want to visit! This section goes on to discuss the various types of asteroids, and the resources they offer those intrepid enough to attempt to mine them.

This leads naturally into prospecting operations, beginning with the rules for surveying asteroids and determining what they have to offer. Once a prospector has decided an asteroid is worth his attention, he needs to stake a claim to it before mining can commence. This is followed by details of mining operations, in terms of both what goes on and game mechanics. There's a wealth of detail here, easily enough to run asteroid mining operations in their entirety if that is what you want to do. There's even an expansion on the core rulebook rules for zero-G, given that most asteroid mining operations are conducted in micro-gravity conditions.

Next comes a section all about Belter characters, those who were born or who work in asteroid belts



and space habitats. Those born there have certain starting characteristics and abilities—for example they tend to be less strong but with greater dexterity than the planet-born, and their vacc suit and zero-G skills are well-developed from an early age. Those who work there soon learn such skills if they want to survive, and there is a full Belter career path given for those who would like to have this in their background. To round this out, there is considerable detail on the 'belter lifestyle' to help you understand what your character has been doing and incorporate Belter attitudes and habits into your role-playing.

This is followed by a section on expeditions, equipment and ships which covers both the organising of trips into an asteroid belt (for mining, for research or whatever purpose) and the gear necessary to undertake them. There are even full details and plans for both a solo prospector's ship and a full-blown mining platform.

The rest of the book contains a detailed account of an asteroid belt, the Shaeffer Belt, and a campaign and individual adventure ideas based there. You can

Critics' Corner

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use the Shaeffer Belt as is, or mine it for ideas to create your own wherever in the universe you want to locate it. Even if you run your game in the official Traveller universe (OTU), you can slot it in to an undeveloped hex—several possible subsectors are suggested—as it is supposed to be a bit of a backwater, little known outside of the few who call it home (or at least, the place where they work). It's to be found in the Sonares system—which is fully described—a place where the indigenous inhabitants have not yet discovered Jump, and so have been limited to travel around their own system. Most of the asteroid belt is open to independent prospectors, plenty of scope for intrepid adventurers. Plenty of background and history for the system is provided, complete with a colonised world, a recent massive conflict, space habitats and a charismatic military dictator, so it is not just somewhere to put the asteroid belt but an interesting place in its own right with things to get involved in other than asteroid mining.

Characters coming from the Sonares system are catered for, with notes informing the character generation process. The various space habitats—both space station and hollowed-out asteroid—are well-described, enabling them to serve as someone's 'homeworld' or as a place to visit.

As if this wealth of information does not provide enough material to empower your game, this is followed by several adventures, beginning with *The Factory*, the first scenario in the *Beltstrike Cam-*

paign. It involves the Lothrain Free Company, a prospecting and mining outfit, that the characters can work for—there are even some fully-developed NPCs which can be used as characters if you want to jump straight in. They are asked to check out a mining platform that the company is intending to purchase... this is followed by several short scenarios to 'fill in' time before the purchase is made and the characters get involved in refitting the mining platform and getting it operational, and then onwards to making money... and perhaps getting involved in an all-out war!

What is interesting about this campaign is that it presents the *Traveller* universe (be it the OTU or one of your own devising) as a place where ordinary people live and work... yes, adventures happen, but adventure is not the reason for its existence as an alternate reality. We, as players, know that of course it's only there for us to have games in, but for our characters it is their reality... and this setting and campaign really bring that to life. Not that these scenarios are boring, by any means. Adventure and excitement—and gun play—are to be had here, but within a setting that does not stretch imagination too far (once you've accepted a universe in which interstellar space travel is commonplace, at any rate). Here are adventures in which people are important, their plots and ambitions, their lives and careers... technology is but a backdrop for the human drama.

If this kind of 'realism' appeals, this campaign could make a valuable contribution to your gaming pleasure. 🌟

Active Measures

Shade

by Michael Brown

Synopsis: *the PCs must drive away a group of animals protected by strict planetary law from their transport.*

Setting: *Any world with Atmosphere 5, 7, or 9 and Starport Type D or E.*

Equipment and Skills Required: *None.*

Players' Information

The PCs are on a hot world with extensive grasslands. After completing their business onplanet, the PCs are making preparations to leave when they discover that a large group of animals has taken refuge from the sweltering heat in the shade offered by the undercarriage of their starship. The starport staff

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Active Measures

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informs the group that the animals are protected by strict planetary law and harassing them is not permitted. The crew must leave the world within the day if they are to make their next port of call on schedule.

The port warden adds that the beasts might move on when planetary night falls—or not. (If the planet is tide-locked, the adventurers are sunk.) Either way, there seems to be little the visitors can do but wait.

Referee's Information

The animals, a species of feathered reptile, are abundant on the planet, but have been protected by law for decades. The laws were put in place to help the creatures recover from a natural plague that nearly wiped them out, and no one in the planetary government seems to be willing to rescind the statutes even though they are no longer needed.

The creatures number 2D×10, are aggressive and quite fearless. Getting too close to them provokes a display of hissing and feather-fluffing. If the intruders are not chased off by the threat display, the adults herd the chicks into the middle of a circle of females, which is in turn encircled by the flock's males. If they attack, the males swarm even large opponents. 40% of the animals are males; the rest are females and young.

Local law is very stern. The creatures are not to be harmed at all; this includes attempts to scare

them away by sound, light, or missiles. Directly injuring any of them means jail time; even so much as touching one if not rendering assistance to a wounded specimen carries stiff fines. This leaves few options for the PCs to board the vessel (the throw for success and the time it takes are in parentheses): wait for the flock to leave (see below); try to lure them away, perhaps with food (10+, takes 12D minutes); or encourage one of the creatures' natural enemies to enter the area (takes 2D hours, including time spent hunting for a suitable specimen.).

If the PCs do not own the ship, the owners or operators of the vessel are generally unwilling to flout planetary law and will take no action against the reptiles. Worse, they will turn in any PC who tries to do so. If they lose patience and try to harm any of the creatures, the port staff will arrest the offender (as they are allowed to do, since it happens on Imperial property) and hold them for the planetary police.

If the planet has a night, throw 8+ each hour after sundown for the creatures to quit the ship and move on. If three throws in a row fail, the beasts are there for the night. The entire sequence of procedures "resets" the next day.

The referee should determine the flow of subsequent events.

	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds/Weapons	Behavior
Herbivore/ Grazers	50 kg	14/7	--	teeth	A3 F5 S2



Doing It My Way

Alternate Psionics Rules for *Traveller*²⁰

by Jason Kemp

This is a lightly-edited version of an article originally posted to the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website in 2003.

The official *Traveller*²⁰ (T20) Psionics rules are modelled after the skill-level-based approach to psionics that Classic *Traveller* (CT) and *Marc Miller's Traveller* (T4) took regarding psionics: the level of a

character's psionic skill determined the abilities that the psionist could activate and use, and thus psionic skill checks were never made as actual skill checks to accomplish these tasks. In T20, once skill levels reach an appropriate level, the psionist can take feats to reflect their mastery of new psionic talents.

While this recreates the feel of CT very well, there are those that feel that such an implementation doesn't accent the d20 System approach to skills

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very well. They feel that a skill check-based approach, such as those found in *MegaTraveller* (MT), *Traveller: The New Era* (TNE) and *GURPS Traveller* (GT), might better take advantage of the d20 System's approach to skills, and thus better fit their concept of psionics in a T20 campaign. It is for these people that the following Alternate Psionics Rules are proposed.

A Note On Skill Check DCs: The skill check DCs for this alternate method were derived from adding the number of ranks required in the *Travelers' Handbook* (THB) to a base DC of 13. This ties the skill check requirements directly to the requirements of the standard T20 psionics system, and hopefully maintains some essence of the balance created for the original T20 psionic system's design. Referees should feel encouraged to alter these DCs as they see fit for their campaign settings. One possible suggestion might be to multiply the original ranks required by 1.5, though this may lead to much more difficult DCs at the higher end.

Open Game Content Note: Material appearing after this note is to be considered Open Game Content governed by the Open Game License (see p.55).

Psionics Based On Skill Checks

Psionic Sphere Skills And Ability Modifiers: It's important to note that, as PSI is not an ability score (according to THB, pg 188), psionic sphere skill checks are modified instead by the psionist's Intelligence modifier. This is based on MT's choice of Intelligence as the stat referred to in their task descriptions. Referees may wish to consider using Wisdom, or even PSI (despite the fact that the rules specify that it is not a stat), to modify Psionic skill checks, if such would fit the premise of their campaign setting.

Effects Of Training: Once a character has completed Psionic Training as described in the book, they receive a zero (0) rank skill in the sphere(s) for which they have affinity. These psionic skills are

considered to be cross-class, unless the character takes the Hobby feat or gains a level in a class or prestige class in which a particular psionic skill would be considered as class skills.

Sphere Development: Once a character possesses psionic sphere skills, these skills may be developed through the normal expenditure of skill points as the character increases in level. Like normal, the number of ranks that a character possesses in a psionic sphere skill may never exceed their Psi score.

Developing And Using Psionic Talents: The psionist no longer needs to purchase feats to represent their mastery of psionic talents. Instead, the use of psionic talents is achieved through the use of psionic sphere skill checks against specific DCs set forth in this document.

Talent Descriptions: Specific Talent descriptions are found in THB Chapter 10: Psionics. Note that, for purposes of this system, the Prerequisites and Rank sections of each Talent are ignored, since the skill check replaces this particular aspect of the official psionics system. The Sphere, Cost, Duration, and Benefit sections all remain the same, however, and function as normal.

Other Aspects Of Psionics: All other aspects of psionics (PSI Score, testing, training, recovery, psi drugs, etc.) function as per the standard T20 rules.

Telepathy Sphere

A psionist skilled in the Telepathy Sphere may attempt the following psionic talents through the use of their Telepathy sphere skill. The costs noted in the THB are spent, regardless of success.

Psionic Talent	Skill Check DC
Shield	*
Life Detection	15
Telempathy	15
Read Surface Thoughts	17
Send Thoughts	18
Probe	22
Assault	23

NOTE: (*) indicates that the psionist must have Telepathy sphere skill, but no skill check is required to use this Talent.

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Clairvoyance Sphere

A psionist skilled in the Clairvoyance Sphere may attempt the following psionic talents through the use of their Clairvoyance sphere skill. The costs noted in the THB are spent, regardless of success.

Psionic Talent	Skill Check DC
Sense	15
Clairvoyance	18
Clairaudience	18
Combined Clairvoyance & Clairaudience	22

Awareness Sphere

A psionist skilled in the Awareness Sphere may attempt the following psionic talents through the use of their Awareness sphere skill. The costs noted in the THB are spent, regardless of success.

Psionic Talent	Skill Check DC
Suspended Animation	15
Psionically Enhanced Strength	17
Psionically Enhanced Constitution	18
Regeneration	22

Telekinesis Sphere

A psionist skilled in the Telekinesis Sphere may attempt the following psionic talents through the use of their Telekinesis sphere skill. The costs noted in the THB are spent, regardless of success.

Psionic Talent	Skill Check DC
Telekinetically Lift 1 gram	14
Telekinetically Lift 10 grams	15
Telekinetically Lift 100 grams	16
Telekinetically Lift 1 kg	18
Telekinetically Lift 10 kg	21
Telekinetically Lift 100 kg	23
Telekinetically Lift 1000 kg	27
Telekinetically Lift 10,000 kg	31

Teleportation Sphere

A psionist skilled in the Teleportation Sphere may attempt the following psionic talents through the use of their Teleportation sphere skill. The costs noted in the THB are spent, regardless of success.

Psionic Talent	Skill Check DC
Teleport self, unclothed	18
Teleport self, clothed	20
Teleport self, light equipment	22
Teleport self, moderate equipment	25
Teleport self, heavy equipment	28



Raconteurs' Rest

A Compact Model

by Andrea Vallance

Part 2

208th of 2029 (034-98): Maison de Pierre, Cisvus¹⁰

Maison de Pierre is one of the best eating houses on Daramm, five stars in the Kelirus,¹¹ apparently. I still felt out of place in this kind of establishment. I guess I'd have to get used to them. Siish seemed at ease however, that helped. I was feeling a little light headed, a little too much wine to calm my nerves, probably. I still wasn't used to being a lover not a

friend, but I was getting there. We'd reached the desert course. "So Siish, *kamminlu*, I assume you're looking forward to it."

He gave me *that* look, the one that means 'yeah, right' "*Dinkir*, in all honesty, I'd rather gouge my eyes out with this desert spoon that sit through a *kamminlu* recital, but it is sort of required."

I took another sip. "... required?"

"Mother sponsored the performance and I'm attending for her. And you should slow down, that's your third glass."

I went a little red, embarrassed. "Just nervous, honey." I was trying out endearments for him,

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seemed like the thing to do. None had seemed to fit so far.

He smiled, "That's the fourth one."

"Fourth one what, honey?" Nope, definitely not right.

Chuckling now, "We've had 'sweetie', 'pumpkin', 'dear', and now, 'honey'. I'm just dreading 'Siishie'."

A little more red. "Sorry, just, this feels awkward." I quickly added, "Not that I want to stop; I'm sure I'll get there."

He lent over the table and kissed me lightly, "I'm sorry, too, so just relax, Afira, we can go as fast or slow as you want. Let's just get through dinner and take it from there."

I took a breath and swallowed. "Yes." I changed the subject, something a little more 'comfortable' "So, Siish, when are we leaving? *Raledenet* has been sitting waiting for ten days. The docking fees must be piling up."

He sniggered, "Only five thousand *Keedits* so far, not like we can't afford it. But five more days."

"You sound certain, there, Siish...ie." Very definitely not right.

"Oh, very funny. But, yes, I am. I checked out the datachip Kirsov gave us; sounds interesting. So, if everyone is okay with it, we'll be off to Kalu Marasiin."

I grinned; seven parsecs, at least three jumps there and three back. "What's at Kalu Marasiin?"

"A dead ship, the *Vias*, a cruiser, *Augusta* class. Kirsov wants us to get its datacore."

My turn to chuckle, "And I'm assuming we don't know why he wants its datacore, *balul*." *Balul*, better.

He laughed, "*Balul*! You've got to find something better than *balul*. But yes, no idea why he wants it."

I was feeling a lot less nervous now "I like *balul*, could have gone with *gilul* or *kellul*¹²." I looked over, he'd finished his desert, I'd finished mine. Some

time ago. It was time to go; he'd noticed too. The nerves returned.

"We should be getting back, *dinkir*." He suddenly sounded a bit nervous, too.

My stomach felt like it was full of a herd of stampeding wild *bulis*, I took another drink, a rather large one. "Yes."

I woke early the next morning. Four years in an Imperial prison and so many months since then, far too long. I looked over at Siish's sleeping form and smiled; I could do this. I kissed him as he began to stir. "Good morning."

He yawned as he stretched. "You know, *dinkir*, I think I can face six hours of *kamminlu* now." I blushed.

He stroked my face. I shuddered, embarrassed, ashamed, broken. I whispered, "I'm sorry."

"No, I'm sorry, but you shouldn't be."

I cuddled to him. "Thank you, *sheevia*¹³." Lover, that worked.

210th of 2029 (036-98): Daramm Up

We were finally going back to the ship, only not all of us, and not to actually fly it. Siish had to stay behind, 'things' to do with Sharik and her mother. She'd been really nice when she came back, made sure we had plenty of time together before dragging poor Siish off to his doom, or to ancient high culture, at least. Oddly enough he'd seemed reluctant to leave me. I'd like to think it was the pleasure of my company, but I suspect it more the prospect of six hours of *kamminlu*. Sharik had also—oh so discreetly—enquired if I'd had a pleasant night; I assured her I had. There had been a nod, a wink, and a broad grin at that. But now here the rest of us were, Jane, Ariaryn, Isabella, Sakuya, and me, all on our way to check and prep the ship. The shuttle was almost empty, just us and a few workers on the commute. I was bored, a twenty-five minute trip, even at six G. I turned to Sakuya. "So, Sa... Anthony," I caught myself. "How was the *kamminlu*?" I smiled, waiting for his response.

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"I loved it." You could tell from the smile on his face and enthusiasm in his voice he meant it; the boy was definitely mad.

"Enjoyed it?" I looked over at Isabella, she nodded and shrugged her shoulders.

"Yes, it was great. All the costumes and patterns and flow. Great."

I stared at him; I still couldn't quite believe it "You enjoyed *kamminlu*?"

"Yes, don't you?"

I tried to be polite. "No, I... er... find it hard to follow."

He nodded "Yes, but it's simple once you find the patterns."

I wasn't following him. "Patterns?" There were no patterns in *kamminlu*, just a whole load of random words, sound and movements.

He just ploughed on, "Yes, patterns, maths, it's all one big series of interlocking patterns, the movement, the music, the poetry. Sort of like a giant De Brett equation¹⁴."

I still wasn't following. "De Brett equation?"

He nodded enthusiastically, as if it were the most obvious thing in the universe. "Yes, it's just like doing a De Brett equation."

I looked at him, utterly baffled. "You do De Brett equations?"

That grin on his face, like some kid in a cake stall. "Yes, in my head, just to pass the time."

He was totally deranged, obviously brilliant, but absolutely mad. "You do De Brett equations? In your head? For fun?"

If he'd nodded any harder, his head would have fallen off, sort of like 'doesn't everyone?' "Yes, I was working on a theory, you know. There was a project..." His face changed, his voice just trailed off, like some huge club had hit him.

Isabella saw and just hugged him. She told him softly it was all right. He didn't say anything more after that.

Raledenet was sitting in her bay, gleaming with new paint. She looked fresh and clean; I found myself longing to be back in space. Jane and I did an external check, landing struts and hull. We didn't expect to find anything but Jane did. "Hey Afira, pretty sure this isn't supposed to be there."

I looked; I couldn't see anything. "Where?"

She pointed, "There, in amongst the landing hydraulics."

I looked closer; you'd miss it if you didn't know where to look. A small box, seemed to have a trailing wire wrapped around the landing struts. "What is it?"

"No idea, but it's not meant to be there." She climbed up into the strut bay and examined it without touching it. "I think we should get Ariaryn to look at it."

"Booby trapped?"

"Best to assume so, I reckon."

I considered for a moment. "Why would anyone put something there?"

"Again, no idea, deary. But there it is."

We called Ariaryn out, with Isabella and Sakuya, just in case. He studied it carefully. "Any ideas what it is?"

Jane looked at him. "Like I said, sugar, no idea." It was cute the way she called him 'sugar'.

Sakuya looked and spoke hesitantly, "That wire, it looks like an aerial."

"Aerial?" Jane sounded puzzled.

"Yep, bare metal touching the landing strut, could turn the entire hull into an aerial."

Ariaryn studied it again. "But aerial for what? Well, better try to get it out, I suppose."

Jane turned to him "Be careful, sugar."

Ariaryn climbed up into the strut housing and began to slowly unwind the wire from the strut. "Isabella, you got a stethoscope handy?" She handed one to him from her bag. He listened to the box. "Well it's not ticking or anything, but it's clamped on pretty tight. Jane, love, get me a metal plate please."

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She left and returned with several slim hull patches. "These do, sugar?"

"At a pinch." He very carefully snipped the wire tape and wedged the box up and slid one plate between it and strut. It didn't move. He repeated the process and gently pulled it free. Very delicately he handed the box to Jane and climbed down.

Jane looked at the box. "Wonder what it is?"

Ariaryn smiled, "Only one way to find out; open it up. I'll need a tool kit with a drill and a camera probe." We waited while Jane fetched a kit. Ariaryn slowly drilled, listening all the time. He slipped in the probe and whistled, "This is tamper-proofed."

I wondered out loud, "Can you disarm it?"

He grinned, "Naturally." Ariaryn was always proud of his skills. It took him five minutes of careful work before he had it open and safe. He stood back and took a bow. "Ta-Da."

Jane playfully slapped him, then kissed him. "Show off. So what the hell is it?"

Ariaryn blushed, "Not my field."

Sakuya spoke quietly again, "But it is mine."

We watched in *Raledenet's* lounge as Sakuya examined the device, gradually uncovering its purpose. He'd quickly determined that it received, transmitted and stored data, some kind of relay. But its controls were encrypted. He was trying to break the encryption. I glanced at Isabella, her concern for him was obvious. "He seems better."

She kept watching him. "It's not even been two full weeks yet. He goes in phases, most of the time he seems fine. But then something will remind him and he'll go to pieces. Got a long way to go yet."

I felt a little guilty. "Like in the shuttle."

She nodded, "Like in the shuttle."

Jane turned to us. "The other day, when I asked what was wrong with him, you said 'the intelligence services.' What did you mean?" You could hear both confusion and perhaps a very slight note of anger in her voice.

I could see Isabella was carefully considering what to say. "He was... interrogated, quite thoroughly; he's sensitive and didn't fare well." She looked at Jane and then Ariaryn. "That's all, but that's enough too." I looked at her, her hand balled into a fist again. Jane was going to say something, but noticed her hand too. She remained silent.

We sat, watching Sakuya. He worked and finally announced, "The ship's bugged." He seemed quite satisfied with himself. "I've got the frequency, if you want to find them."

We searched the ship from top to bottom, not only relying on the frequency, but physically looking everywhere we could. There were quite a lot of bugs. I made a point of finding Isabella. "Why didn't you tell them the truth?"

There was a slight sadness in her eyes. "I did tell them the truth."

"But not the whole truth."

She sighed, "I've lost too much, Afira. Jane and Ariaryn are good people, honourable and patriotic. And they're my friends." She chuckled, "I don't have a lot of those and this is the only home I've got." She smiled that sad smile of hers. "They wouldn't believe me anyway. Nobody would."

I took her left¹⁵ hand "*Efepkammosaryn Edtyassos*, Isabella¹⁶, I believe you."

She laughed, she laughed very hard and smiled "Thank you. *Efepkammosaryn Edtyassos*¹⁷, you can do just about anything with that."

210th of 2029 (036-98): A hotel, Cisivs

Special Agent Vu reviewed his situation. Well, at the very least, his accommodations were better. He'd figured there was no point in trying to hide and had moved from the seedy dive he'd been staying in. He actually found himself a little lost in the luxury room. In truth, a bit lonely, actually. He found his thoughts straying to Manish *Wa*, again. His job left little room for a family or even much of a social life. He had enjoyed her company. He pushed such

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thoughts from his mind, he knew who and what she was, after all, and that was dangerous. But regardless, things were not as bad as they'd seemed. They'd be watching him of course, he knew that and he assumed listening too. But he'd still managed to recruit 'help'. Some L'polian¹⁸ mercenaries. He'd have preferred Sesheryn¹⁹, his people, but most Sesheryns' sympathies lay very solidly with the Protectorate. He hated that he couldn't trust his own people for this. Still, L'polians weren't too bad; once you paid for them, they normally stayed bought. He'd managed to plant surveillance in the *Raledenet*, twice. He expected they'd find the first set quickly; they were meant to. He hoped the second would remain hidden. Only very short range and dormant until the first set was removed, but he needed that edge. He'd also got a very clever little virus into their computer system, undetectable until activated apparently. But then again, so were his identity documents.

The other thing working in his favour was the Protectorate clearly felt indebted to him. He didn't see it himself, he'd just been doing his job. But they did, and their sense of honour²⁰ would prevent them from acting until he did something serious. So if he acted quickly and without too much fuss, he could still pull this off. Now what was needed was to rattle their cage, something to make them leave prematurely. That would give him his window. That and lose his tail, but that bit he knew he could do.

210th of 2029 (036-98): The Gubashiidi Estate

"Bugged? Who bugged us, Jane?" Siish was angry; he didn't like 'his' ship being tampered with.

"No idea; if I had to guess, I'd go with Imperials."

Siish looked deep in thought. "Would make sense; Mother said there was an Imperial agent looking for Sakuya."

Sakuya nodded, "We met him, was supposed to put him off. Don't think it worked." He looked

scared again. "They'll execute me if they take me back."

Ariaryn mumbled, "Barbaric²¹."

Isabella tried to reassure him. "We won't let them, will we?" She looked at us all; we nodded.

I looked at Sakuya. "You met him?"

He nodded. "Yes; Lady Manish arranged it, a dinner. They said it would make him back off."

"So we know who he is, then?"

Siish took over. "His name is Fakri Vu; I have an image. He's been under surveillance for a while now, apparently."

I was annoyed; I could see Jane and Ariaryn were too. "And you didn't think it important to mention this?"

Siish looked rather uncomfortable. "He was being watched."

I was rapidly moving passed annoyed. "Didn't stop him bugging the ship, though, did it!"

A quiet voice. "No, no, it didn't"

"And if he'd come for Sakuya? What, you thought he'd send a note first? Siish, you are unbelievable! This was damn bloody serious; somebody could have got hurt!"

"Calm down, please."

"Don't you tell me to calm down! You messed up, right bloody royally, Siish! Anything else you'd like to mention? Like maybe the Imperial Navy is out there, or there's an asteroid about to hit us? You know, minor unimportant things like that?"

I could tell he was embarrassed and feeling guilty. "I'm sorry, *dinkir*."

"Don't you '*dinkir*' me, Siishubuu Manish! And 'sorry'?" I could see Ariaryn and Jane chuckling. At least they were getting a giggle out of me losing it. "'Sorry'! Yeah, I'm sorry too, sorry you're a pompous, self-important *bulis*' arse."

"I didn't think it was serious, you know, not important, I'm really sorry."

"Not Important? *Not Important?* An Imperial agent out to get us *not important?* When might it have become important, when he started shooting at

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us?" I was just about to lose it totally. I screamed and stormed out.

They watched as Afira swept out of the room, Jane was chuckling away. "You know, for a *yashti*²², she does that so well."

Siish was looking glum. "How long do you think?"

"Oh I'd give her an hour or two at least. And you may want to be spending the night with Sharik. You do know she's right?"

"Yes, I do know she's right, I did try to apologise, to all of you. I am really sorry, all of you." His eyes scanned them all.

Jane sighed, "Yes, okay, sorry too."

Ariaryn nodded, "Yes, though I should be throwing a fit, like Afira," the only reason he hadn't was Afira had done it for him. "Sorry too."

Jane and Ariaryn looked at Isabella; she'd been very quiet. She looked at them. "Yes, I'm sorry too. Very sorry."

It suddenly clicked. "You knew, too!"

Isabella sighed, "Yes, Jane, I was told, too. And I am, like Siish, extremely sorry."

Ariaryn looked at her hard. "Which is why you wanted to learn to shoot."

"Yes, sorry, sorry, sorry."

He took a deep breath. "You know, Isabella, I ought to join Afira. Any thing else we're not privy too?"

"No. As far as is known, one Imperial agent, Fakri Vu. He's good, apparently better than everyone thought. He's probably got local help, but that's not for sure. We have pictures."

Ariaryn considered. "Yes, Isabella, you screwed up, too. But, yes, sorry too."

Jane looked at her *eeshren*²³, then Isabella and Siish. "The pair of you are intolerable, you know. But, like dear Ariaryn, sorry also." She turned back

to Siish. "So after all the screw ups, what are we going to do?"

"Well, good as this agent may be, I doubt very much he can track a ship through jump."

I was still fuming when I heard the knock at the door. I assumed it was Siish, so I snapped. "What do you want?"

I heard Sharik reply, "To have a little chat about Siishubuu, dear, but I can come back later if you'd rather."

A little embarrassing. "No, it's alright, come in." She entered. "I'm sorry; I thought you were Siish."

She chuckled, "I'm sorry, too, but, yes, I heard. I believe the term 'pompous self-important arse' was used."

I returned her chuckle, "'Bulis' arse', actually."

"And I assume he deserved it?"

"Yes." A slight tinge of anger came over me. "Why, you come to try and make peace?"

Her reply was rather quick, "Oh no, not at all. Between the two of you, dear."

My anger subsided, well, towards her, at least. "So, why are you here, then?"

Her face took on a rather scheming look. "Siishubuu, his er... health."

I felt a sudden moment of concern. "Why, is something wrong?"

"Not 'wrong', exactly. But at the Rurur Garintylil ceremonies, did you notice his uniform, perhaps a little... close fitting?"

I laughed, "Maybe, but nothing serious. I like a man with a little bulk."

"Well, don't we all²⁴, but he must have put on a good ten kilos in the last month; that's more than a little bulk, Afira." She sat in one of the chairs across from me. "If he keeps on this way, he'll end up like a *gabali*."

I considered; she might have a point. "So, what would you like to do about it?"

"I've already talked with Eneri and he's said he'll uhhh... keep an eye on his eating when he's at

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his mother's." I chuckled again. Siish hated it when Eneri went on about his eating. "And, of course, Gahashi will be cooking here."

I could see where this was going. "And you'd like me to keep an eye on him on the ship?"

She fiddled a little nervously. "Well, yes, that's part of it."

"And the other part?" I was getting a little suspicious.

Definitely nervous. "I was hoping you might, as his *nuntarri*," she still smiled a little when she said it, "help me get him to agree to a diet."

"It's not fair; you're ganging upon me, both of you!" Siish was... irked, picked on.

"No, dear, we're just concerned. For your health."

Sharik was being delicate. I was still annoyed with him, so I felt no such need. "You're getting fat, Siish, so you're going on a diet."

"I am not; I'm a perfectly healthy weight."

"If you get any fatter, we'll have to roll you down the aisle at your match."

He looked over at Jane, pleading. She was chuckling away, close to hysterics "Don't bring me into it. You're the one who decided to have a match *and* a *nuntarri*. Can't have your cake and eat it, Siish."

Sharik clarified, "Until he loses some of those extra kilos, he can't have cake at all."

"They don't show this in the holodramas." He sounded so gloomy.

Ariaryn spoke. "They do, actually, sometimes. Comic relief in the narrative flow. It contrasts with the build up of dramatic tension." We all looked at him "What? I took some short courses in dramatic composition in the Guards." We kept looking, he sounded a little defensive. "The Guards encourage an appreciation of the arts. I did creative writing and *kulfi*."

Now that was just plain wrong. Jane was sitting mouth agape. In the Navy short courses tended to

be things such as 'eating for health and well being', 'the dangers of unprotected sexual contact', 'The care and use of the model 17a personal manoeuvring pack'. Maybe if you were lucky 'waltz for beginners'²⁵, but only because it encouraged fitness and coordination. The idea of some grizzled Guards' drill *serganet* teaching battle hardened veterans the finer points of artistic flower arranging was disturbing. I shook my head to clear that image. "Regardless, you need to lose weight, Siishubuu. It's all arranged, Eneri and your mother will be looking out for you when you're there. Sharik and Gashishi here. And I'll be watching you on the ship." I looked at Sharik, we nodded firmly to each other.

Notes

Notes 1 through 9 were included with Part 1 of this story.

10. An arcology near the Gubashiisdi estate. One of the larger on Daramm, home to about six million people.

11. Eating guide for restaurants in the Protectorate.

12. *Kellul*, literally old man. Usually used to refer to a male relative one generation older.

13. One of a series of four terms of address used between physically intimate partners, all of which are usually translated as lover. *sheevia* is used by a woman to refer to a male partner, *sheelia* is used by a male to refer to a woman, *sheepia* between two woman and *sheenia* between two men. None of these terms would virtually ever be heard in public. Technically the more generic *eshal* should be used in public, but due to the fact that at the time the term *eshal* was seen as having negative connotations by many, the euphemistic term *osdteelisren* (special friend) or its shorter form *osdtren* was often used instead.

14. The equations required to calculate a three parsec jump. Extremely complex and usually preformed by the ships computers, they were a vital part in the Terran invention of jump three drives. The search for the successor to De Brett equations which would allow access to higher jump numbers was one of the greatest challenges in mathematics at the time.

15. As approximately 96% of all Luriani are left handed, the left side has special significance in their culture.

16. Roughly translated 'never again *Edtyassos*'. This is a common Luriani phrase used in times of tragedy, disaster, loss and war. The specific meaning depends on the context. In this case it is used to comfort somebody who

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has suffered tragic loss. This also is a use of one of the more unusual features of Standard Luriani, the past future tense, putting the future into the past. The closest Anglic can come is 'I had will do it'. The use of this tense is rare and almost exclusively poetic or metaphoric, but *Edtyassos* is frequently described in it.

17. *Edtyassos* (unique in that it never takes an article or possessive form) is the Luriani term for the so called 'Year of woe' following the Vilani conquest of the Luriani worlds. What happened is unknown. Vilani records only mention it briefly as a purge and Luriani oral tradition is considered unreliable. It however exerts a huge influence on Luriani culture thousands of years later. Luriani tradition speaks of near genocide and genetic analysis have confirmed a massive drop in the Luriani population at this time (though it is uncertain if this occurred after the conquest or during the prior 35 year long campaign that verged on one of extermination in its level of ferocity). It is known that the Vilani uncharacteristically destroyed all records of the event and much of the Luriani's previous history was lost at this time. As such it represents the only example of the Vilani actively destroying knowledge. *Edtyassos* is perhaps the most pivotal event in Luriani history. Generally agreed to be the origin of the almost fanatical desire of the Luriani to avoid control by others.

18. The L'polan Empire was a small pocket empire absorbed by the Imperium some ten years before the Luriani War. Traditional enemies of the Protectorate, the Empire was actually the re-establishment of an earlier, larger L'polan Empire that had existed during the early years of the Long Night. The first empire fought five bitter wars with the First Protectorate before collapsing into civil war and anarchy following the pyrrhic Luriani victory in the Fifth L'polan War. However, the exhaustion caused by these wars is regarded as the cause of the Protectorate's demise some one hundred years later. The reformed empire fought two more inconclusive wars with the Second Protectorate before succumbing to a short Imperial campaign.

19. The Sesheryn were a people dominant in the rimward portions of the Empty Quarter sector. They evolved from an independent trading culture during the Long Night. Their language was a Luriani/Anglic creole and they had a long history of close trading ties with the Luriani. There was no real Sesheryn state, the Sesheryn

Feodarate being more a loose alliance of independent worlds who had agreed on a common set of rules of behaviour. The Sesheryn were regarded as allies of the Protectorate. There were many similarities between the Sesheryn and Luriani, though some were simply the result of independent evolution.


20. The three basic tenants of the Luriani code of honour are best summed up as "Protect your family, hospitality to those who ask and mercy and fairness to the fallen foe." By extension, somebody who protects a Luriani's family (or in this case their perception of the entire Protectorate as a single family) must be treated respectfully and honourably.

21. The death penalty was abandoned in the Protectorate during the early years of the First Protectorate. Most Luriani regard it as excessively cruel and are revolted by it. The later Treaty of Daramm that would eventually incorporate the Luriani into the Imperium includes a clause prohibiting the Imperial application of the death penalty on former Protectorate worlds without their consent.

22. Very roughly, righty, slang for a right handed Luriani. Compared with *hajkti*, lefty. Right handed racial Luriani are (inaccurately) regarded as less volatile than left handers.

23. Short form of *eeshiaelullistren*, literally 'romantic male friend'. The word is also the short form for *eeshiaewalistren* (romantic female friend). One of the problems comprehending Standard Luriani is its tendency to form new words by compounding and then shorten them by dropping some or all of the middle syllables, leading to a word with multiple meanings. An extreme example is *wurlana*. It is the short form of *wuryokwineshasitiyyolana* (literally, 'deep sea traveller of great distance'), one of the sub-cultures of the Luriani; as well as *wurjkirefgaranfilana* (literally, 'deep cup thrown for distance'), a popular children's game at parties; and finally of *wurkabommfishimmlana* (literally, 'deep explosive device for measuring distance'), a type of seismic charge.

24. The commonly accepted ideal of 'desirable body shape' tended to be a little towards the larger side in Luriani society.

25. One of the three most popular Terran dance and musical forms adopted by the Luriani. The other two are tango and mariachi. 

#14: Awards

I've accepted, at the age of 49, that I'm not going to win an Olympic medal, a Nobel prize, or even an Academy Award. At least it seems vanishingly unlikely. As a 7 or 8 year old living in Virginia for a couple of years I remember a similar disappointment at realizing I could never be President of the USA because of my birthplace.

It was, therefore, with some interest that I came across the Zhodani Base awards in January of this year, and it was with considerable delight and astonishment to learn that two items of mine had been nominated in three categories. Now, I've no idea how widely these are known or what regard they're held in; they are what they are although this is the fourth year they've run. But it's a website I've long enjoyed visiting and I hugely respect the work and quality that goes into it. So I think I can admit to being "dead chuffed", as we say here in the UK—particularly when I saw what exalted company had also been nominated.

The awards ('Zobies', perhaps?) are, of course, solely for *Traveller* so I have a good knowledge of all the other contenders and can form my own opinion of the worth of various books. The awards also have various categories, just like the Oscars, so it was possible to see one approach to recognizing excellence across the huge range of material that's published for the game each year.

In the event, the "Best Adventure" went to *Cirque*. There's lots to love about it, and a mass of material that will provide a lot of adventure. Much though I love my own effort *Into the Unknown* as the first game I ever refereed, not quite the first adventure I put together, and for a special moment at TravCon I've written about elsewhere, it was hardly a disgrace to lose to such excellence.

The "Best OTU Product" included the third adventure I've ever run in *Three Blind Mice* which was also my first attempt at running an adventure based on more limited notes rather than nigh on 100 pages (in an attempt to quell newbie nerves). But the eventual winner was *The Traveller Adventure* which (unfortunately?) had a rerelease in 2014. Well, what can I say... merely being mentioned in the same breath was award enough. And perhaps the mice came close with Berka's parting shot: "Better luck next year 13Mann. I really like your products."

Which might also explain the 'bonus' category which *Three Blind Mice* did win: "Best Free Traveller Product". Well, perhaps it was an afterthought, but to win at all and to win against a GDW product and the terrific *Colonial Times* was certainly an honour and I shall treasure my Zobie accordingly.

In any case, it might not have the excellence of an Olympic gold, the cachet of a Nobel, or the controversy of an Oscar, but it's encouraged me to keep on writing. Surely no bad thing? 🌟

Doing It My Way

Hazard: Storm!

by Michael Brown

"It was a dark and stormy night..."

So begins Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Paul Clifford*. The line has been roundly mocked for its banality, but it sets an immediate scene in the reader's mind, one of raw, primal forces, darkness and gloom, and nature's power. Storms occupy outsized places in popular literature and in the human zeit-

geist. Their place in role-playing games, *Traveller* in particular, are no exception. But while a common and necessary part of nature, storms rarely make appearances in games.

Why should the referee include a storm? Storms add drama and another complication to the heroes' mission. They serve as wild, natural counterpoints to the shiny, well-behaved environments that often accompany Imperial technology. They add a dimension of unpredictability, turmoil, and a sense of ur-

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gency. Additionally, a storm can make for a great adventure or series of adventures in its own right. In short, storms bring excitement, which is the meat and drink of every gamer.

That said, *Traveller* lacks rules for creating and gaming storms. We shall set out to correct this oversight. The rules set down here will focus mostly on the effects storms have on the PCs and their activities, with only as much discussion of the mechanics behind storm formation and propagation as necessary.

Author's Note: while based on real-world meteorological science, the concepts presented here are part of a game. Nothing written here is intended to be used in real-life weather situations. Readers are directed to their respective national weather organizations or meteorological institutes for more information.

The Making of Storms

A storm is an atmospheric disturbance which affects both air and ground. They can be violent. Regardless of the type of storm, the mechanisms behind its creation can be boiled down to a few common items: low barometric pressure; atmospheric lift; atmospheric instability; and usually moisture. Other factors include season (dictated by the world's axial tilt), overall world climate, the prevailing atmospheric pressure (thin, standard, or dense); and the world's hydrographics percentage.

Every planet possessing an environment other than hard vacuum has some type of weather; storms are a common element. For example, Mars, in the Terra system (Solomani Rim 1827), has suffered planetwide dust storms, despite having a very thin atmosphere.

Worlds with exotic atmospheres (Atmosphere type A+) have similar storm ingredients, except their clouds are not composed of water, but far more exotic compounds. These compounds are almost always toxic. The most common are ammonia, methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen and sulfur. If water is present, it's usually in very small quantities. Storms on such worlds—especially large ones—generally take the form of ferocious winds, chemical sleet, and lightning. Such storms can be very long-

lived; Jupiter's Great Red Spot has been raging since before Gian Domenico Cassini first observed it in A.D.1665 (-2803 TI).

Creating the Storm

The following storm creation system is designed to be simple and quick. Rather than go into detailed meteorological details, we will use common storm characteristics and their effect on the heroes, combining the results creatively to describe various types of storm. Several common conditions can affect PCs: strong winds, poor visibility, hindrances to movement, and debris. Duration is also a factor.

To begin, throw 2D-2 (optional DMs: -1 for Atmosphere 5-; +1 for Atmosphere 8+; the world's Size/5, dropping fractions). Treat 0 as 1 for purposes of calculation in the formulae below. The result represents *all* of the following:

- The storm's *Intensity* (i)—a representation of its power—ranging from 0 (a weak or transient disturbance) to 10 (a severe, life-threatening tempest).
- The storm's *duration*, measured in minutes, and calculated as $2D \times (i+10)$. Long durations may be multiple shorter storms, at the referee's discretion.
- The wind speed, measured in kph, and calculated as $12 \times (i)$. This may be sustained winds or gusts, at the referee's discretion.
- A negative DM on attempts to fly (due to turbulence, wind shear, etc.) unless the PCs' vehicle is fully streamlined; in that case, divide the throw by 3, rounding down. The unmodified value is doubled for characters not inside a vehicle (for instance, exposed Droyne, or adventurers using a grav belt.)
- The (negative) DM to both visibility and overland movement due to precipitation, darkness, slick surfaces, etc.; and the DEX penalty to individuals' efforts to stand, engage in combat, etc.; both are calculated using the formula $-1(i/2)$, rounding up.
- Expressed as a percentage, $(i \times 10\%)$, the chance per combat round of exposure of the PCs taking

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hits from the storm. Such damage can take different forms, depending on the storm. All damage is 1D unless otherwise specified:

The most common form is flying debris. Small debris hits as a Foil (Book 1) and uses the same weapon vs. armor matrix. Larger objects do damage per the referee's discretion. The referee may also elect to use the Full Automatic Fire rules from Book 1 to determine hits.

Hits may be caused by hail; in that case, damage is 1/2 Club, and uses that armor matrix instead.

If the storm occurs during low temperatures (a snowstorm or blizzard), extreme cold is a danger; hits in this case are due to hypothermia. Only cold weather clothing (Book 1) and vacc suits protect.

Dust- and sandstorms send tons of particulate matter into the air which cause hits by suffocation if inhaled. Filter masks and goggles (Book 1) protect.

Lightning, if present, also causes hits, but the chance of being struck should be determined by the referee. Multiply hits by 6 and use the Group Hits by Shotguns rule (Book 1).

Example: the referee wants to create a storm. She throws 2D-2 and gets 8; the storm is quite powerful (perhaps the equivalent of a Severe Thunderstorm on Terra) and since the world is similar to Terra, she simply rules that it is indeed a thunderstorm. She throws 3 (on 2D) for the storm's duration and plugs it into the above equation: $2D \times (i + 10)$, resulting in $3 \times (8+10) = 54$ minutes. She rules that this will be one large, slow-moving tempest. The winds clock in at 72 kph ($12 \text{ kph} \times 8$); the referee decides that these are gusts, not sustained winds. Those same winds make the DM to fly -8 (-2 for a fully streamlined vehicle, or -16 for anyone foolish enough to try flying exposed). The penalty for visibility, movement and each team member's DEX are all -4. Finally, the referee rules

that hits come from flying debris; any PC leaving their vehicle has an 80% chance (a throw of 5+) every combat round of being hit for Foil damage.

The referee may "fine-tune" the storm by determining each value separately, beginning with the Intensity throw and applying the applicable formulae for each throw.

The referee should describe the storm based on the die results, the world's climate, and common sense. For example, the storm in the above illustration could be a blizzard on a frozen world. The same modifiers (Intensity, wind speed, movement and visibility penalties (from blowing snow), hits risk (perhaps manifesting as exposure and hypothermia) and DEX penalties (slippery ground, or hidden obstacles) would apply.

The accompanying table may be useful in helping provide a description.

Special Storms

Some storms should be specially imposed by the referee: tornadoes and cyclones (tropical storms, hurricanes, and typhoons.)

Tornadoes: If the referee rules that an Intensity 10+ storm is tornadic, (s)he should throw an additional 1D-1, which represents all of the following:

- The tornado's rating on the Enhanced Fujita (EF) Tornado Scale (0-5). If for some reason an exact wind speed is required, consult published Enhanced Fujita Scale sources.
- Multiplied by 275, its width in meters at its narrowest point.
- Multiplied by 22.4, the forward speed of the tornado in kph.
- The number of minutes the tornado is on the ground. Treat results of 0 as 9D seconds.

As with the process above, the referee can determine the tornado's characteristics separately. This may be desirable anyway, as tornadoes are notoriously unpredictable storms that often violate established meteorological conventions.

Example: It's the heroes' unlucky day; the storm has spawned a tornado! The referee—after calculat-

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Doing It My Way

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Storm Type	Storm Component							
	Wind	Rain	Hail	Lightning	Sleet	Snow	Particulates	Flooding
Dust storm/Sandstorm	×			(×)			×	
Hailstorm			×					
Thunderstorm	×	×	×	×				(×)
Electrical Storm	×		(×)	×				
Snowstorm						×		
Ice Storm*		×			(×)			
Blizzard	×					×		
Rainstorm		×						(×)
Windstorm	×							
Tornado**	×	×	×	×				
Cyclone**	×	×		×				×
Exotic (Size/Atmosphere A)	×			×	--			

* Precipitation falls as rain, but freezes on contact with a surface

** Indicates a storm that must be specially imposed by the referee

(×) Indicates an uncommon or rare component

-- Indicates sleet is not composed of water, but other—possibly toxic—compounds

ing the parent storm's base characteristics—throws 1D for a 4. The twister is an EF3, quite capable of tossing the PCs' ATV like a toy. (If she needs a wind speed, consulting a published Enhanced Fujita scale shows the tornado packs winds of 218-265 kph.) She multiplies 4×275 and gets the funnel's width: 1,100 meters. Finally, she multiplies 4×22.4 and finds that it is moving at 67 kph and will be on the ground for 4 minutes (16 combat rounds.)

Cyclones (*tropical systems, hurricanes, etc.*): For these disturbances, the procedure is similar. Throw an additional 1D-1, representing all of the following (0 becomes 1 for purposes of calculation):

- The storm's category on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane scale (1-5). Again, if the exact wind speed is required, consult published Saffir-Simpson scale sources.
- Multiplied by 80, its diameter in kilometers
- Doubled, its storm surge (flood waters) in meters

The duration of a cyclone is always 12 hours, divided into 2 periods of 6 hours bookending a calm

interval (the storm's "eye") of 6D minutes. Note that ordinary storms do not become cyclones; these disturbances build during several days at sea and last 2D+5 days.

After the Storm

Storms usually have socioeconomic impact out of proportion to their area of direct effect. Besides the physical devastation they bring, they affect an area's economy, society, and environment.

The economic impact can be devastating and long-term. Smashed businesses mean fewer places for citizens to shop or work. Destroyed dwellings mean homelessness and refugees. Particularly bad storms can wipe out entire communities, forcing migrations. Local governments and Imperial agencies struggle to reestablish communications, commerce, and order. Outside aid is commonly required.

Social disruption is frequent. Looters and con artists find storm-ravaged areas easy pickings. Accepted mores go out the window as desperate victims do whatever is necessary to survive. Aid workers may, subtly or not, try to influence storm victims

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to their own views. Such workers may in fact be composed of organizations or troops loyal to the local government. Oppressive regimes may deny relief to victims they deem rebellious as a tool of control or punishment.

Disease is also frequent. Devastated and strained medical services usually find themselves combating hard-to-stop epidemics. Parasitic and bacteriological contamination of food and water also takes a toll. Psychologically, survivors may suffer Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, thus overwhelming any remaining mental health services.

Adventuring

There are many ways in which the referee can include a storm in the adventure. The easiest decision is when to include it; either during the group's current mission, or before. This determines whether the group is struggling for survival or helping pick up the pieces.

The referee also decides whether the storm is a random encounter, mere background color; or the main thrust of the adventure. Featuring the tempest as the focus of the adventure almost always puts the adventurers amidst the violence. The aftermath can be almost as dangerous, for the reasons stated above.

Some adventure themes lend themselves well to stormy action:

- Escape (the group must find a way to avoid the coming calamity or escape a storm in progress)
- Rescue (the PCs must rescue imperiled storm victims or allies)
- Retrieval (the heroes retrieve a particular item from a storm-ravaged area)
- Investigation (the group is hired to help study a particular storm, or solve a mystery in its aftermath)
- Survival (self-explanatory)

Adventurers of sufficient tech level may even be hired to make an attempt at stopping a storm in progress or preventing a storm from occurring.

Ship's Locker


Besides the cold weather clothing and filter mask mentioned in Book 3, other gear is useful during stormy weather:

Conductive Suit: (TL 8) Cr300. An insulated garment with a metallic mesh covering its exterior. Provides protection against electric currents, including lightning strikes; against lightning, however, the suit is only equivalent to Ablat (Book 1). Weighs 1.5 kg.


De-Icing Spray: (TL 6) Cr25. A canister of chemical de-icing agent. Each application melts one square meter of ice up to 25cm thick. Ten applications. Weight negligible.

Raincoat: (TL 4) Cr25+. A waterproof outer garment made of cloth coated with rubber or other waterproof materials. May come with a hat made of the same material. Weighs 0.1 kg.

Weather Station: (TL 6) Cr1,200. A dedicated package of equipment for measuring and forecasting weather and storms. Typically includes an anemometer, a barometer, a thermometer, a precipitation gauge, and a hygrometer. Advanced models include radar and can be linked to a computer. Fully portable at tech level 8+. May also be mounted on a starship at no weight or cost. Weighs 3 kg (portable).

Weather-7: (TL 7) Computer software that allows for detailed analysis and prediction of weather systems. Typically found aboard IISS Donosev survey vessels. 1 space, Cr300,000. 

TravellerCON/USA 2015

The Kickstarter for TravellerCON/USA 2015 has been an unquestionable success, and barring any sort of preventing disaster, T-Con/USA will be taking place October 9-11, 2015, at the Lancaster Host Resort (same site as last year). We hope you'll be able to join us. This year, the con's theme will be Rogues. Watch this space for additional information; planning is in the early stages. 

Adventure 2: Prison Planet

Reviewed by Megan Robertson

Mongoose Traveller Adventure 2: Prison Planet. Lawrence Whittaker
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
softbound, 132pp
US\$24.95/UK£15.00

This review was originally posted at <http://www.rpg-resource.org.uk> in September 2012, and is used with the author's permission.

I don't know about your players, but mine scamper around the known universe seeking out if not actively causing trouble. The sort of folk who land on a planet, ask where the roughest part of town is, tool up and head down there ready to rumble. Yet the *Traveller* universe is not a lawless place. Those characters who break the law persistently will eventually get their collars felt, be hauled in front of a judge and sent down for a term in jail!

This need not be the end of the game or a time to roll up new characters. The number of courtroom and prison dramas on TV suggests that there is plenty of scope for playing out characters' brushes with the law. A prison break adventure is an obvious one, but those characters who settle down and 'do their time' can also get involved in prison politics, make contacts or learn new skills ready for when they get out... and of course, there is much adventure to be had in wrongful accusations, where characters have to negotiate and survive incarceration whilst proving their innocence.

The Prison Planet of the title is Keanou in the Lanth subsector of the Spinward Marches, but can be set on a desert planet wherever is convenient for your purposes. The material provided begins with some game mechanics for modelling the justice process, in particular that which applies after sentencing: parole hearings and appeals. We then move on to details of the in-processing and adventure material entitled 'The First Week' which serves to introduce the characters to their new home. This includes notes on prison routine and layout; it is an interesting place converted from an old mining facility, and prisoners labour in the mines if not cunning or lucky



enough to wangle a more favourable work detail. There's plenty of scope here for running adventures involving a lengthy stay, and certainly enough and more resources if you intend for the characters to be incarcerated briefly prior to escape or release by other means.

The next section provides details (and full stat blocks) for prison staff and convicts. Each one has notes on personality and interests to help you make them come alive as they interact with the characters. Their details also include work assignment and which prison rumours they know. These may or may not be accurate, of course, but prisons run on rumours and the characters should be encouraged to find out as many as they can. The good thing is that there are a lot of prisoners for the characters to get to know, so it is easy to build up the atmosphere of a lot of people held here... there are even a few intended to arrive after the characters, so that they will not be the New Guys for ever! There's lots of detail on the guards and other staff, including how easily they bribe (and what works best), how they treat the

Critics' Corner

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convicts in general, and how they are likely to respond to someone trying to be friendly. Lastly there are a few visitors, mostly lawyers touting for trade and the like.

Next comes *Running the Adventure*, which provides the Referee with all the tools to play out the dragging miserable existence that is the convicts' (and so the characters') lot. Mechanics cover encounters with other prisoners, the work routine, the gaining of 'reputation' in the prison and the operation of the various gangs and power blocs that have developed here. There are also notes on security, bribing guards, and getting into brawls. There are a comprehensive series of 'events' which can take place, chosen by die roll or Referee whim as suits. This section covers all the day-to-day operations of the prison.

Then comes a section of *Rumours*, where you can look up the various rumours different NPC convicts know, as well as details on how true they are... there's plenty of scope for the Referee to spice them up, embellish them, as he sees fit.

This is followed by a selection of *Incidents*, set-piece events designed to teach the characters something about the prison and its assorted dangers. There are also some overarching adventure ideas which have longer-term consequences. The Referee may choose any of them, or a combination, to run in

parallel with the more everyday events from *Running the Adventure* and the discrete *Incidents*—the beauty of this is that repeat visits for those characters who prove recidivists are quite possible, just pick different background adventure arcs to run each time they are convicted!

And if all this is not enough to keep everyone occupied, there are several full-blown adventures to run once the characters have settled in. Each has its own timescale and a whole series of events, and they can be stirred in around everything else that is going on... and of course, at least one offers the possibility for escape! For those who do get out, somehow, the final few pages cover the planet Keanou and its main settlement of Circle City.

For those players who want a spell of jail time in their history, the rules for a term as a prisoner is included for use during character generation. But the real thrust of this book is to enable you to play out incarceration when the law catches up with the characters!

This is an impressive collection of resources and adventures to make a spell of imprisonment a real part of your campaign. Or, if you prefer, an idea's just occurred to me, it could be quite interesting if characters for some reason got jobs running the prison and had to cope with all the events and adventures herein from the other side! Overall, it could prove for some interesting games whichever side of the bars the characters end up... 🌟

The Shipyard

Fire Arrow Assault Fighter and Karve and Dragonship Assault Carriers

designed by John Parr

Concept

The role of the *Fire Arrow* assault fighter is to insert a four person fireteam from an orbiting ship to the surface, provide fire and logistical support for those troops in the field, and then extract them back to orbit at the end of their mission. In that respect, it

Classic Traveller Designs

is similar in capabilities to an interface-capable Grav Infantry Fighting Vehicle (G-IFV), except that it has evolved from ship design rather than from grav vehicle design. This means that, unlike a grav vehicle, the assault fighter can be employed in a close orbit or space combat role if necessary.

Conventionally, when assault troops are deployed from orbit in small craft, they are carried in sections or larger. While this may be cost effective in terms of the investment required, it exposes the as-

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sault force to ground fire that could lead to the loss of a significant proportion of its strength. In addition, if the craft is not armoured, it tends to be withdrawn from the battlefield after dropping the troops, thus leaving them without any transport on the surface.

The assault fighter concept attempts to address these issues. They are faster and more agile than normal small craft so they are less vulnerable to ground fire while in transit, and they expose a smaller proportion of the assault force to being lost. Once they have deployed their troops, they stay in the vicinity to offer direct fire support where they can provide more firepower per head than most G-IFVs. When the area is secure, they can land and provide the fire team with shelter either inside or under the cover of the armoured wings. The troops can also recharge equipment using the power plant, resupply from the small cargo space and take advantage of the onboard comms and sensors aboard the craft. They can also provide rapid transport for the fire team around the operational area.

If the troops are equipped with grav belts then the assault fighter does not even have to land to deploy or recover the team. It can fly over the battlefield at treetop altitude and the troops can exit from the rear door using their grav belts to land. Conversely, to recover troops, the craft flies low over the battlefield and the troops use their grav belts to fly up and into the craft. This cannot be done while the fighter is travelling at full speed but it does prevent the craft from having to stop and land, thus reducing its vulnerability.

When they are not on the ground, the fighters can be deployed in a space combat role to protect their assault carrier. While they do not carry as much punch as a dedicated space fighter would, they can still be effective against other ships if necessary. Alternatively, they can be used to deliver their troops for boarding actions.

History

The *Fire Arrow* assault fighter is a product of the Dimorphic Design Bureau (DDB) on Respite (Glimmerdrift Reaches 2620). It is principally aimed at the TL12+ military market. Ironically, creating an assault fighter was not the original goal. The original design was a collaboration between DDB and Respite ZGE (Zero Gravity Engineering), the local shipyard. A couple of years previously, during a lull in orders, the shipyard had created a disc shaped heavy fighter prototype, but had not been able to bring the project to fruition before rising demand caused work on it to be cancelled as resources were needed elsewhere. The partially completed spaceframe was consigned to a corner of the yard and would have languished there until it was eventually broken up for scrap. However, one of the ZGE designers moved to work at DDB and found that they were working on a similarly shaped small craft. Consequently, the two companies joined forces with ZGE providing the spaceframe and DDB the additional design work.

The initial aim was to create a vehicle with which to study the flight dynamics of this type of spaceframe and to act as a testbed for various flight systems. Therefore, the spaceframe was adjusted to accommodate a module holding a Model/5 computer for data collection and analysis along with seating for a pilot and two technicians. Positioning the attitude drive elements in many clusters around the rim of the disc gave the craft superior agility in both space and atmosphere and increased survivability in case any were lost.

Morph23 - Experimental Flight Platform
FZ-0606F02-000000-000000-0 MCr 81.920 23 tons
Batt bear Crew=3
Batt TL=12
Cargo=0.240, Fuel=0.863, EP=3.450, Agility=6, Fuel
scoops, 1 x Model/5 computer

322 cubic metres, flattened sphere, manoeuvre=6G,
jump=0, powerplant=15, no bridge, model/1 computer +
model/5 computer, 7 days endurance, 3×acceleration
couches (pilot, 2 technicians), arch fee=MCr 0.819,
build=MCr 65.536 in quantity

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The craft was extensively used for testing in the Respite system until, by chance, it came to the notice of a Major Tallow who commanded a mercenary unit, Ishorien Support, which provided logistics and intelligence services to mercenary combat units. Feeling that it would make a good mobile analysis or command centre, he ordered two units. Two years later, Tallow's unit was in trouble as the mercenary operation they were part of crumbled around them. Forced to make an emergency evacuation, Tallow pulled the Model/5 modules from both craft and packed them with as many bodies as physically possible.

When the mercenaries regrouped, they found that a small group had become isolated by the fighting. Tallow's craft were the only air transport immediately available and the mercenary colonel in charge commandeered them immediately. Using their high speed and agility, the craft were able to evade the enemy forces and make the recovery. They then subsequently served as general air transport for the remainder of the operation. When the fighting was finally over, the mercenaries involved passed an after action report back to DDB and ZGE praising the performance of the craft. It was the discussion caused by this report that eventually resulted in the *Fire Arrow* assault fighter.

Fire Arrow-class Assault Fighter

FT-0606F02-200000-04001-0 MCr 40.635 23 tons
Batt bear 1 1 Crew=2
Batt 1 1 TL=12
Cargo=0.260, Fuel=0.863, EP=3.450, Agility=6, Fuel scoops

322 cubic metres, flattened sphere, armoured hull (factor -2), jump=0, manoeuvre=6G, powerplant=15, 1xfusion gun (factor-4), 1xmissile rack (factor-1), 1xfoxhole charge launcher (0.1 tons, MCr0.2), no bridge, model/1 computer, 7 days endurance, 6xacceleration couches (pilot, gunner, 4xtroops), arch fee=MCr 0.406, build=MCr 32.508 in quantity

The *Fire Arrow* still has the 16m diameter, disc shaped hull of the Morph/23, but the nose section has been cut back to accommodate the weapons package consisting of a fusion gun and missile rack

mounted under the chin. On the underside is a launcher containing 8 small rockets with grenade sized warheads. These are fired ahead of the craft and are designed to create a shallow man sized foxhole in the ground in preparation for the troops to use. The foxhole rockets are unguided and are of marginal offensive value. The topside of the disc curves up over the engines and crew compartment to a point 2.5m above the rim while on the underside it curves down to 0.75m below the rim.

The crew of pilot and gunner sit side by side with the four man fire team seated sideways in a line behind them, ready to exit through the rear doors. On the wall facing the fire team are storage lockers and two fold down bunks. The lower bunk obstructs the foot space and can only really be used when no one is seated. The upper bunk can be used when the fire team is seated because it is above knee level. However, it does obstruct entry and exit via the rear doors because it blocks the standing room. In practice, troops in the field seem to prefer to dig a foxhole under the landed *Fire Arrow* so that they have good protection over their heads. A ceiling hatch is fitted just behind the crew seats and has been known for someone to stand head and shoulders out of the hatch firing personal weapons, even while the craft is in flight.

The avionics are mounted either side of the cockpit and the engines and powerplant are in two pods either side of the troop compartment. The rear doors swing outwards to give troops exiting or entering the craft while it is in flight protection from the engines. The craft has a tricycle skid undercarriage and when landed there is about 1.25m between the floor of the troop compartment and the ground. The undercarriage also lowers a step below the rear doors to make entering and exiting the craft easier.

If necessary, the fire team seating can be removed from the craft to increase the cargo space. Some owners have also modified the fighters to replace seating with computers, comms equipment or stretcher racks for casualty evacuation. The use of

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extra avionics is facilitated because the original connection provided on the original Morph23 for its Model/5 is still present in the *Fire Arrow* wiring.

One notable user of the *Fire Arrow* is the mercenary company Hagnar's Guard. This large outfit has developed two types of assault carrier which are used for delivering and supporting forces using the *Fire Arrow*. The *Dragonship* carries a 328 person unit with 55 *Fire Arrows* and the smaller *Karve* carries a 63 person unit with 10 *Fire Arrows*. Hagnar's Guard are known to operate one *Dragonship* and at least two *Karves*, but the carriers are usually dispersed in different operations, so are rarely seen together. The finance required to setup and operate such a force is considerable and the rumour in the industry is that the Guard are supported by the Sorenson Group, an engineering mega-corporation. A direct link has never been substantiated but the Guard have certainly been employed by Sorenson on a number of occasions.

The details of the carriers and the organisation of the units follows.

Notes:

- The price of the carriers includes the *Fire Arrow* assault fighters and pinnaces.
- *Fire Arrow* pilots and gunners are included in the marine headcount as they are part of that unit rather than of the carrier crew. Flight deck and pinnacle personnel are part of the carrier crew.
- Unless otherwise required to replace the main bridge, the backup bridges are used as an operations centre by the marines.
- Both carriers have more staterooms than are strictly required, to support single cabins and offices for key personnel and to allow for changes in the ship's complement.

Dragonship Class Assault Carrier

CT-K4226F4-351000-06805-0 MCr13279.828 13ktons
Batt bear 6 64 5 Crew=523
Batt 6 64 5 TL=12
Cargo=429.5, Fuel=3380, EP=780, Agility=2
55x23T *Fire Arrow* Assault Fighters, 4x40T Pinnaces, 1x23T launch tube
Fuel scoops, Fuel purifier

182000 cubic metres, close structure, manouvre=2G, jump=2, powerplant=6, main bridge with Model/6fib, backup bridge with Model/3fib, 4x100T particle accelerator bays (factor-8), 30 triple missile turrets in 5 batteries (factor-5), 30 dual fusion gun turrets in 6 batteries (factor-6), 12 triple sandcaster turrets in 6 batteries (factor-5), meson screen (factor-1), armoured hull (factor-3), fuel=3380 tons (2 parsecs, 28 days endurance), 300 staterooms

Crew Sections:

Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings
Engineering: 4 officers and 30 ratings
Gunnery: 3 officers and 27 ratings
Flight: 2 officers and 76 ratings
Service: 3 officers and 23 ratings
Medical: 1 officer and 2 ratings
Security: 1 officer and 12 ratings
Marines: 328 (see organisation notes below)

MCr 11380.088 singly (incl. arch fee MCr 112.674), MCr 9013.931 in quantity, plus MCr 1899.740 of small craft - 165 weeks singly, 132 weeks in quantity

For smaller operations there is the *Karve*-class assault carrier.

Karve Class Assault Carrier

CT-D4226E4-251000-05403-0 MCr 4306.333 4.5ktons
Batt bear 3 42 4 Crew=147
Batt 3 42 4 TL=12
Cargo=132, Fuel=1170, EP=270, Agility=2
10x23T *Fire Arrow* Assault Fighters, 2x40T Pinnaces, 1x23T launch tube
Fuel scoops, Fuel purifier

63000 cubic metres, close structure, manouvre=2G, jump=2, powerplant=6, main bridge with Model/5fib, backup bridge with Model/2fib, 2x50T particle accelerator bays (factor-4), 8 triple missile turrets in 4 batteries (factor-3), 8 dual fusion gun turrets in 4 batteries (factor-5), 6 triple sandcaster turrets in 3 batteries (factor-5), meson screen (factor-1), armoured hull (factor-2), fuel=1170 tons (2 parsecs, 28 days endurance), 90 staterooms

Crew Sections:

Command: 7 officers and 4 ratings
Engineering: 2 officers and 10 ratings
Gunnery: 2 officers and 18 ratings
Flight: 2 officers and 25 ratings
Service: 1 officer and 8 ratings
Medical: 1 officer
Security: 4 ratings
Marines: 63 (see organisation notes below)

MCr 3925.353 singly (incl. arch fee MCr 38.865), MCr 3109.190 in quantity, plus MCr 380.980 of small craft - 146 weeks singly, 117 weeks in quantity

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The Shipyard

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Task Force Organisation

The *Dragonship* Task force consists of four infantry platoons and a support platoon, each fully-manned at 60. There is additionally a headquarters (HQ) section of 18 and a carrier party of ten, for a total strength of 328. 55 *Fire Arrows* are assigned.

HQ section *Fire Arrow* (FA) assignments:

One FA: Unit CO, Intel Officer, 2×Trooper, Pilot, Gunner
One FA: Unit XO, Ops Officer, 2×Trooper, Pilot, Gunner
One FA: Unit Senior NCO, 3×Trooper, Pilot, Gunner

Support platoon *Fire Arrow* assignments:

One FA: Platoon CO, 3×Troopers, Pilot, Gunner
One FA: Platoon Sgt., FlightControl/Fwd.Observer, 2×Trooper, Pilot, Gunner
One FA: 4×Comm Techs, Pilot, Gunner
One FA: 4×Medics, Pilot, Gunner
Two FAs: Each 4×Combat Engineers, Pilot, Gunner
Four FAs: Each 4×Heavy Weapons Trooper, Pilot, Gunner

Infantry platoons are arranged into a command group and three infantry sections, with *Fire Arrow* assignments as follows:

One FA (Command Group): Platoon CO, Platoon Sgt., Medic, Comm Tech, Pilot, Gunner
Three FAs Each Section: Section NCO, 11×Troopers, 3×Pilot, 3×Gunner

The carrier party are not normally assigned to *Fire Arrows*, except for one pilot and one gunner to each of two designated “backup” craft. Manning of the carrier party is as follows:

Quartermaster SNCO, 2×Comm Techs, 2×Technicians, 1×Medic
Two FAs (backup): 2×Pilots, 2×Gunners

The *Karve* task force consists of one infantry platoon, theoretically assigned as above, and a carrier party of three. There are ten *Fire Arrows* assigned; the carrier party consists of the quartermaster SNCO, a communications technician, and a general technician, for a total strength of 63. ☸

Critics' Corner

Six Guns: Lasers

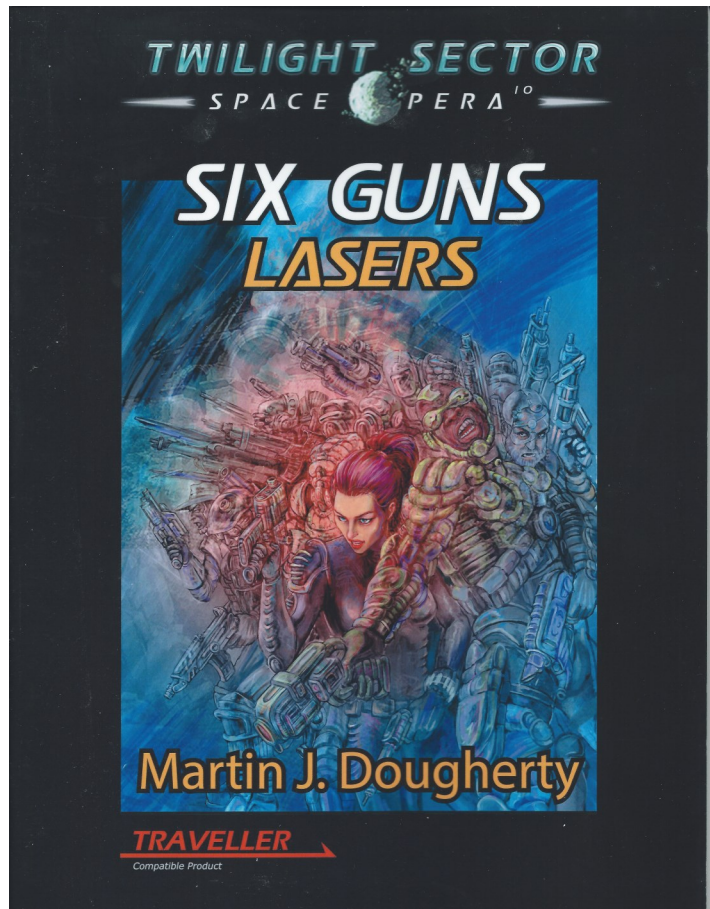
Reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Six Guns: Lasers. Martin J. Dougherty
Terra/Sol Games LLC <http://www.terrasolgames.com>
60pp., softcover
price information not available

The reviewer received his copy as a Kickstarter backer.

Lasers are a standard item in most *Traveller* versions, but in the core rules—and even in most supplements—all you get are basic generic versions of the weapon. It is generally left to the referee and perhaps some homebrew rules to give a laser a “personality” of its own, and to adjust for such things as quality of manufacture.

Enter *Six Guns: Lasers*. This slim volume packs a good amount of information about personal lasers (as opposed to ship weapons) into its pages, from a basic explanation of just how lasers work from the user’s point of view (i.e., what happens when you shoot someone/something) to an overview of both



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Critics' Corner

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direct-injection powered and chemical-cartridge lasers, to a selection of laser weapons and accessories, and throws in an adventure and a bunch of characters. Reading through the book is recommended at least once, as the information presented is sensibly ordered, and information from later in the book assumes that you are familiar with the earlier information. Thus, the basic explanation of a laser's function is followed by the overview of the two general classes of laser, which in turn is followed by some optional (and in some cases mutually-exclusive) rules for refereeing lasers in an adventure, taking into account their nature. The rules include discussion of various types of armor, and adding laser protection to armor types that don't normally have it; they also include adjustments to aiming DMs, penetration, and "where is that b***** firing from, anyway?".

After the rules modifications, there is a section of accessories and related items, which includes such things as rechargers, converter cartridges (to convert slugthrowers to lasers), designator systems, and so on. There aren't many such items, but the selection provided is definitely idea-provoking, and expands on the basic "shoot the bad guy" use of personal laser weapons.

The next section is the meat of the volume: the lasers themselves (along with magazines, power packs, cartridges, etc.). Each weapon has a good textual description, outlining its intended purpose (you don't use a cartridge laser revolver for suppressive

fire, and a heavy laser rifle that's good for suppressive fire isn't necessarily a good sniper weapon, and so on), power requirements, available accessories, and special considerations (e.g., the Beacon Optics LR-062 fires three-pulse bursts, giving it slightly better penetration than the SL-002, whose single pulse does more damage—but the mechanics and electronics for the LR-062 make it less durable). Each weapon has a stat block and a line drawing; the stat blocks were printed in too large a font, which causes formatting issues, but nothing insuperable, as they're simple enough to decipher.

The adventure that follows the weapons is very much designed for the Terra/Sol setting; moving it into the OTU would require a fair amount of work, and it pretty much *must* be set in a frontier area not thoroughly dominated by a major polity. It's presented mostly as a setup, with some options for the PCs to pursue to accomplish the mission, and a hook for continuing once the adventure is completed. Details are thin on the ground—but more than what's presented isn't really needed.

The final section presents four NPCs and two items that aren't marked as such but can only be described as Library Data entries. They are unconnected with the adventure, and indeed, two of them don't appear to have any connection with the subject matter of this book—but all have their interesting points.

Without price data, it's hard to say whether it's good value for the money—but if it ends up priced at the same point as the similarly-sized *Six Guns: Rescue Organizations*, it won't be poor value. 🌀

Active Measures

Evensong

by Michael Brown

The adventurers are called upon to rescue a singer with a unique vocal talent from pirates intent on using her to secure a legendary treasure.

Evensong is a Classic *Traveller* adventure for a group of 3-5 characters with varied career backgrounds. It is assumed that the group has been working together for some time prior to the adventure. The initial action takes place on any Imperial world, but moves to a deserted area elsewhere. No particular skills or equipment are necessary for the

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adventure, but the team will find access to a starship and perhaps appropriate survival gear useful.

Pre-adventure Preparation

The referee will need to select or create the following items:

- A pirate crew; calibrated to the PCs' capabilities. Their leader, Omatari Zealous, is detailed under NPCs below
- A starship serving as a pirate corsair; perhaps more powerful than the PCs'
- A desolate area; an unpopulated region of a mainworld or an entire world with Population 0
- A system of caverns, possibly populated with animals (*Book 3: Worlds and Adventures*)
- A starship buried in the caverns, with deckplans
- The capabilities of a ship's Anti-Hijack program (*Book 2: Starships*), specifically, its deadline
- The personality of a legendary pirate
- A pirate hoard

Intro: Heaven Had Wanted One Immortal Song

The team's previous mission was a complete success, and the rewards were great: not only were they paid everything they asked, the client threw in tickets (worth hundreds of credits and almost impossible to get) to the latest Kristallin concert. The client also told the adventurers if they mentioned his name to Kristallin's staff, they might get to meet the singer backstage after the show.

An opening act takes the stage first, playing several sets to the audience's great enjoyment. Then after what seems to be a few minutes of minor confusion, they play another set. Then another... and another. As the time for Kristallin's appearance draws near, the crowd grows increasingly ugly, hurling boos, catcalls and insults, ready to hurl objects.

Just as the audience is about to storm the stage, the band is hurriedly called off. An announcement goes out over the PA system that due to illness, Kris-

tallin will not be performing; the patrons are invited to report to the admission windows for a full refund.

As the assemblage begins angrily filing out, one of Kristallin's stage crew members nervously asks the PCs to accompany him backstage. If the group follows, they are taken to meet her manager, Gezar dos Santos, an anxious man with a worry-creased face. He asked to meet with the adventurers because of their transaction with their previous client, who happens to be a personal friend of Kristallin. Dos Santos hopes the PCs can solve his problem as well.

The reason given for Kristallin's no-show is a lie. The truth is that no one knows her whereabouts. Handlers sent to her dressing room to escort her to the stage reported that she was nowhere to be found. A hasty search turned up nothing.

Dos Santos is convinced that the singer is the victim of foul play; her security team, while capable, is stretched thin. Frankly, they weren't prepared for something like this; their duties normally went no farther than keeping the occasional overly-ardent admirer at bay. Dos Santos feels he needs the team's expertise to help locate and rescue her, if possible. He offers them Cr3,000 each on the spot to bolster his security staff and find Kristallin.

Fortunately for the group, they will quickly find evidence that Kristallin is still somewhere within the venue. Unfortunately, it's a big property, with many places to hide:

To locate Kristallin within the building:

DIFFICULT; INT; 5 minutes

REFEREE: If the heroes split up, each subgroup or individual gets to throw for the task.

If successful, the team finds Kristallin in a little-used basement storeroom, guarded by several rough-looking individuals (a number equal to the PCs who find them, minimum 2) armed with SMGs, who are awaiting an opportunity to move her out of the building once the heat is off. Half of the assailants engage the PCs while the others attempt to spirit Kristallin away. They are not above threatening her

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life if necessary; nor are they above killing any PCs who interfere.

If the team doesn't find Kristallin, they are eventually summoned back to dos Santos. He shows them a security holo featuring a group of men taking a bound and gagged Kristallin out of a rear service entrance. Before leaving, one of the men holds a handwritten sign up to the camera stating they will kill the vocalist if the police are called.

Dos Santos doesn't dare disobey. But he offers the heroes ten times his previous offer to find Kristallin and bring her back before the hooligans visit whatever harm they are intending upon her.

Interlude: However Rude the Sound

It is important to the plot that the referee allow the ruffians to escape with Kristallin, and he or she should manipulate the encounter to favor the enemies, within reason. However, it's possible that no matter what the referee does, the PCs are either strong enough or clever enough to win. What then?

Several options are available: the opponents could always try again, perhaps using reinforcements, or perhaps wait for an opportunity when Kristallin is alone (while she is sleeping, for example). One of the PCs' or Kristallin's friends could be kidnapped and an exchange offered. The foes could be upgraded, giving them advanced or uncommon weapons, for example. They are also wily enough to engineer a diversion, such as a riot or a fake call to the police, and abduct the singer while the commotion is being sorted out. The referee will doubtless come up with other options not detailed here.

Chorus: The Liquid Music of Her Voice

Assuming the adventurers accept the assignment from dos Santos, they are faced with the problem of finding who took Kristallin, which perhaps offers a clue to where they took her:

To identify Kristallin's kidnappers:

ROUTINE; Ex-Pirate (terms), Streetwise

REFEREE: The task assumes a former career of Pirate. Former Navy, Rogue, and Law Enforcement characters may also attempt the task (replacing the Ex-Pirate modifier above), but in these cases, the Task Difficulty becomes DIFFICULT. Any other prior career may attempt the task with FORMIDABLE difficulty.

Success allows the group to identify the abductors: members of a particularly-lethal pirate band wanted by the Imperial Navy and several system navies (see NPCs below). What they would want with a famous entertainer is unclear, but anyone knowing about them knows that the clock is ticking; they will surely kill Kristallin the second her usefulness to them is at an end. The adventurers' must locate her and her kidnappers as quickly as possible; discover where the pirates intend to go; and what they want to make Kristallin do.

Once the marauders escape with Kristallin, they pile her into an air/raft and make for their small craft. Where this is depends on the world; if the environment is non-hostile, the ship is hidden in a wilderness area; if hostile—or the referee simply wants to raise the stakes—the vessel is in a starport hangar controlled by criminals affiliated with, or just plain afraid of, the raiders. The referee should adjust this group to give the heroes a challenge.

If the PCs don't chase the buccaneers with alacrity, they first have to figure out where they went:

To locate the pirates:

DIFFICULT; Ex-Pirate (terms), Streetwise, Tactics; 10 minutes

REFEREE: Ex-Rogues may attempt the task, but they use terms/2 (round down). If any others attempt the task, the difficulty becomes FORMIDABLE. Regardless, anyone asking takes a -2 to reactions, with former Navy or Law Enforcement taking twice that.

If the group at any time throws both a Critical Success on the above task and a Reaction of 9+, they will learn the legend of Cervantes Diabolique (see below), offering a motivation for the raiders.

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The time to the ship's boat is 8D minutes. The pirates require a subsequent 5D minutes securing Kristallin and prepping the ship for launch. It takes an hour to rendezvous and dock with their main vessel in orbit. The vessel jumps outsystem as soon as possible. The adventurers thus have up to two hours to try and intercept the brigands before they leave the planet.

If the heroes intercept the brigands before they leave the planet's surface, a firefight is inevitable. But see "Interlude: However Rude the Sound", above. If the team misses the pirates on the surface, but catches up to them insystem, the pirates fight a ferocious space battle until they can bring the jump drive online and jump outsystem.

If the heroes miss the pirates altogether and the opponents end up escaping with Kristallin, all is not lost. There is a way to determine their possible course heading. If the group is still onplanet, they can use the locate task above to find out through street contacts where Kristallin was being taken (if succesful, see "Bridge: Who, As They Sung, Would Take the Prison'd Soul", below) but the time becomes 100 minutes. If they confronted the pirate ship in space, they may be able to use their ship's sensors to determine the other vessel's jump vector using its latent energy signature:

To determine the pirates' jump vector:

FORMIDABLE: Navigation, Computer, Electronics; 1 hour

Success means the team determines a reasonable destination (or small set of destinations) for the buccaneers. Of course, they'll still have to make the jump.

If the heroes don't have their own starship, dos Santos can authorize the use of one of the show's cargo vessels and a pilot, if necessary. The referee should decide the speed and power of this ship relative to the pirates'.

Bridge: Who, As They Sung, Would Take the Prison'd Soul

The raiders avoid as many patrols and traffic control sensors as they can en route to their destination. If the world is interdicted, this will slow the rogues down greatly as they must also skirt any automated monitors.

When the PCs arrive depends on how diligently they pursued the pirates and what kind of transportation they secured. They may be mere hours behind the marauders, or much farther behind. The adventure from this point on assumes the heroes aren't far behind the cutthroats.

The spot chosen by the brigands is in badlands far from civilization (if any). They are unconcerned about hiding their ship; they believe they have shaken pursuit and made planetfall undetected. Thus, their vessel is out in the open, with only a token guard. A cave entrance is 100 meters away.

Collision: A Window to the Secret Places

The cave mouth accesses a natural cave system. One cavern opens into a section of a starship hull with an airlock door; not enough of the vessel is visible to tell its class, or how long it has been in the caverns. However, anyone with Demolitions skill (*Book 4: Mercenary*) can tell the craft was deliberately buried, using expertly-placed explosives. An additional electronic lock (see Ship's Locker below) has been added to the hatch; its rude appearance belies the intricacy of its inner workings. It is wired with enough high explosives to end attempts to tamper with it with a massive cave-in; again, Demolitions skill can detect this.

If the referee decides that the ruffians haven't yet gained access, the PCs' appearance will surely start a firefight. Kristallin is in danger from ricochets and being used as a human shield. The pirates, however, will ask no quarter and give none. While they aren't willing to fight to the death (yet), they will fight ferociously, especially if Captain Zealous—who is present—is endangered.

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If the heroes don't encounter the outlaws while they are trying to access the hatch, there is still time; Kristallin must sing the song perfectly—the proper notes in the proper order in the proper key—to disengage the lock—a daunting task even when she doesn't have guns pointed at her; the pirates' threats are making her nervous, so she is making mistakes:

To sing the proper code to open the lock:

IMPOSSIBLE; Perform (Singing); 30 seconds

REFEREE: Multiple attempts may be made, with +1 added to each subsequent attempt. Thus, Kristallin will not succeed on her first try, but will learn the notes necessary through practice.

Failed attempts may buy the adventurers enough time to catch up to the villains.

Captain Zealous and her crew aren't known for patience or charity. After each unsuccessful attempt to sing the lock open, the referee should throw Zealous' reaction; 7- means she orders her crew to rough Kristallin up, for 1D damage each time. Should the beatings render her unconscious, she will be carried to the craft outside and allowed to recover before being brought back into the cave to try again.

Success on the singing throw deactivates the Bardlock and automatically opens the ship's airlock. Unknown to the intruders, accessing the ship awakened its computer, which had been operating in low-power mode since its burial. It is a cutting edge (for its time) machine, with personality emulation software advanced enough to allow it to convincingly masquerade as an uploaded Diabolique. It is not a true AI, however. Once the heroes/pirates board the vessel, the computer awakens and runs the ship's Anti-Hijack program. Meanwhile, "Diabolique" challenges and taunts them.

The threat ends when the computer is shut down or destroyed, or all of its offensive capabilities have been disabled. A canny referee could manipulate events to force both groups to work together to bring this about.

Coda: A Defiance to the Giddy Wheel of Fortune

Once the computer has been dealt with, the crew can access the hoard locked in the ship's cargo hold. There might be additional rewards such as returning particularly valuable items to their original owners (possibly leading to several subsequent adventures) and turning over information on the ship to the authorities. Records show that it is a private vessel that disappeared from a neighboring subsector years ago. If the PCs captured any of the pirates, especially Captain Zealous, they will find a substantial reward awaits them courtesy of the Imperial authorities.

Of course, the greatest reward is the safe return of Kristallin to her crew and fans. An overjoyed dos Santos will gladly pay as promised. And since the show must go on, as soon as it can be arranged, the PCs will be offered front row seats to a concert that is now dedicated to them.

The referee should determine the flow of subsequent events.

NPCs

Kristallin 7A8A55 Age 30 Cr200,000

3 terms Other (Entertainer);

Member Travellers' Aid Society

Perform (Singing)-5, Blade Cbt-1; Jack-O-T-2;

Admin-1

Kristallin is one of a handful of humans gifted with a ten-octave range. In addition, an unusual palate structure gives her a particularly resonant voice; she has singing ability well beyond that of normal vocalists. She has parlayed this ability into a lucrative career and a way out of a hard-knock life on her own homeworld. When singing, she adds her skill level to audience Reactions. She is built using the tables in "The "Other" Option: An Extended Career for Classic Traveller" (*Freelance Traveller*, January/February 2014 issue.)

Capt. Omatari Zealous 486BC8 Age 46 Cr150,000

7 terms Pirate Leader

Brawling-3, Gun Cbt-2, Blade Cbt-1, Pilot-3

Corsair, SMG

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Despite being small of stature (she stands only 152 cm tall and masses 50 kg under 1g), Zealous has an outsized ruthlessness and cunning that has helped her destroy enemies and evade concerted Imperial efforts to capture her. She is obsessed with Terra's ancient Egyptians, and adopts Egyptian-styled accessories. Recovering Cervantes Diabolique's fabled treasure represents her Big Score; she will let nothing stand in her way.

Zealous heard the Legend of Cervantes Diabolique (see below) many times, but never dreamed she'd ever find the fabled hoard, until she happened to stumble across some notes written in an arcane code in an old book. The notes proved to belong to none other than Diabolique, and while they didn't say exactly where the treasure was, there were enough clues that Zealous eventually deduced them. It was then that she discovered that the legend of the Bardlock (see Ship's Locker below) was true. Undaunted, Zealous chased down the required song, then turned to finding someone able to sing it; thus the current scheme.

Her crew is ruthless, uncouth, and fanatically loyal. Their modus operandi includes not leaving witnesses, and as a result are among the Imperial Navy's Most Wanted pirate bands. They are typically armed with SMGs and knives.

Ship's Locker: The Bardlock

(TL unknown): Secures valuables with a unique song as its code. 2 kg (not counting additional fasteners such as chains, etc.) Cr Unknown.

This device is unique in the Imperium. Previously the property of the notorious Cervantes Diabolique, it's not known whether he built, commissioned, or found it; but it is considered (in legend, anyway) to be the most secure lock ever devised.

The so-called Bardlock is a digital lock that responds to sound, but not the simple voice command of the sort that can be found all over the Imperium. The device requires a particular song sung in a par-

ticular key in a particular octave range. These requirements are far beyond the capabilities of the average singer. The lock's digital protections can be augmented with physical fasteners such as chains, ropes, or cables, but it has a dedicated computer and a powerful electromagnet that effectively renders access to whatever it is securing impossible.

The Bardlock has defenses against physical tampering in the form of high explosives that deal 12D to anyone attempting it.

Successfully opening the lock deactivates its defenses both electronic and physical. The device can then be reprogrammed by anyone with sufficient Computer skill.

The referee is encouraged to set the Bardlock's Tech Level to as advanced a level as desired.

The Legend of Cervantes Diabolique

There is not a pirate in the sector that hasn't heard the legend of Admiral (his men didn't dare refer to him as a mere captain) Cervantes Diabolique. This notorious pirate lord cut a bloody swath some 150 years ago. Rumor has it he was responsible for thousands of deaths and the destruction of a handpicked Imperial task force assigned to bring him to heel—and the families of the task force's leaders afterward. His appetite for plunder was vast; he is whispered to have caused the bankruptcy of several planets by emptying out their treasuries.

The legend goes that Diabolique decided to retire, hiding his amassed ill-gotten gains until the heat died down and he could return for it. To secure his booty further, he used the most complex lock anyone had ever seen, installing it on the entrance to the hiding place. And as yet one final safeguard, he entrusted the location of the horde to only one other: his First Mate, who proved to be as greedy as Diabolique. This worthy quickly decided such a treasure should finance his retirement instead; to that end, he quietly slipped Diabolique's whereabouts to the Imperial Navy and waited for the empire to do his dirty work. But word reached Diabolique of the

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Active Measures

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treachery, and a final confrontation took place between the two men on a lonely asteroid, just before Imperial missiles sent them both to the Great Black .

Rumors that one or both actually survived aside, the fabled riches were (depending on who one

asked) still out there somewhere, although most people consider them just a myth. An embellishment of the fable states that the spirit of Cervantes Diabolique still guards the treasure, along with the cunning lock. ✪

The Prep Room

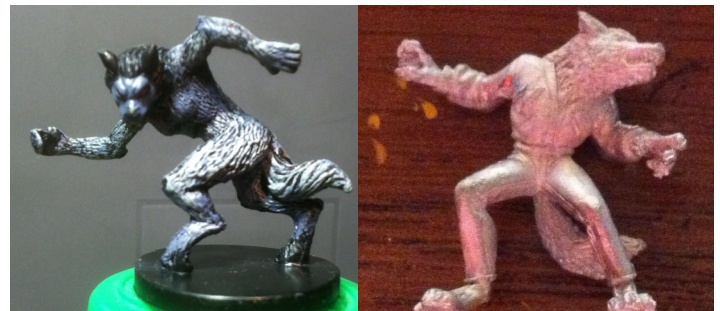
The Prep Room will carry those articles that really don't fit in any other section, and which focus on the sort of work that a referee—or player—might do “behind the scenes” to prepare for a session or adventure.

Modifying Miniatures for *Traveller*

by Robert DeVoe

In my many years of being a player and a game master I have found that using miniatures is helpful. It helps players see what is going on and where characters are in relation to each other and of course to the opposition. There were occasions when area affect damage was debated by characters suddenly saying they were not in the effect zone and then arguing over what was said and what was meant. Sometimes this is the player trying to protect his character, sometimes it is poor description by the game master. Whichever, miniatures have been a staple at my games for over 20 years.

Unfortunately there is not much in the way of miniatures for *Traveller*. Back in 1983, Grenadier produced several box sets of miniatures for *Traveller*, and RAFM produced the odd space character here and there. There are some companies that produce space-based miniatures in the 25/28mm range: Reaper Miniatures (the Chronoscape line), Victory Force Miniatures, and Hydra Miniatures (to name a few). However, these lines are only useable if you want to play a human, at least as one of the major races. This leaves only the option of playing humans only, trolling eBay looking for pieces (you can search with “Grenadier *Traveller*” and usually get a hit every week), or taking matters into your own hands.



The D&D Werewolf

Tommy the Wolfman

In this article I will show how I converted the werewolf from the Dungeons and Dragons Giants of Legend release into a gun-toting Vargr, and Tommy the Wolf Man from Reaper Miniatures into a sword-wielding Vargr. Both are a little large for the true 25mm scale in which the Grenadier Vargr were cast, but then, most miniatures these days are 28mm scale and some push the 30mm envelope. When you compare them to the ‘original’ miniatures it is very noticeable, but you can always get around it by saying some characters are larger than the race average.

To make the conversion you will need several tools and supplies. For tools you will need an X-Acto knife, small smooth pliers, clay molding tools (at least the pick and the small flat paddle), small files, a small hand drill, and a small wire cutter. For supplies you will need a small paperclip, some superglue of some kind, and green stuff (modeling putty—yes, it’s really called “green stuff”). Most of these items should be available in your local gaming shop, but you may find the tools cheaper if you shop around at hobby stores (RC stores, or Hobby Lobby).

For the potential I saw in the werewolf, the first thing I wanted to do was reposition the arms a bit.

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This is one of the easiest things to do when the mini is plastic. I cut the arms off at the elbow using the knife. I also trimmed most of the creature's mane off that was flowing down the back.



Adjusting the arm position

Then I used the hand drill to make a hole up each arm. I cut off a piece of paper clip and then glued the metal into the arm. This is needed so that you can 'pin' the arm into the new position. I then test fitted the lower arm to the position I wanted and drilled new holes into the forearms.



Dressing with green stuff

Vargr don't necessarily run around in the buff, so putting clothes on is the next step (actually, this is a process best done in several steps). Green stuff is both a joy and a pain to work with: a joy because it is very malleable, not runny soft, and will hold its

shape well; a pain because it is very sticky and loves to hold fingerprints. When molding pants, don't forget to put in folds and creases. This can be done with the modeling tool; dip the tool in water otherwise it too will stick to the green stuff. You can also use the flat end to mash out finger prints and move it into the hard to reach areas. The X-Acto can be used to cut edges and if you want to run a seam somewhere. You have to wait 24 hours *after each step* for the green stuff to fully cure. Then move to the next section of clothing. From experience, don't try to do the whole figure's clothing set in one day, as you usually need about half of the figure to hold while working the green stuff on the other half. It is very important to have a vision of what type of clothes the

figure will have so you know how everything should look. The files are useful to remove excess bits, smooth out fingerprints, or put in a new crease.

When creating something to put in the figure's hands it is often useful to have a firmer structure underneath the green stuff. For a gun cut a piece of paperclip and bend it into a 90 angle. Put some green stuff around it and then put it into the figure's hand. Now comes the tricky part, walk away for 15 minutes or so; when you come back the green stuff will be a little more solid. You can use the molding tools to shape a gun. You can also use smooth pliers to put a shape on both sides. Poke a hole in the end for the muzzle. Again, remember to wet your tools periodically to keep them from sticking. Adding a belt (or strap) is a matter of rolling a thin piece of green stuff and then stretching and wrapping it around the figure. Smash down the roundness with your molding tool. Holsters are a little tricky, green stuff does not always like to stick to dry green stuff, so a dab of superglue will probably be needed. I added a vest/jacket and used the pliers to pull edges away to show movement and added back some hair on her head.

Finally when everything is molded the way you want it, you can paint it.

Tommy the Wolf Man was by far the easier conversion. Using the X-Acto I trimmed off the letter from the jacket and used the files to smooth the area down. I put a belt on him because I was already thinking ahead and wanted to add equipment to his belt.

I have a variety of weapon trees and chose an etched sword to put in to his hand. On test fitting the hand would have to be closed somewhat to better look like it was grasping the sword. I gently used the smooth pliers to achieve this. I also had a spare gun from a Tau Fire Warrior. I cut it down and also



The painted Vargr

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The finished Tommy

undercut it some more to give the appearance of a barrel. A little putty worked to make a clip. I tried a variety of test fits as to where I wanted to place the gun. I finally decided on an over the back sling and glued it into place.

However now I realized that his waist was becoming obscured. And I still wanted to add a

scabbard. I'll admit the scabbard did not turn out exactly as I wanted. I used green stuff to shape it but had to superglue it into place. I guess when I did I did not realize I slightly bent it.

Painting Tommy the Vargr was pretty straight forward. There was not a lot of hanging clothes and hard to reach angles.

The overall results, with just a bit of care and planning, can be quite good, as you can see. You'll need to develop your own techniques for all the fiddly bits, but ultimately, the core of the entire process is going to be learning to see the possibilities in the miniatures you start with. ❄️

In A Store Near You

Smart Fabrics

by Glenn Grant

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2001.

Consumers in high-tech societies may select from a bewildering variety of options when shopping for clothing or other items made from fabric, such as tents and bags. A scanner booth generates a 3D model of the shopper, which can be saved to a smart card or personal organizer. Provided with this model, automated manufacturing equipment (often located in the store) can produce any requested garment within a few hours—sometimes minutes—custom-fitted to the shopper's measurements, and integrating the selected features.

A single Smart Fabric can have a maximum number of optional capabilities equal to its TL minus 8. Thus, TL9 Smart Fabric can have only 1 capability, TL15 up to 7 capabilities. Of course, a garment can consist of multiple layers of fabric, thus allowing it to have more capabilities than would otherwise be possible—but with additional cost, weight, volume, and heat retention.

All costs, masses and stored volumes listed below are per square meter of Smart Fabric, and are in addition to the cost, mass and volume of the Basic Fabric itself. For a full suit, 2m² is the minimum needed to completely cover the typical adult human from head to foot. More fabric should be used for looser, bulkier, padded, or layered garments.

- To cover the torso and arms (but not the head), use at least 0.8m².
- To cover just the torso, use at least 0.4m².
- To cover the lower body from the waist down, use at least 1m².
- To cover the entire head and neck, use about 0.2m².
- For gloves, use about 0.04m² per pair.
- For footwear, use about 0.06m² to 0.1m² per pair.

Except as noted, most options require tiny rechargeable batteries, which are included in the price. Most clothing designs include discreet pockets for batteries and various personal electronic items such as Comms.

All Smart Fabric features break down over time due to wear and tear, especially from cleaning. They eventually become inoperable, some faster than oth-

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ers. Video Fabric-12 will become blurry and illegible after perhaps only 30 days' use and cleaning, while Variable Colour-12 will last much longer. Higher TL materials are longer lasting.

Smart Fabrics should be washed only by cleaning technologies of equal or higher Tech Level; lower-tech methods will damage or destroy them.

These materials cannot be properly tailored at home by the consumer without a special skill and expensive computer-driven equipment.

Some options cannot be combined in the same fabric, such as Electro-Adhesive and Touch-Sensitive (because the adhesive area cannot also be touch-sensitive).

Some combinations of options are redundant, e.g. Video Display includes Electroluminescent, while Optical Chameleon includes both Variable Color and Variable Shade.

The Smart Fabric Catalog

The Basic Fabric and each option described is followed by its Mass in kg, its Cost in Cr, and its Stored Volume in liters, then the description appears indented on the next line. Omitted information for mass or volume indicates negligible or no change from Basic Fabric. All figures are in addition to the corresponding figures for Basic Fabric.

Basic Fabric-9: 0.5kg 10Cr 0.5l
 (figures are per 1m²) Optional capabilities are detailed below. Computer circuitry is integrated into the weave of all Smart Fabrics, giving them a specialized computational Rating of 1, for all other tasks -1. Thus, Video Display fabric is R1 for video display tasks, R-1 for all others. The rating is the same regardless of the amount of fabric. (For higher ratings, see "Computational Array-13-15", below.) Smart Fabric integrates seamlessly with most Comms, Business Rings, computers, and other personal electronics.

Smart Fabric Options, by Tech Level:

Motion Capture-9: — 50Cr —
 Captures body-motion data to any computer, for VR and tele-operation applications. Does not provide tactile or force feedback.

Phosphorescent-9: — 25Cr —
 Absorbs sunlight and glows for several hours. Once charged, the fabric's phosphors cannot be "turned off", and will continue to glow until their energy is dissipated.

Thermo-Electric-9: 0.25kg 300Cr 0.25l
 Self-heating and -cooling. Uses between 100 and 1000w, depending on conditions, and requires a power source. ('Photoelectric' option is usually sufficient to power only the lowest settings.)

Electro-Adhesive-10: 0.3kg 5000Cr 0.3l
 Becomes extremely sticky under a small current; otherwise non-sticky. Usually applied only to the soles of footwear for use in microgravity (see 'Stickyfeet', *Central Supply Catalogue* p.15), or to the palms and fingers of gloves, providing added traction in climbing, for example. A bolt of Electro-Adhesive material, fixed to the ground and fitted with a motion-detector, could be used as a humane (if expensive) trap for small animals. Designed into carpet, it will seriously hinder intruders, but not authorized personnel. Mass and price shown are for 1m²; use at least 0.04m² for a pair of Sticky-feet sole-patches, 0.02m² for a pair of Sticky-gloves. Patches must be replaced regularly at 4000Cr/m².

Variable Color-10/12: — 25Cr —
 Varies within a spectrum between any two primary colors, at a set tonal value (i.e. light, medium, or dark), unless combined with Variable Shade option. At TL12, varies across nearly the full color spectrum, at a set tonal value. Able to display various patterns (pinstripes, checkers, dots) and large-size text, but refreshes slowly (about once per second). Not a useful video or computer display.

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Variable Shade-10: — 25Cr —
Varies within a spectrum of tonal values from dark to light, within a single color (unless combined with Variable Color option). See Variable Color option for additional description.

Water Shedding-10: — 25Cr —
Breaths easily, but waterproof under most wet-weather conditions. Actively channels water from the interior to the exterior surface. Water-shedding fabric is not waterproof when fully immersed, but will dry itself rapidly even after being soaked through.

Biomonitors-11: 0.2kg 200Cr 0.2l
Captures the wearer's body temperature, blood pressure, pulse rate, respiration rate, and blood oxygen saturation. May include a pedometer/calorimeter for fitness buffs.

Electroluminescent-11: — 70Cr —
Produces light in a fixed color of variable intensity. Variable colors at TL12+. At maximum intensity, illuminates up to 10m radius for about 1 hour on a small battery. Will glow at lower intensity for several days, or can be connected to a continuous power source. Can flash to attract attention, and display various patterns or simple static messages in large text, but is not a useful video display.

Speaker/Microphone-11: 0.1kg 200Cr 0.1l
Can stiffen circular panels which vibrate to produce sound. Also receives sound through smaller panels that act as microphones. Quality of sound output and reception tends to vary with the size of panel, and how firmly anchored it is - e.g., a "Sound-Shirt" can reproduce human speech recognizably with some distortion, while a "Boom-Bedsheet" stapled to a wall will cleanly reproduce music with heavy bass and clean high frequencies. Requires 5w to 200w power, depending on volume and size.

Variable Opacity-11: — 100Cr —
Varies from opaque to nearly-transparent. Tends to be more popular with the fashion industry than with the general public.

Video Display-11: — 100Cr —
Low-resolution RGB fibre-optic weave. Requires video input from camera, Comm, or recording (not included). Otherwise same capabilities as Electroluminescent.

Force Feedback-12: 0.5kg 1000Cr 0.5l
Flexes to provide limited tactile/force feedback for tele-operation or VR.

Optical Chameleon-12: 0.25kg 500Cr 0.25l
Medium-resolution variable-color display material. Short-range moving images collected by sensors on one side of garment are displayed on the opposite side, to camouflage the wearer. Confers +2 DM to surprise rolls when stationary, +1 when moving (+3,+2 in darkness), and DM-1 to spot with optical sensors. Can also be used as medium-resolution Video Display.

Photoelectric-12: 0.25kg 20Cr 0.25l
Generates power when exposed to sunlight. Output varies with conditions, but on an Atmos 6 world, 1AU from a G0v sun, a full suit will generate about 100w (250w at TL14). A 1m² area entirely exposed to the same light will generate about 300w (650w at TL14). Even the slightest cloud cover drastically cuts the output. In vacuum, output is at least three times as many watts.

Computer-13/15: 1kg 700Cr 1l
Provides a higher computation rating than Basic Fabric by increasing the density of circuitry and connecting regions of the fabric into an array. Specialized Rating R2 at TL13, R3 at TL15.

Self-Repairing-12: — 200Cr —
Self-repairs minor splits, tears, abrasions, etc.

Touch Sensitive-12: — 200Cr —
Haptic transducers in the fabric partially extend the wearer's sense of touch to the exterior of their clothes. Senses heat, cold, moisture, impacts, and texture, though much less acutely than human skin. Requires sensory jack implant

In A Store Near You

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(not included). Touch Fabric has the strange effect of making one's clothes feel as if they were literally part of one's body, thus providing a heightened awareness of one's surroundings. Applied to bulky armor, reduces DEX penalty by 1, with practice. Extremely useful when applied to the exterior of vac suits or other bulky hazardous-environment gear.

Toxin Filtering-12: 0.5kg 250Cr 0.5l

Filters a range of known toxins from atmosphere. Commonly found in filter suits (*Central Supply Catalog* p.12).

Variable Rigidity-12: 1kg 1kCr 1l

Can instantly rigidify when impact sensors are triggered, conferring an armor rating of r1 versus subsequent impacts (DM of -1 to DEX tasks when rigid). Can save the wearer's life in a fall. TL14+ versions include proximity sensors that can predict some impending impacts before they occur (on a roll of TL or less on 3D).

Variable Shape-12: 0.5kg 100Cr 0.5l

Varies cut, fit, and style of garment within a limited range. With this feature, loose garments can become snug and skintight, hemlines can shorten or lengthen by a few centimeters, lapels can widen or disappear, etc. But a dress cannot transmogrify into pants or a shirt.

Variable Reflectivity-13: — 300Cr —

Varies from matte to mirror-like. Mirror mode provides armor rating of 1 against laser weapons, but is very easy to spot with optical sensing, even at night. This feature is commonly used in environments with extreme temperature ranges.

Thermal Chameleon-13: 0.25kg 500Cr 0.25l

Similar to Optical Chameleon, but operates in the IR spectrum to break up the wearer's heat signature and imitate surrounding heat-imagery (-2 to spot with thermal sensors).

Self-Cleaning-15: — 600Cr —

Actively breaks down and sheds virtually all

foreign material trapped in or on the fabric, especially organic matter. Though not completely impervious to grime, it can be worn continuously for up to five days without acquiring a noticeable odor. However, under-layers of synthetics must be worn, because Self-Cleaning Fabric will likely identify hair as dead organic material, leaving the wearer's body virtually hairless! It will also degrade organic cloth in close contact with it.

Typical Smart-Fabric Suits

Work/Leisure Outfit-11: 1kg 170Cr 1l

Variable color, variable shade, water shedding. A dark, conservative suit at the office, transforms into colorful casual-wear for dinner, loose or skintight as desired.

Dance Club Gear-12: 1.5kg 820Cr 2l

Video display, sound, biomonitors, variable opacity. Sound panels tie into the club's sound system, putting you literally inside the music. Video display reacts to biomonitor data with flashes of color and light in sync with your body's rhythms. Opaque or translucent, depending on your mood, inhibitions, and respect for local custom.

Immersive Media-Suit-12: 2.2kg 2890Cr 2.2l

Motion-capture, force feedback, sound, touch sensitive. For VR or tele-operation use. Touch Fabric provides the illusion that the suit isn't even there.

Covert Ops Bodysuit-13: 3kg 2270Cr 3l

Water shedding, opto/thermal chameleon, variable shape. Crawl through the swamp, avoid the sentry-bots, set the charges, and slip back to the black-tie reception without even stopping to change clothes.

Adventure Climber-14: 2.1kg 1550Cr 3l

Thermo-electric, water shedding, electroluminescent, self-repair, photoelectric (generates about 250w); sticky-shoes and -gloves. The glow of your climbing suit will help the rescue teams

In A Store Near You

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find you when you get stuck half-way up the crater wall.

Exploration Suit-15: 3.4kg 5070Cr 4l

Thermo-electric, water shedding, biomonitors, self-repair, optical chameleon, variable rigidity, variable reflectivity. What the obsessively well-outfitted Scout is wearing this season.

Typical Smart-Fabric Gear

Backpack-12: 1kg 325Cr 2l

Water shedding, variable opacity, self-repairing. De-opaque your pack and find out at a glance

where you stowed your socks—without having to unpack everything else. Increases Encumbrance limit by 20%. Capacity: 30 liters, 80kg.

Utility Vest-14: 3kg 1500Cr 3l

Water shedding, optical chameleon, photoelectric, self-repair, touch sensitive, variable rigidity, variable shape. Pocket capacity: 12 liters.

Ultra Tarpaulin-12: 50kg 34000Cr 50l

5×10m; electroluminescent, variable opacity, optical chameleon, photoelectric (generates about 650w per m² exposed to sunlight). Perhaps the most expensive way to cover a campsite ever invented! ☼

Kurishdam

The Club Room

The Forlorn

by Bruce Johnson

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2006.

The Forlorn are a minor human race of unknown origin. Commonly called Gypsies, a term they dislike, the Forlorn (the Galanglic translation of their word to describe themselves) are the only known humans to be fully zero-gee adapted.

The Forlorn appear to have originated somewhere in the area of space trailing the Imperial core, possibly somewhere in Fornast sector or more distantly to trailing. They had reached about TL 8 before some great calamity occurred on their home-world. The Forlorn themselves have only fragmentary knowledge of that time (which they call The Destruction), and no remaining records; much of their history has been passed down as oral tradition.

Apparently they had some warning of the calamity, because they undertook a desperate task: to save as much of their people, culture and history as possible.

A monstrous building effort took place on their home world, which according to their oral tradition sapped all of its resources.

Hundreds of large sub-light ships were built, several millions of people were placed on board for a journey that was supposed to only last, perhaps, ten years, to nearby systems that their scientists thought contained planets that would sustain them.

At this point what happened is unclear. Tradition holds that whatever the calamity was, reached out and overtook their ships, as well, before they were completely out of the system. Apparently great damage was done to all of the ships, many were utterly destroyed, most lost some functions. The great fleet was scattered, as well.

Through truly heroic effort, some twenty seven of the ships were brought back together. All were damaged, many had hundreds of dead and wounded, with failing life support systems, failing power generation, failing control systems.

Fortunately, the people in the surviving ships had access to a large supply of material and machinery destined for use on the now-unreachable target systems. By cannibalizing their future, they managed to bind themselves into a loose association of structures, linked by tenuous threads, but linked nonetheless.

After 1500 years, they had traveled unimaginable distances, and had come to know themselves as the Forlorn, the lost ones, as they passed star after star, never having the delta vee their feeble propulsion

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system could muster to stop at the ones their instruments indicated had habitable planets, never finding one they could stop at that had anything but baked vacuum rocks and vast, cold gas giants.

As the centuries passed they became accustomed to their low gee world, becoming masters at recycling, refashioning ships again and again, stealing matter from the cold empty space, atom by atom, with huge magnetic nets that fueled their power systems, ran their lights, kept their precious plants alive, kept them alive.

They changed, physically, as well. Their ancestors had all been chosen for their suitability of working in space, and the harsh first 500 years ruthlessly weeded out all but the fittest. They slowly became slender, lithe, conservative of air, and movement. They could only manage 0.25 gravities in the parts that were able to spin for weight. Most of the living spaces were permanently weightless.

The web that bound their ships—by now called “the 27”—became the culture that bound the Forlorn. Cooperation was essential in all things, and each individual had a grave responsibility to all, if they were to survive. Yet grim surroundings did not mean grim people. They had access to a number of plant dyes to color their world, and once the dreadful first few centuries passed, and they learned to manage their world better, they were able to expand, have families, start to live again. They had to, else succumb to the gnawing despair that had robbed so many in the early years of their will to live.

The 27 became a world of its own, slowly growing, speeding through the empty reaches of space toward what would become the Sylean Federation, and later the Third Imperium. In -240, the first report of a rumored giant sub-light ship filtered through the free trader network back to the Federation. By -180 it was clear the ship was approaching, and it was steadily decelerating. It was headed to-

wards a system with a sparsely inhabited agricultural world in the Geshaggere system. In -168, as they slowed to a wide looping orbit around the primary, the Forlorn were astonished to find themselves met by other humans in spacecraft. They were almost as astonished as the Scouts who met them.

Thus began the last upheaval in the lives of the Forlorn.

After 1500 years of believing that they were the only humans in existence, the shock of finally coming to rest, and finding, not only humans, but humans who could travel faster than light, humans who had spread to thousands of worlds, humans who were already living on the beautiful planet that they had come to think of as their new home was more than many could take. To many this was a time as dark as the original Destruction. To many their struggle to live over the last 1500 years had been an exercise in futility...they thought they were the salvation of humanity. An epidemic of depression and suicide swept the Forlorn.

Worse, when some of them ventured down to the planet, they found it was not a place they found fit to live in, it was dirty, smelly, disease ridden. They weighed too much, many were utterly paralyzed from the weight, and most of them suffered from horrible agoraphobia. They were used only to no horizon in the space between ships, or a ship's hull, at most, a hundred meters away; a horizon line many kilometers or hundreds of kilometers away left them reeling with dizziness, nausea, and a feeling of panic.

Soon, the survivors realized that after all this time, they *had* a home, and it was on their familiar, beloved 27. They realized that now they no longer had to depend on capturing material atom by atom, but they could comb the system they were in for material. They could construct large new habitats, fill them with their recycler farms, their beloved *strinthees*, and grow. Their depression turned to exhilaration, as they realized that they, of all the people they'd met were the most suited to living in space. They had technologies far in advance of the

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Syleans, in some respects: in the areas of large scale life support systems, zero gee construction, long distance sensors and analysis, manipulation of magnetic fields, hydroponics farming they were at least TL 13-14. In this they at least had something to offer the Federation. They were fortunate their first contacts were with a honest scout from an honest large corporation. Their secrets weren't stolen from them, and their interests were properly represented during the chaotic first years of their recontact with humankind. (It is doubtful that they'd have been as lucky in the later expansionist environment.)

The Forlorn in the Imperium

The Forlorn have increased their numbers since arriving in the Imperium, with a total population now estimated to be 5 to 8 million. There are pockets of them throughout the old Sylean Confederation space. Forlorn work teams are in high demand for zero gee construction, and Forlorn-designed life support systems are sold throughout the Imperium for use in vacuum and hostile environment habitats. Forlorn researchers are found in the IISS research branch, where they are working on long distance sensor and survey techniques.

Still, most Forlorn are still clustered in the Geshaggere system, living and working in their growing cluster of habitats at Geshaggere's Lagrange points. They are acutely aware that they are, by now, quite different from the people they have settled amidst, and feel considerably lost unless they are with a number of other Forlorn. Their history of intense community cooperation have made them even more group oriented than the Vilani, though without the technological conservatism that marks Vilani culture. They have a distinct language, that they work assiduously to keep alive, as they do their rich oral history and traditions.

They have a love of brightly colored clothing and surroundings, of music, of food. They have embraced a number of foods from their new surround-

ings, blending them into their cuisine as the plants have proven to be compatible with their farming systems.

Outside of the Geshaggere system, they are most often found in family groups of 15-45 individuals, never solitary. They have been the target of more than a little discrimination, for their habits of traveling in groups, their strange language, their habitual use of filter masks in the presence of outsiders, and more often, their disdain for those they consider *drangin*, 'dirt-bugs', their derogatory term for anyone who isn't happier living at zero-g in a nice clean space habitat. In other words, anyone who lives on a planet. Most Forlorn feel they are truly the only modern humans, living free from their planetary bonds. All of endless space is their homeland.

Forlorn Innovations

Forlorn life support systems: Forlorn life support systems are really designed for use in large habitats, or very large ships; they are unsuitable for use in small ships. They are a combination recycling system/farm, using a combination of plants, algae, and some rather exotic polymer and metalpolymer membrane systems to maintain a healthy atmosphere, food, and water supply over extremely long periods of time. These systems are much more efficient than current Imperial life support systems, but need more attention and are at times quite susceptible to 'poisoning' by outside contaminants, such as heavy metals, bacteria and fungi. They work best when a 'clean' system can be erected, such as on a vacuum world, or in orbit, where some decontamination can be set up for incoming personnel.

Forlorn 'Life Conditioning Unit': Displaces 2 dT/100 dT of ship to be 'conditioned', requires minimal power, and requires 0.1 Crew member/dT for maintenance and operation, counted as Steward.

Derived from Forlorn life support system components, these smaller systems are designed for use on board small ships. They are more like small hydroponic gardens than anything else. These cannot replace full life support systems, but rather, provide

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an extra amount of 'conditioning' to the system, particularly the air supply, removing trace irritants, and adding the impossible-to-replicate scents of living plants. Ships that carry such systems do not receive any cut in costs for life support, but can charge an additional 5-10% for middle and high passages, because the systems simply make it more pleasant to be on board.

PCs could well want to invest in one of these systems, not only for the increased revenue, but again, because its a lot more pleasant to be on a ship with one.

Magnetic field manipulation: The Forlorn's only resupply system during their centuries in flight were their laboriously adapted magnetic radiation and particle shields (Their original ships were to carry the fuel they needed). They became adept at manipulating magnetic fields within the low power constraints of their systems, filtering the scant detritus of interstellar space for hydrogen, carbon compounds, methane, and rarer molecules. They have a large practical knowledge of this subject, but since most of their experience is a significant fractions of c , the practicality and usability of their technology is questionable in the much lower speed Imperium. Still, they have struggled to make some headway.

Zero Gee construction: Forlorn structures are marvels of maximum strength with minimum mass, and their abilities to work on and manipulate structures in zero gee are almost inborn by now. They have developed a number of specialized composites and alloys for such use. Their structures are often designed to withstand stresses in very defined directions, and Forlorn designs often resemble elaborate spiderwebs of tension elements, often looking no more substantial than balsa wood models.

Forlorn structures are typically built in place as they cannot withstand the forces required to boost them into position. However, they are often far more economical of construction time, material and volume than 'normally' designed orbital habitats or

structures, and have found a niche for use as astronomical observatories, deep space sensor platforms or comm relays, or belter habitats.

Some of their engineering elements and composites are finding their way into Imperial engineering practice, as well, and there is a noted Forlorn occupying the Branfield chair of the Imperial Institute of Technology's School of Offworld Engineering. As she cannot come down to the campus without extensive preparation and protection, she telecommutes for all of her routine administrative duties, and lives, does her research, and teaches in an orbital habitat near the Old Sylean Highport at Capital, which serves as a classroom/summer camp/laboratory for students in her program of Alternative Construction Methods.

Forlorn Societal Structure

The Forlorn, more than any other society in the Imperium, value the group over the individual. Decisions, major and minor, are often made by consensus. While this can slow negotiations with non-Forlorn, the resulting agreements are well thought out, and rarely lead to arbitration or litigation. Paradoxically, though, the Forlorn value innovative thinking by individuals as well, since many times throughout their history, it was only the quick actions and ideas of individuals that saved them. Forlorn schooling focuses a great deal on rapid, iterative problem solving: "Fix it *now*, then fix it better, until it's done right" rather than "study it to death, then fix it right"... far too often in their history what would have been dead would have been them. The Forlorn, in other words, are inveterate tinkerers. They do not fully understand (and vehemently object to) the mindset that asks "Why is there never enough time to do it *right*, but always enough time to do it *over*?"

Since, by the end of their journey, the entire 27 came to become, essentially, an extended village, the Forlorn concept of 'group' includes all the Forlorn in existence. They do recognize more immediate familial groups, and Forlorn living arrangements are usu-

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ally oriented around this size group, which will usually consist of a biologically related extended family. Forlorn are very gregarious, though, and larger communities tend to still act in a very unified fashion. The initial screening of their remote descendants, and the intervening 1500 years of isolation, with the vastly smaller initial population of the 27, means that the Forlorn, while considerably more genetically homogenous than the Imperial norm, are relatively free of genetic diseases.

They are, in general, more susceptible to diseases and infections than the Imperial norm. This accounts for their habitually wearing filter masks and full cover outer garments in areas where they have wide contact with outsiders and their pathogens, particularly in their rare ventures onto a planet. Physically, they are taller, much thinner, and often weaker than the Imperial norm, although this is mostly the effects of life led at low or zero-gee; there are some Forlorn who are adapted to higher gee environments. Most have long, nimble toes, as well, and some can use them almost as facilely as hands. Zero-gee has other advantages as well. Most Forlorn are quite long lived, due to the lessened strain of gravity on their bodies, as well as the low calorie diet they maintain.

There has been some mixing of the Forlorn and Imperial humans, but their greater susceptibility to disease and cultural differences have combined to keep the Forlorn a fairly insular group, and 'adopted' Imperials are a small minority.

At home, Forlorn have a wide variety of dress, often in wild colors. Their love of color and visual variety extends to the rest of their environment, too. Forlorn habitats are riots of colors, small nooks and crannies filled with bits of stuff, knickknacks, plants, materials 'put aside' (the Forlorn are still fanatic recyclers—any bit of metal, plastic, wood, or other material, left over from anything, will get scooped up, and put aside for recycling later.) It is common for Forlorn to develop a 'pack-rat mentality', the

urge to collect all sorts of 'things', mostly small and decorative, or something with some utility; this stems from cultural imperatives developed during the time when all they had was the 27, a time when a small decorative object was truly a treasure, and when everything was assembled, atom by atom from the magnetic nets.

The Forlorn as a group have an acute awareness of the fact that they are the *only* ones of their kind that have ever been found. A significant sect among them are the *Ill'ikashi*, 'Rejoiners' in Galanglic. They believe that when the great fleet was scattered, the 27 were not the only ships to survive: if they were able to survive, then surely there must have been others. They believe that it is a duty of theirs to seek out and find their lost people, knowing that this is a monumental task. Their rituals are mostly small reminders of the lost ships; on more important occasions, extra place settings are set out for the lost, as if they might appear at any moment. Astronomy and other sensor-based sciences are honored professions among the *Ill'ikashi*, and they form the bulk of the Forlorn who work for the IISS.

The majority of the Forlorn, however, believe that they were the only ones spared, and it is their duty to retain their history and traditions. A formalized expression of this is the *Deltra Harissim*, literally the 'Society of Makers', a honorary fraternity of engineers, another profession held in high esteem by the Forlorn. Members of the group are the keepers of the *Marakin* or 'Ship's Log'; the recorded history of the Forlorn.

There are numerous facsimile copies available, now that the Forlorn have access to the materials and technology, but 'The *Marakin*', distinguished by the capitalization, is still kept by the chief of the *Deltra Harrisim*, using paper made from specialized *groukit* leaves. It is central to Forlorn culture, and kept on the 27, maintained now as a museum/shrine in the Geshaggere system.

The *Marakin* itself consists of some 4700 volumes of hand-written history, stretching back to the time immediately after The Destruction and the scattering

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of the fleet. The earliest books are no longer ever handled; they are the original engineers hasty notes on construction of the original 27, listing the modifications to the ships controls and mechanisms, inventories of material, preliminary designs of recycling equipment, all written on cheap bound notepads, scraps of paper, bits of packing...anything they could get their hands on. The *Marakin* evolved into a written history about ten years into the voyage, as it seemed that they might, after all, just manage to survive and find a new home. These earliest volumes are far too fragile to handle, and much of the information in them is impossible to get to, and what is known about the contents has been lost or garbled over the ages. The *Deltra Harissim* are undertaking research into how to access the records without harming them, and the *Ill'ikashi* are enthusiastic partners in this, as they believe clues to their origin, and possibly tracking the Lost Ships, lie in these books.

They have contracted with the Alkhalikoi Institute of Archaeology in this endeavor, and several visiting scientists from there are living and working in the 27.

One of them, Dr Muthahti Vinoosh, has written a minor best-seller recounting her time on the *Marakin* project, and with the Forlorn. This light, affectionate portrayal of her hosts has earned Dr. Vinoosh reciprocal affection from the Forlorn, and has softened their image as insular, arrogant, masked strangers for a wider range of people in the Imperium.

Miscellaneous Forlorn Library Data

MagSieve: Magnetic 'sieve' for recovering low concentrations of material from plasma, gaseous, or other extremely low density media. Basically a variation of the Bussard Ramjet; this is a system that can collect specifically sized molecules or atoms from some medium. Currently used experimentally for recovering trace resources from cometary belts, the

upper reaches of Gas Giants, proto star systems, or similar environments. This is currently experimental technology, and is still somewhat of a 'solution without a problem'. The advantage of this system is that it could be converted to a rugged, automated system. Resource concentrations may be low in cometary belts or proto-star systems, but a simple device that can operate for months or years without service could collect a huge amount of material. Forlorn control of magnetic fields, however is still pretty much confined to low-power applications.

Groukit: This is one of the few plants the Forlorn were able to retain from the Destruction. In its most primitive, base form, it is a low, fast growing, squashlike vegetable. It was originally intended to be a food source and 'air conditioner' plant, since it has large leaves for relatively high rates of respiration. It has been manipulated into a large number of variants providing everything from dyes to food to fibers for cloth. Even now, after an influx of new plants, the *groukit* has an important place in Forlorn agriculture, and even more, an important place in the Forlorn heart. Every household has a large, lavishly cared for *groukit* in a place of honor in their main room.

Strinthee: This is the only animal from their home world that the Forlorn have left. All the other species they were taking with them were lost with the rest of the Fleet. The *strinthee* is a small omnivorous quadruped, massing 1-4 kilos, which occupied the same niche on their home world as the house cat: a pet and predator on small pests. Long considered lucky on ships, both surface and spacegoing, there were numerous *strinthees* on all of the ships of the Fleet. *Strinthees* are well adapted for zero-gee life as well, since they evolved from small arboreal omnivores. They do not have prehensile tail or opposable thumbs, but are otherwise quite dexterous. *Strinthees* are as much a part of a family as the any other Forlorn, and though they are quite inquisitive at times, they will tend to stay within sight or scent distance of their family. 🌀

The Mutant Question - Psionics

For me one of the joys of a setting is imagining what life within the setting would really be like. That's the whole impetus for the "Slice of Life" series of articles. For a science fiction setting like the Twilight Sector we're taking a look at how technologies (and sometimes other things) would affect the lives of people (including player characters) within the setting.

In the Twilight Sector setting, "Mutants" is a rather broad category, ranging from natural mutants ostracized because they look different, to humans whose DNA has been intentionally altered to allow them to adapt to any number of environments that humanity has encountered during their migration to the stars. Because it's such a big question let's focus on just one group of mutants: Psions. You might be surprised to find Psionics listed as a mutation at all, but in the Twilight Sector, psions are classified as mutants both legally and by public perception. It's just an unseen one, called "The Hidden Mutation" by the popular press. Let's take a look at Psionics and how it might be perceived by a society in which it exists.

Consider the girl next door. She looks like a baseline human. Oh, her parents probably gave her a few beautification gene tweaks, but that's just good parenting. What if she's psionic? You've got no way to tell. She could even be reading your mind as you pass her on the street! How would you know?

This fear, of someone being able to know your thoughts without your knowledge, is perhaps the most visceral anti-mutant/anti-psionic fear and drives many baseline humans' negative reactions to psionics. It is based in fact, which makes it all the harder to shake. (It should be noted that this is also the fear used as the basis for Psionic suppression in the Imperial portions of the OTU. This type of fear and the reactions it engenders would be applicable to the border areas with the Zhodani in the OTU.

I'm looking at you, Spinward Marches.) That fear is tempered in the Twilight Sector setting by the positive contributions that psionics have made to society.

In heavy industry (including manufacturing and construction) and cargo handling, for example, Telekinesis allows material to be moved and positioned with more precision and less danger to workers and property than purely mechanical means such as cranes and scaffolding. The result has been the reduction (to the point of near-complete elimination) of certain classes of accidental death or injury, or property damage.

Emergency responders also benefit from having Telekinetics on staff; moving debris or victims where there is insufficient stability to mount purely mechanical clearance or evacuation operations has saved many lives that otherwise would have been lost after such disasters as building collapses, multi-vehicle collisions, and so on. Clairvoyance and Telepathy/Telempathy also have roles in such rescues, making it possible to find victims before they die – possibly even before the rescue operations are fully under way.

In many environments where non-psions are necessarily exposed to danger to do necessary and important jobs, higher-level psions can reduce or eliminate such exposure. Examples include handling radioactive materials (for example, refueling fission reactors: Clairvoyance to look in to the reactor vessel to see what's going on, and Telekinesis to move the fuel rods) or dangerous chemicals (Telekinesis and Microkinesis virtually eliminates the danger from spilling them on the chemist), undersea and space construction (similar benefits to ground construction, plus the Telekinetic not necessarily having to leave a rigid craft for a flimsy, comparatively easily-punctured personal suit), and so on.

Medicine has unquestionably benefited from psionics: Surgery has become less damaging ("traumatic", in the medical sense) because of Clairvoyance, Telekinesis, Microkinesis, and talents in-

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volving metabolic control; Clairvoyance, Telepathy, and Telempathy have contributed to increases in accuracy of diagnosis, and earlier detection of some conditions; and the use of Telepathy and Telempathy in mental health has increased our understanding of the human psyche and allowed treatment of disorders that haven't been amenable to "traditional" therapies. Even the rare person whose blindness or deafness proves uncorrectable can live a nearly normal life with a telepathic companion/assistant willing to "share" vision or hearing with them.

Where fraud is a concern, telepaths and telempaths can have roles in investigation, both covertly and overtly, as customer-facing "clerks" before the fraud actually occurs and as investigators afterward. In these roles, they have contributed to companies' bottom lines and to reduction of government "waste". Governments have also found that they're better able to prevent undesirables from entering their jurisdiction, while being able to reduce barriers for those who have honest purpose.

Corporate interest in telepaths and telempaths extends beyond fraud protection – psions with those talents make excellent recruiters, sales representatives, hiring interviewers, and negotiators. Governments can also benefit from psions in similar roles.

Law enforcement and the justice system can use many psionic talents, from Clairvoyance and Telepathy in criminal investigations to Telekinesis to aid in capturing and restraining "guests of the system" to Telepathy and Telempathy to help determine the truth to just about any talent to help manage those "guests" who are "invited" for an extended stay.

Most game masters will likely not have to spend much time to add to this list. It also should not be forgotten that less savory types would have an equal number of job openings for psions, doing many of the same activities for less than honorable purposes.

All that being given, still, no one wants to have their mind read without their knowing it. In the

Twilight Sector setting it has led baselines and even non-psionic mutants to take up training in how to shield themselves from psionic mind reading. There are legitimate methods that can be learned but there is also a plethora of kooks and charlatans offering "psionic protections" on late-night holo-vid channels, ranging from talismans to hokey so-called "yoga exercises for the brain". A technological solution exists for people equipped with wafer jacks. Similar to a husher it is a chip that can be plugged into the wafer jack and makes the user's mind next to impossible to read. The chip can also be plugged into any personal computing device, but unless you hold it next to your head, it won't offer the same level of protection.

In the Twilight Sector Setting there is a wide range of reactions to telepathy. Some nations, like the Archenar Peoples Republic and the Oster Republic, mercilessly hunt down telepaths. They would see any uncontrolled telepaths as a threat to state security, and would attempt to convert the telepath to state use after capture, but they do not want to let "wild" telepaths roam their societies. In those same states, psionic mind readers are heavily used by the State's internal security police. The existence of mind readers and even more so the fact no one can tell who a mind reader is, is an important tool for these regimes to keep the populace toeing the party line.

Legal systems have long struggled with the issue of admissibility of psionic evidence. In some stellar nations, like the Orion Confederation, independently corroborated mind reading is admissible as evidence in legal proceedings in some jurisdictions (there are no absolutes in the Confederation), and even between jurisdictions that allow it, the rules for doing so may be widely variable. Other stellar nations, like the UUP, won't allow it in any fashion. In still others, like the widely disparate Oster Republic and the Free Peoples Republic, mind reading by a specially trained court investigator is required.

So how does this affect my game? Well, it explains all the fear and loathing around psionics in most Traveller games. At the same time, it potential-

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ly offers characters additional tools to use during adventures, as well as offering opportunities to build adventures around.

New Skill: Anti-Psi

The character is trained in special mental thought techniques which make it very difficult for a Psionic individual to read their minds or use any other psionic mind affecting talent. There are two levels at which a character can employ this skill, passive and active. Using the skill passively takes a minor action, using it actively takes a significant action.

When used Passively, the telepath attempting to read a mind employing this skill finds the task difficulty 2 levels more difficult than normal and the psion's skill check for the talent suffers a negative die modifier equal to the Anti-Psi skill level of the character. Actively using the skill makes the task difficulty 3 levels more difficult and the Anti-Psi skill level is again applied as a negative modifier. Note that any difficulty levels beyond Formidable still incur a -2 die modifier per level.

Any psion attempting to use their telepathy talent on someone employing this skill will immediately become aware that their intended target is employing Anti-Psi techniques. There is no characteristic check that substitutes for this skill and when used it should normally be paired with Endurance.

New Technology: Anti-Psi Chip

Anti-Psi Chip, TL 14, Mass: 2 grams, Range – Personal, Cost: 12,000cr

The Anti-Psi chip offers the same level of protection as though the individual was actively employing the Anti-Psi skill (3 task difficulty levels), albeit without any further negative modifiers for the telepath due to the target's skill level. If the chip is deployed anywhere outside of a six inch(15 cm) distance from the head but still somewhere on the body it presents a 1 task difficulty level increase for the psion attempting the read the wearer's mind.

Adventure Seeds

There are any number of adventures you can build around psionics.

- The players could be hired to go to that planet they've been avoiding because a fruit grows there that their patron wants. It temporarily suppresses psionic abilities. Alternatively, the fruit could enhance existing psionic abilities, or even temporarily confer them on a non-psion.
- The spy/thief/fugitive they are pursuing is a telepath and is using their ability to stay one step ahead of the players.
- A telepath is on the run from the government/the mob/a secret organization, and turns to the players for help. Once they agree, she'll know their every thought and if they decide to turn her in for the hefty reward they just found out about.

Kurishdam

Lecture Hall and Library

Jump Destination: Cathai

by Ken Pick, based on notes from a campaign c.1978-1979

Author's Note: This system main world originated in the 30-year-old "Glavion Cluster" campaign notes of Steve Marsh. This is a generic version for insertion into any Traveller campaign.

Cathai C572506-9 NI

Eagleston Trade Class 0

Amber Zone (Ware Pirates)

The largest planet in an orange/red dwarf binary system with no gas giants, Cathai is a backwater, a

mostly-desert world with seriously dust-tainted atmosphere and one small moon. Once high-tech, the world did not survive the Long Night very well; the population of 100,000 is almost entirely nomad tribes of "Sandpeople" wandering the desert, with occasional oasis towns and permanent holdings. The main export is a valuable spice and pharmaceutical raw material refined from the excrement of burrowing armor-worms, collected and pre-processed by the nomads as trade goods. The secondary export is

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artifacts from “Rooning” (finding and stripping the high-tech ruins that appear and disappear beneath the shifting sands of the Outback deserts).

With an Eaglestone Trade Index of zero (NI), Cathai is totally dependent on neighboring systems for any trade volume. Any cargoes moving in or out will probably be incidental small-lots, ideal for Type A free-traders; exports will be primarily Spices and/or Pharmaceuticals, with occasional specialty food-stuffs (cheese).

Planetary Geography

Most of Cathai is barren desert, with the only fertile areas around a cluster of small landlocked brine seas with the distinctive shoreline of clustered impact craters and edged by glistening salt flats. (Cathain seawater is almost as dense and briny as the Dead Sea on Terra, far too salty for any but native life.) Between the desert and the seacoast is a wide transition zone of semi-arid “badlands”.

The starport enclave and settled area are located on a peninsula separating the two largest brine seas. Most of the plant and animal life on this peninsula are originally from off-world, transplanted during the original settlement of Cathai before the Long Night.

(Tip: Use a map of the Moon as a basis, translating the dark “Maria” into the brine seas. The starport peninsula is the wide landmass between “Mare Nubium” and “Mare Tranquillitatis”, with a large set of islands to the north separating “Mare Imbrium” from “Mare Serenitatis”. See the images on the next page; the top image is an unlabeled Mercator projection; the lower is a labeled “globe” showing the “Maria”.)

Surface Conditions/Sky Picture

Surface gravity is around 2/3 gee; the atmosphere is breathable, with normal density and pressure but tainted by slightly-low oxygen content and blowsand from the deep desert; the Starport Enclave peninsula gets a major dust storm every few local

months. The day is 42 hours long from suntide drag, with a year (measured between conjunctions of the two suns) of 68 local days. The long day/night cycle causes extreme temperature variations including hot afternoons and cold nights; on the Port Peninsula, this is mitigated by the heat-sink effect of open brine, but is at its full extreme of scorching days and freezing nights in the deep desert.

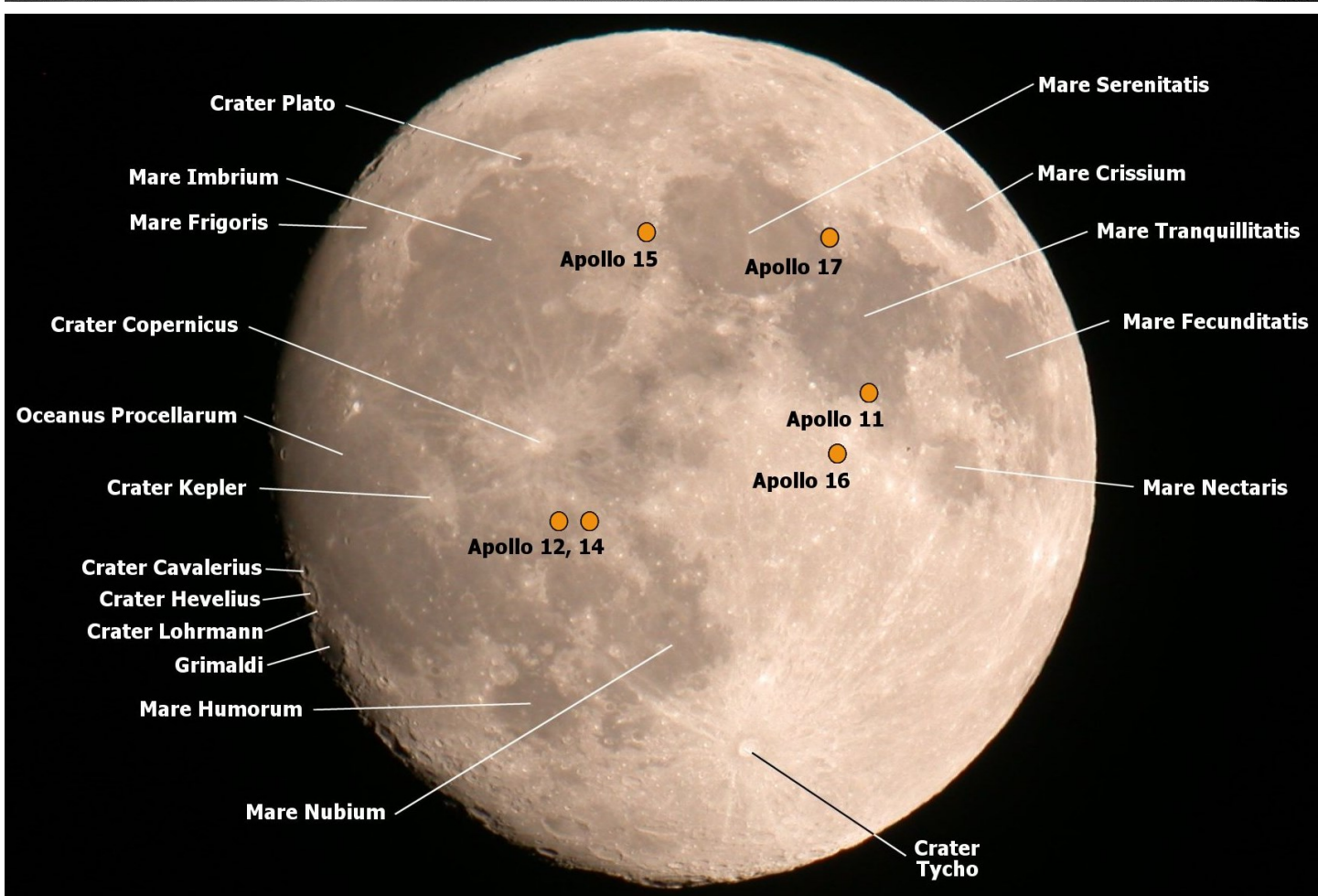
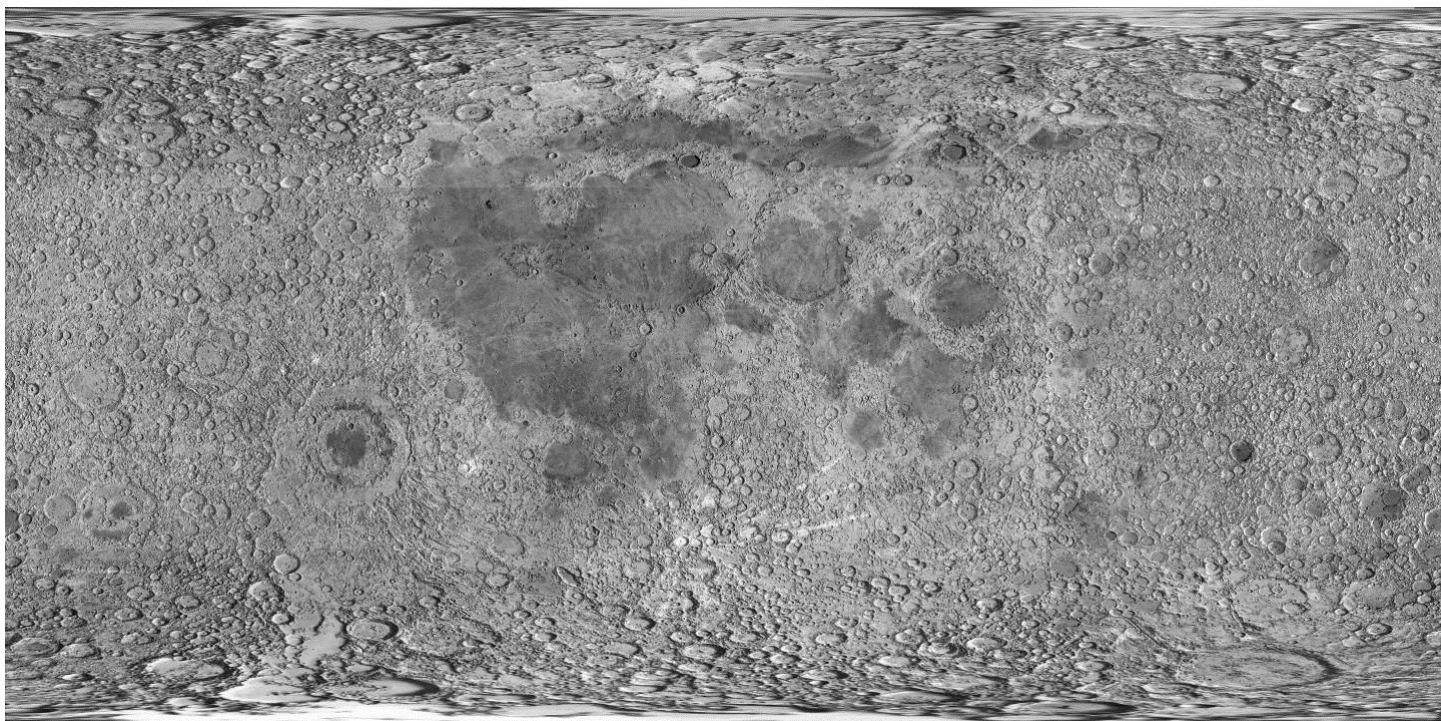
The main sun (the K3 V orange dwarf) is half-again as large as “normal”, with a distinct orange tint; the moon is half the apparent diameter of the sun, with a distinct reddish tint and a twelve-day month. The second sun (the M6 V red dwarf) appears as a superbrilliant star, a ruby laser in a sky often tawny with high-altitude blown sand.

Like most surface-habitable worlds orbiting orange/red dwarves, the hundred-diameter safe Jump limit is determined by the sun, corresponding to Orbit 2; Cathai is in Orbit 1, the liquid-water habitable zone. Safe Jump distance is thus .3 AU (45,000,000km) outsystem from Cathai, corresponding to “close neighbor world” distance. This helps system defenses, as any attacker Jumping in must boost for 18 to 36 hours to get to Cathai; even a “Dump-and-Jump” with 6-G missiles would give some 15 hours early warning.

Native Life

Native Cathain plants are limited to the fertile areas around the seas. Most are low scrub plants, like tangles of carotene-orange rope. Some badlands and desert-edge plants appear similar to yucca with long, tentacle-like leaves that unfurl over the ground during the long day and curl up during the long cold night; though no Cathain plant is carnivorous, the larger tentacle-yuccas do have a creepy “man-eating plant” appearance, especially when furling or unfurling.

All native Cathain animal life are invertebrates, from the “wormfish” of the brine seas to the armor-worms of the badlands and deserts. Armor-worms—long invertebrates with peniform armored head carapaces—are the archetypal land animals, burrowing



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deep and hibernating during the hot days and cold nights, becoming active at dawn and dusk.

The largest armor-worms are 6-8m apex predators similar to the "Graboids" from Tremors. However, such mega-predators are rare. More plentiful are "Footgrabbers", smaller 1-2m omnivores that are a major nuisance pest. The "Deathspike" is a venomous predatory armor-worm about 1m in length with a retractable stinger thrusting forward out of its head carapace. And then come "Spiceworms", the subterranean grazers that produce Cathai's cash crop. Or at least one species of them does, and only the Sandpeople know which one.

Starport Enclave

Population 6000 (Guild employees/vassals, dependents, local "camp followers"), Government 1 (Starport Guild corporate), Law Level 6, Tech Level 9. Downport only, no Highport.

The starport is a Guild-run ground port surrounded by the only true "city" and Startown on-world, built into and onto abandoned/mothballed sections of a former larger starport. The high Law Level (banning all firearms) is a reaction to tribal blood feuds/murders/duels among the Sandpeople entering town to trade.

The port has unusually-large TL9bis hospital/medical facilities, used for goodwill medical care of locals and neighbors. Additionally, the port has reactivated a desalinization plant to provide fresh water not only for the enclave and surrounding agricultural land down the Peninsula, but as a trade good with the Sandpeople of the deep desert.

Port entry gates enforce the local tribes' "Peace of Water and Salt" hospitality ritual upon crossing the XT Line. All visitors are offered a cup of salt and cup of water upon entry; the recipient puts a pinch of the salt on his/her tongue then washes it down with the water. Once he has "eaten your salt and drank your water", all blood feuds are null and void for either the length of his stay or a certain number

of days (which varies from tribe to tribe). It works most of the time, but don't count on it in Startown. The Cathai Starport Guild adopted this custom from the native oasis/trade towns where it originated.

The Guild runs and maintains the system defenses, close-orbital minefields of encapsulated missiles, some dating back to before the Long Night. Most of these are dead from sheer age, but you never know; the Guild may have more operational than the official figures. The Guild also maintains the only organized armed forces on Cathai, a single TL9 mercenary battalion on a long-term Security ticket.

The Sandpeople

Once you get away from the port, it's effectively Government and Law of zero; the population is nomad tribes of "Sandpeople" (averaging 500 per tribe) and the occasional oasis town and/or permanent holding with populations of up to 1000. Most of the trade towns have similar Law Levels/weapon bans as the Starport Enclave, and for the same reason. This has not stopped the tribes from wanting higher-tech weapons for their feuds; some are willing to pay high premiums for firearms, traded at your own risk. (Referee: On any sale of firearms to nomads, secretly roll 1D-1, and add the result to the player's roll on the Actual Value table for the sale.)

Though to the Starport Enclave and offworlders all Cathaians are "Sandpeople", the term properly applies to the nomads of the deep deserts, not the settled people of the oasis/trade towns or the agricultural tribes on the Peninsula who grow the food for the Starport Enclave. Despite the name, most true Sandpeople wander the badlands at the desert's edge, venturing into the sand seas only in search of raw Spice or 'rooned' artifacts.

Such nomads are dependent on their riding/pack animals, grazers genetically-engineered from before the Long Night to live on native Cathain vegetation, producing a fortified milk that is the nomads' survival staple. Oasis towns in the Peninsula, badlands, and edge deserts are more agricultural, surrounded by farms and orchards of offworld vegetation. Some

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of the native cheeses (with unique flavor and texture) are almost as offworld-marketable as the Spice.

As is common on a harsh world with limited resources, the native tribes have developed a *Tharkultur* (tribal blood vengeance culture) in their zero-sum competition for survival. Trust is only within the tribe, among those related by blood; all outside is the Other. Blood feuds are common, as any “law” extends only as far as the tribe; outside there is only blood vengeance. Raid-and-pillage is also common, as in a zero-sum game the only way to get more for yourself (or your tribe) is to take it away from the Other (including the townies of the trade-oases and offworlders at the downport) by force. Yet tribes still need to interact with the Other (including townies and offworlders); this is the reason behind the “Peace of Water and Salt”, to formalize short-term cease-fires through a universal hospitality ritual. After all, the desert is the ultimate Other, the enemy of all.

This *Tharkultur* is at its peak in the nomad tribes; the harsher their territory, the more pronounced it is. Townies (especially those on the Peninsula) are mellow; their resources (agricultural) are more plentiful and the survival struggle was never so intense. However, townies still have to worry about nomad raids, and the port’s battalion of TL9 mercenaries is there for a reason.

The Gentlemen of the Red Moon

An abandoned base on Cathai’s one moon (C100303-9) once served as a major pirate haven in the Cluster; judging from the size and condition of the ruins, this Tortuga was cleaned out a long time ago. Recently, a band of pirates/corsairs has set up in the surviving base facilities and reached an accommodation with the Starport Guild for an ad-hoc Port Royal operation, including Letters of Marque and legal status as “privateers” or “mercenaries”.

The Guild has the leverage of operational system defenses (the abovementioned high-tech orbital

minefields), a monopoly on the sources of fuel and high-tech medicine in-system, and an understanding to look the other way so long as the pirates don’t directly bother them or get too blatant with their operations. The “Gentlemen of the Red Moon” use Cathai downport as a liberty port, and are usually on their best behavior while doing so—no sense fouling your own nest, especially when said nest is the only open-sky habitable surface with the best medical facilities for parsecs around.

The pirates are also actively ‘rooning’ the lunar base and in-system for leverage over the Guild and as cover for their other operations; various types of plunder could be hidden in plain sight amid rooned artifacts.

Variant

If the campaign includes Vargr, the “Gentlemen of the Red Moon” could be Vargr corsair packs, i.e. “Wolves of the Red Moon”. Given the ever-changing chaotic nature of Vargr society and organization, the non-aggression relationship with the Starport Guild could go very sour very fast.

Adventure Nuggets

This is a less-than-stable situation; the Port Royal arrangement/balancing act between the Starport Guild and the Gentlemen of the Red Moon could go bad fast, especially if the pirates get too blatant and/or the payola flowing in both directions becomes inadequate. Though the Trade Index is minimal, Cathai’s customers would very much like to continue receiving Spice regardless of the world situation.

If the above Vargr variant is used, intrigue between the various corsair packs and between the packs and the Starport Guild would provide many dangerous opportunities; the Starport has a strong interest in preserving the current Port Royal arrangement, especially if Cathai’s branch of the Port Guild is doing this on their own, without sanction from the Guild proper.

Additionally, the source of the Spice—the Sandpeople—are out for themselves and their tribal blood feuds, and could easily cut their own deals

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without going through the Starport (especially if the deal includes weapons to knock over the neighboring tribes)—Another way for the pirates/corsairs on the moon to make life interesting.

Or, since the tribal situation is similar to a small-scale Dune with the Sandpeople as Fremmen/

Bedouins, what if the tribes were to actually unite under a Muad'dib/Mahdi?

Or you could chuck it all and go 'rooning', either in the Outback or on the moon/in-system. However, the Sandpeople claim the former as their rightful territory and the pirates the latter. Do you feel lucky today? ☼

The Shipyard

Beyond Book 2: Expanding the Basic Classic Traveller Starship Design System

by Ken Pick

This is a lightly-edited version article that was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2002.

History

When *Traveller* premiered in 1977, it was printed in the usual three-book format of the period. The starship design system (filling most of *Book 2: Starships*) was a simple building-block system for ships of 100-5000 tons, with the "standard" designs provided for player-characters ranging from 200-800 tons. All in all, a "small-ship" universe, probably in a "cozy" campaign setting of a subsector or two.

But this was 1977, only months after the premiere of *Star Wars*, with its galaxy-wide Empire and huge starships. The only other widespread universe paradigm was *Star Trek*, another big-ship universe with ultra-high "Trek Tech". Both of these paradigms emphasized big ships, maxed-out technology, and a wide-ranging campaign area.

Accordingly, early *Traveller* campaigns tried to push the limit, attempting large ships (up to tens of thousands of tons), a ruling Tech Level of 13-15, and empires about equivalent in size to the later Spinward Marches (a full sector of 16 subsectors).

With the publication of *Book 5: High Guard* in 1979, and its revision of 1980 (the revision is generally referred to (unofficially) as "High Guard 2"), larg-

er ships, with a slightly more complex design system (primarily geared towards warships) for ships of up to a million tons, were introduced. *Traveller's* official universe, the Third Imperium, spanning dozens of sectors, provided a big universe for these big ships.

Traveller campaigns of this period emphasized big ships, big campaigns, and Tech Level 15, either in the Third Imperium itself or freelance imitations of it. Travellers had their galaxy and large starships—but paid a price.

Most player-characters were still limited by price and numbers to the smaller ships from *Book 2*—the Type A Free Traders, Type R & M subsidized merchants, and Type T & C paramilitary craft. These ships which player-characters could reasonably expect to own and/or control had shrunk to insignificance beside the megaton monsters coming out of *High Guard's* shipyards. In such a big pond, to become a big fish meant starting at or rising to the level of a high-ranking VIP in a strategic-level campaign. Such Imperia had lost their scale for the free-traders and adventurers that made up the typical player-characters—except for vermin and pawns skulking around the edges.

Gedankenexperiment: Low-tech Traveller

Sometime in the 1990s, I tried a thought-experiment. Instead of a TL 15 big-universe, big-ship campaign, why not go as far as practical in the other direction? One subsector (maybe two), TL 11 (with TL12 being gee-whiz cutting edge), exclusively using *Book 2*-designed starships. A "cozy" campaign universe—with 15+ years of hindsight, probably

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what *Traveller* did best. See how much you could do using only *Book 2* starships.

It turned out you could do a lot. Many of the starships from this experiment are now published in *The Shipyard*—stretched versions of the Type As & Rs, large liners and bulk freighters of up to 6000 tons, heavy scouts, stretched and tweaked small craft, and multi-role refits for the ubiquitous Type T patrol craft.

However, for the Navy, pure *Book 2* became a bit limited; there was little difference between a dedicated warship and a well-armed civilian one, much like wooden ships during the Age of Sail. To bring our interstellar navies up to the “modern era”, a little *High Guard* retrofitting was in order.

The following additions to the *Book 2* design system retrofit a little of that *High Guard* flavor without unduly stretching the basic design system:

High Guard 2 Retrofit: Armored Hulls

Book 2: Starships had no provisions for armoring the hull; *Book 5: High Guard* introduced the concept. Unlike later versions of *Traveller* (*MegaTraveller* and later), armoring a ship was a yes/no proposition, with no choice of material—you simply allocated volume to armor according to a formula, applied the cost formula, and that was that.

Armor Allocation	
Tech Level	Formula
TL7-TL9	$4 \times (\text{DesiredArmorFactor} + 1)\%$ of hull rate (tonnage)
TL10-TL11	$3 \times (\text{DesiredArmorFactor} + 1)\%$ of hull rate (tonnage)
TL12-TL13	$2 \times (\text{DesiredArmorFactor} + 1)\%$ of hull rate (tonnage)
TL14-TL15	$1 \times (\text{DesiredArmorFactor} + 1)\%$ of hull rate (tonnage)
Cost of armor is $\text{MCr}(0.3 + (0.1 \times \text{DesiredArmorFactor}))$ per ton	

In combat, armor would reduce the number of damage-causing hits.

Damage Mitigation	
Armor Factor	Effective Damage-Causing Hits
Armor Factor 1	2/3 of hits cause damage
Armor Factor 2	1/2 of hits cause damage
Armor Factor 3	1/3 of hits cause damage
Armor Factor n	1/ n of hits cause damage

High Guard 2 Retrofit: Missile Bays

Book 5: High Guard also introduced the idea of missile bays. A missile bay was essentially a giant missile turret, firing enlarged heavy missiles or “torpedoes”. Before the introduction of nuclear dampers and meson guns at TL12, missiles were the primary ship-killing weapon.

Missile Bays					
Type	Tonnage	Cost	Crew	Capacity	Rate of Fire
Small Missile Bay	50 tons	MCr12.5	2	50	5/turn
Large Missile Bay	100 tons	MCr21	2	100	10/turn

Heavy Missile

An enlarged missile fired from Missile Bays. Commonly called a “torpedo” or “bay missile” to distinguish it from the smaller “turret missiles”. Heavy missiles are one ton each, cost five times as much as a standard (“turret”) missile, and do 1D×1D damage.

Mines

Mines in *Traveller* are basically encapsulated light (turret) or heavy (bay) missiles with a special “mine” fire-control/IFF package attached. Instead of being fired directly, they are “laid” in orbital or drift minefields and float in space until activated by coded signal. Once activated, they launch themselves at a target, usually an intruding ship. When a mine fires, it attacks with the EW rating of its Tech Level.

There are four levels of activation:

Weapons Hold: Fire only on direct command signal to fire, only at target specified in command.

Weapons Tight: Fire only on targets positively identified as enemy.

Weapons Free: Fire only on targets not positively identified as friendly.

Berserk: Fire on anything and everything within range.

In addition, the fire-control package is “smart” enough to obey simple commands like “fire on the first target in range”, “let the first x targets pass, then fire at the next”, “deactivate at a specified time and reactivate later”, “deactivate until receiving new activation signal”, etc.

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High Guard 2-inspired Enhancement: Laser Bays

Although not part of *Book 5: High Guard*, laser bays are an obvious extension of the missile bay concept to lasers: a giant laser turret, mounting 30 lasers firing as one. (These were used in the Foible Federation campaign of 1977-78, where they were known as “bank lasers”.) Laser bays require 10 tons of volume and a crew of 2; the cost to add a laser bay to a ship is MCr16 for pulse lasers, or MCr31 for beam lasers.

Essentially, a laser bay is 10 triple laser turrets ganged together into a single mount for savings in cost and personnel. A laser bay fires as a laser turret with only one “to hit” throw for the entire bay; a hit does 30 hits to the target ship.

Laser bays are found only on military ships as “big guns”.

Enhancement: Multiple Engines

In the original *Book 2* starship design system, M-drives, J-drives, and Powerplants were fixed sizes (rated by letters in the usual A-Z sans I & O progression) that cross-indexed into hull size to give the drive and powerplant ratings for the ship.

This resulted in a “topping out” effect at larger hull sizes; the largest (Z) engine could only give a rating of 4 (Jump or Gs) in a 3000-ton hull, 3 in a 4000-ton hull, and 2 in a 5000 to 6000-ton hull. (And, presumably, 1 in a 10000 to 12000-tonner.)

Also, since engine damage was counted by derating the engines to the next (letter) size with each hit, ships above 2000 tons were progressively more vulnerable to engine hits, until a 5000+ tonner was as prone to “one-hit cripples” as a 200-ton Free Trader.

These limitations can be mitigated by allowing a “cluster” of multiple engines in a single hull. Multi-engined large ships can increase performance over single-engined ships, while absorbing more engine damage.

Design Limitations:

1. All M- and J-drives, and powerplants in a multi-engine ship must be of the same (letter) size.
2. Each engine in a cluster must have a rating of at least 1 for the size of hull. (This effectively limits *Book 2* engines to a maximum hull size of 12000 tons, reasonable for a “small-ship” campaign.)
3. Each jump drive or powerplant has the same fuel requirements as it would if installed alone. (This has no effect on jump fuel, but brings the *Book 2* “ten tons per powerplant number” a little more in line with reality for large ships.)
4. The drive/powerplant rating for the ship is the sum of all the engine ratings.

In-use Effects:

- Large ships are now capable of high performance.
- Multiple-engined ships are now more resistant to battle damage. When a multi-engined ship takes an engine hit, roll a die to see which engine is hit, and derate the engine in the normal *Book 2* manner. As a hit can go to an already-damaged (or destroyed) engine without further effect, it is possible to survive multiple “free” engine hits, thus making larger ships more survivable.

High Guard 2 Retrofit: Nuclear Missiles

Before the introduction of nuclear dampers at TL12, nuclear missiles (“nukes”) were the heavy-duty ship-killing weapon.

Nuclear missiles are available at TL8+ (while nukes are TL6, getting a small and efficient enough warhead requires a tech level or two more), do 1D× the damage of a normal (HE/fragmentation) missile; for simplicity, radiation effects are assumed to be part of the normal damage.

Nuclear turret missile: 1D×1D (same as a normal bay missile).

Nuclear bay missile: 1D×1D×1D.

Cost (when available): 10× a normal missile of the size, more for “Thunderballs”.

Nukes are a mass-destruction weapon, and are tightly-controlled by the military. They would be

The Shipyard

found only on actual military ships as a “special round”. (At least officially; such a firepower-multiplier is in demand on the black market under the name of “Thunderballs”.)

High Guard 2 Retrofit: Nuclear Dampers

Nuclear dampers are “shields” that neutralize nuclear warheads by varying the strong and weak nuclear forces. First described in *Book 4: Mercenary*, dampers project an interference pattern of strong- and weak-force nodes from two widely-separated antennae which interfere with nuclear fission and fusion reactions, causing the warhead to fail in a meltdown or much-reduced explosion. The pattern must be focused to hold a node on the incoming missile; for this reason, nuclear dampers require active sensors and precise fire-control.

In CT, nuclear dampers “fire” defensively on incoming missiles, with the base “to hit” throw (as a laser) with an additional DM of the relative Tech Levels of the missile and the damper. If the damper “hits”, the nuclear missile will not explode. Note that nuclear dampers have no effect on normal missile warheads.

Nuclear dampers are available starting at TL12:

Nuclear Dampers			
Tech Level	Tonnage	Cost	Crew
TL12	50	MCr50	4
TL13	20	MCr45	4
TL14+	10	MCr30	4

High Guard 2 Retrofit: Rapid Launch/Recovery Facilities

Though small craft can be launched rapidly (ask anyone who’s seen a full abandon-ship), they are difficult to recover using standard shuttlebay fittings. Rapid Launch/Recovery Facilities (such as on carriers) allow a ship to launch and recover small craft or ship’s vehicles quickly. *Book 5: High Guard* called these “launch tubes”.

Rapid Launch/Recovery Bays require 25 times the tonnage of the largest craft to be launched/recovered through the bay, and 10 crew. Each bay uses ten hardpoints, and costs Cr2000 per ton displacement. 40 small craft can be launched or recovered per turn.

Each bay requires attached hangar space of 1.3 times the capacity in small craft tonnage, at a cost of Cr2000 per ton displacement. The extra room is required for marshalling the small craft to and from the launch/recovery bay.

Miscellaneous Note: Adapting “Wet-navy” Ships

A lot of the warship designs done under this system (such as the *Kanin*, *Krupny*, *Venetian*, *Worcester*, and *Mogami*) were “Travellerizations” of actual wet-navy ships.

These were mostly scaled from the armament, using the following rules-of-thumb:

- Triple laser turrets represent either a twin 40mm or single three-inch (75-76mm) gun mount.
- Laser Bays represent a twin gun turret of five to six-inch (120-155mm) caliber. (Heavier-caliber main guns are outside of this system, but can be represented in High Guard by the varying sizes of spinal-mount main batteries.)
- Missile Bays represent TL6 torpedo tubes or TL7+ missile launchers. A 50-ton bay represents a two- or three-tube torpedo mount or a single-arm missile launcher; a 100-ton bay represents a four- or five-tube mount, a twin-arm launcher, or a VLS missile array.
- Rapid launch/recovery facilities represent a dedicated aircraft-handling flight deck such as on an aircraft carrier; packing a couple fighters in a shuttlebay represents the limited helicopter capability of most TL8+ warships. 🌟

Out of Bounds

by James Catchpole

This adventure was originally posted to the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website in 2007.

The PCs are approached by a group of scientists who urgently need to transport some experimental equipment to a nearby system. It consists of several trunk-sized cases (which they will open if asked—all contain recognisable scientific equipment and tools) and one large sealed container. The container has its own power source and, behind an obvious locked panel (which the team leader will open if they ask to look), a display showing a set of complex readouts (the container and display are standard equipment, but the characters can make no sense of the readouts). This apparently contains delicate samples in powered containment. They have all the right credentials and a letter of reference from a senior regional noble, who unfortunately isn't available to help them out (the starport authorities can verify they are who they say they are). These people are clearly above-board. *En-route* cargo access is needed. They are offering a good sum (whatever seems reasonable for the campaign) to take the equipment and some (or all if there is room on the ship) of the team to their destination. If pressed, they will increase it to a large sum, as they cannot otherwise find a regular shipper who can accommodate them in time.

Possible Directions to Take This Scenario:

1. All is as represented. The equipment is harmless. The trip passes without incident. The team think they are on to something groundbreaking and will talk about it happily, if incomprehensibly (none of the PCs have enough background in the applicable sciences to follow the explanations). The PCs get a science lesson while the tension builds and they wait for something to go wrong.
2. As above, but the scientists are very reticent and will not talk about the cargo unless pressed. They check the cargo at regular intervals and look anxious throughout the jump. Once the sci-

entists start talking, it turns out that they think they have a region of 'space' in the main container where the laws of physics are 'different', which may be highly dangerous if mishandled. Point out that trying to jettison the cargo *would* constitute mishandling if necessary.

3. As 2 above, but when they get to their destination, the starport authorities will not let them land if they find out what they are carrying. Resolve this as necessary.
4. Apparently as 2 above, except one of the team will be very garrulous once the news is out and will talk to the characters at every opportunity ('It's a relief to be able to talk, actually'). They will try to reassure the characters whilst actually making the situation sound worse and worse. The readouts start worrying the team more and more, then, as soon as the ship docks, the scientists abandon ship onto the dock. The players are left to deal with the cargo, which will sound an alarm, start venting some kind of coolant, then suddenly pop open to reveal a large display showing the host of the local equivalent of 'Candid Camera'. The team have filmed *everything* from the first approach and will edit it to make the most amusing program (read: make the PCs look as bad as possible). The contract for the trip included a release in the (very small) print.
5. As 2 above, except that something happens *en route* and the ship experiences 6D6 hours of altered physics. Work out the real side effects of your favourite SF handwave and inflict them on the PCs. Fatal effects should be localised to some parts of the ship so the players can see the results without experiencing them and/or inflict them on handy NPCs (maybe some of the science team). After a few hours the effect breaks down and normality restores itself.
6. As 5 above, except the effect is permanent and propagates across the campaign area at whatever speed seems dramatically appropriate. Explain to the players how the universe now works - or let them work it out for themselves. 🌌

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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!

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

March/April 2015

- **Zozer Games** has released *World Creator's Handbook*.
- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Starships Book IIIIOI: Low Berth Liner, RP-X1, Space Stations XI: Battle Cube, Starships Book IIIII0: Hammerhead Merc Cruiser, Striking Dragon, Starships Book IIIIII: Monolith Cargo Lander, Shrieking Eagle, Space Stations XII: Orbital Grand Hotel, Space Stations XIII: Mercenary's Haven, .*
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Referee's Aid 2: The Type S Scout/Courier, Referee's Aid 3: Type A Free Trader, Referee's Aid 4: A Guide to Star Systems, Referee's Aid 5: Type Y Yacht, Referee's Aid 6: Societies and Settlements, The Third Imperium: Into the Borderland, The Third Imperium: Borderland Profile: Arunisiir, Referee's Aid 7: Type R Subsidized Merchant, .*
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *21 Vehicles*. 

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”.

