



FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured Article:

Jump Destination: Hamilton's Star

by Ken Pick

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January/February 2017

A Note About Production

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

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

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From the Editor



I am once again extending my apologies for a late issue; this time, it was because I spent two weeks fighting off a northeastern U.S. winter bug. Like a fool, I tried to keep working right through it, and while I managed to meet most of my real-world obligations, I was coming home just too 'wiped out' to spend the necessary time on the magazine.

This issue does, however, illustrate what's possible in the larger bimonthly issues that couldn't have been sensibly done in the monthly issues: The bulk of this issue is represented by two articles, Ken Pick's on the Hamilton's Star system, and Timothy Collinson's on the *Naklaad*-class Interface Merchant. These are both quite large articles, and while they could have appeared in the smaller format, both

would have had to be broken up across multiple issues—Ken's into two; Timothy's into three—or possibly four, actually, as after this issue was essentially ready to 'print', I received a Classic *Traveller* version of the ship from him (which will appear next issue).

So, obviously, big is beautiful. But so is small. And so is what's between them. And my article files are a bit thin on beauty. I'd really like to see them beautified, but I need your help. Any sort of article is good, whether house rule, ship design, something a character might pick up on a shopping trip, a culture-building article, and adventure, a review, whether of a *Traveller* product or fiction or a mine-worthy non-*Traveller* product... it's all good, and it will all beautify my article files, which means more hopefully-beautiful issues of *Freelance Traveller*. ☀

Cepheus Engine

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Cepheus Engine System Reference Document. Jason "Flynn" Kemp.
Samardan Press (no website found)

208pp., PDF

PWYW: \$4.25/£3.37

Modifiable version available, MS Word DOCX

PWYW: \$3.08/£2.45

A note on the price: At the time of the writing of this review, the Cepheus Engine System Reference Document (CE or CE SRD, henceforth) was available from DriveThruRPG as "Pay What You Want" (PWYW, above); the prices given are what DTRPG claimed were the average contribution for the product.

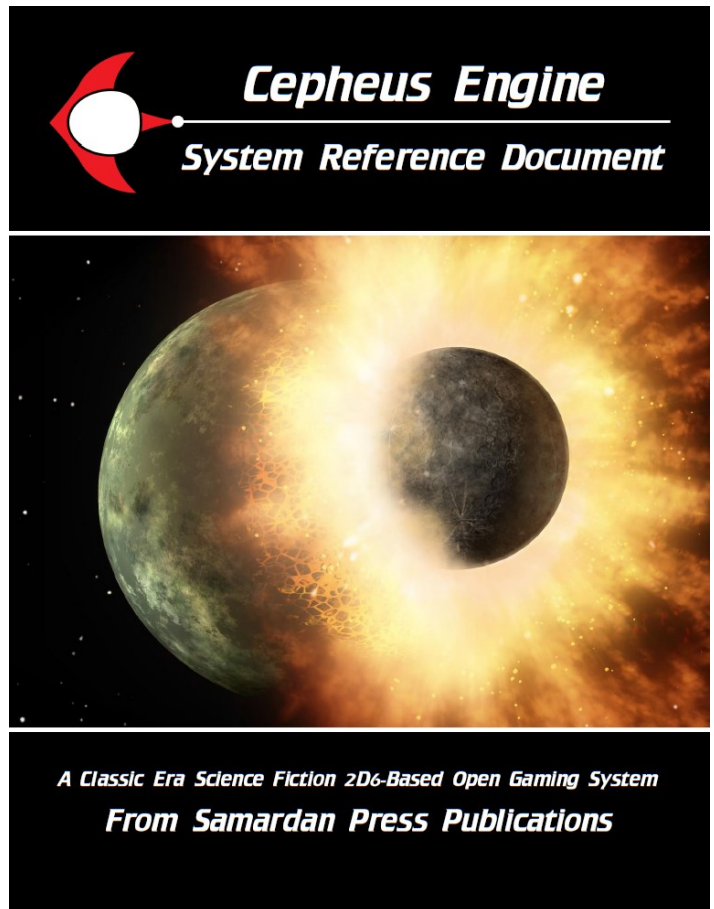
A description of the genesis of *CE* would necessarily get into a discussion of some issues best described as political. I'm not really interested in going there, and you're not really interested in reading what I'd write were I to go there.

CE represents a complete set of core rules—and only core rules—for a game similar to *Traveller*. The author specifically notes that he has drawn on the Mongoose *Traveller* SRD (for their first edition of *Traveller*, withdrawn with the publication of their second edition) and "other Open Gaming Content". The result is a game that will be familiar to most of the *Traveller* community.

The *CE SRD* is broadly divided into four sections: an Introduction; Book 1, Characters; Book 2, Starships and Interstellar Travel; and Book 3, Referees. Each book is a solid treatment of topics relevant to the book's overall subject.

The Introduction is just that, an introduction—to roleplaying as well as to *CE*. It starts by laying the groundwork for someone new to the hobby, beginning with answering the question "What is Roleplaying". It then builds concepts, explaining the fundamental ideas of the roles in the game (i.e., player vs. referee vs. character), characteristics, skills, careers, game play, die rolls, and so on. The progress through concepts gets more and more specific to *CE*.

Book 1: Characters covers, chapter by chapter, character creation, skills, psionics, equipment, and



personal combat. Each chapter assumes that you understand the material from the previous chapters, as well as from the Introduction.

The *CE* character generation procedure is a hybrid process, based in part on the process given in the Mongoose *Traveller* 1ed SRD, and in part on earlier character generation processes. Careers (there are 24 of them) are unitary, rather than offering specializations, but characteristic checks are used for resolving terms, rather than fixed DMs, yes-or-no, applied to a roll. Except for the Scout career, ship shares are awarded rather than possession of a ship itself, but the type of ship isn't specified, allowing a party to pool their shares as part of an effort to acquire a ship.

As in past versions of *Traveller*, the "default assumption" is that player-characters are human. However, the generation procedure does touch on aliens, to the extent of giving a few sample alien races and defining the meaning of alien race traits that can be applied to characteristic generation. The reader is referred to Samardan Press's *Flynn's Guide to*

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Alien Creation for more extensive rules on alien creation (reviewed in *Freelance Traveller*, July 2011).

The section on skills describes the standard format of a task definition, with variations. No examples of a task definition are given, and discussion of adjusting the time taken to do the task uses "time frame" where the task definition uses "time increment" (and neither seems fully explained). The reader is expected to be fully conversant with the concept of a 'check' as explained in the Introduction, as that information is *not* repeated here. (It would be better if it *were* repeated here, or in a separate "referee's recap" section; having all the information and definitions together makes for quick reference.) Skilled vs Unskilled is explained, along with conditions under which the difficulty of a skill check might vary from the expected. A full list of available skills and their definitions is provided, and it is specifically noted that the referee can add additional skills if needed for a particular campaign. Unstated, but perhaps implied, is that skills can similarly be eliminated or ignored if the needs of the campaign so require, which should satisfy the "Old School" roleplayer who prefers a minimal set of skills.

A mechanism for increasing skill during play is provided; it involves weeks of training (the number of which is determined by the character's total skill levels plus the desired new skill level). However, a 'week of training' is not defined, nor is it stated whether you must train to acquire skill-1 in a new skill before you may train to acquire skill-2 in that skill (I would certainly play it that way, but it's not stated). It should be noted that there is no indication of whether it is more difficult to learn one skill than another; starting from the same point, under the rules as written, it takes just as long to go from Archery-2 to Archery-3 as it does to go from Computer-2 to Computer-3. The link to the total number of skills means that if one wishes to raise two different skills from level-2 to level-3, it will take a week longer to raise the second than it did the first.

The treatment of psionics in *CE* seems like something of a tacked-on afterthought; this is consistent with its treatment in similar systems that *CE* is based on and intended to emulate. The characteristic governing a character's psionic ability is also used as the measure of how intensely and with what limitations a character can use his/her psionic abilities, as well as providing a modifier for psionic-based tasks (similar to other characteristic modifiers). The net effect is that regardless of the level of acceptance of psionics in a particular campaign setting, the likelihood of psionic abilities occurring, and the likelihood of a psion being trained, the setting will be relatively low in psionics, compared with various SF stories in which psionic abilities occur.

The ability to use psionics is divided into 'talents'; each talent represents a specific set of what are variously called in SF 'powers', 'skills', or 'abilities' (referred to as 'abilities', henceforth), each of which is described in the subsection on the talent. Having a talent allows the character to use any of the abilities, at any time, at the level that the character has the talent. For the purpose of task checks, the talent level is treated as a skill level. The base difficulty of a psionic task check is defined strictly by the ability being used; other factors that might be thought to affect how difficult a task is (such as distance) instead affect the cost in psionic strength.

One specific note: Most other treatments of teleportation ignore conservation of energy and conservation of momentum. As presented in *CE*, these are *not* ignored, and characters attempting certain types of teleportation tasks *will* take damage.

There is a brief discussion of a limited amount of available psionics-related technology; this includes drugs to enhance and suppress psionic strength, artificial shields, a 'teleportation suit' that compensates for energy differences resulting from teleporting, and adding psionic interfaces to non-psionic devices (including weapons). One specific limitation of the psionic interface is that a device equipped with a psionic interface cannot be used by non-psions.

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The section on psionics closes with a brief overview of how psionics may be regarded in society (psi-hostile, psi-neutral, psi-friendly); no additional rules are presented, nor is there any discussion of the implications or effects of psionics on societies.

Equipment is principally a basic catalog of equipment. There is an overview of Technology Levels, described in familiar (and broad) terms. Generally, a world's TL is an indication of its knowledge and ability to produce, and the TL of an object is a representation of its complexity and effectiveness. A single paragraph notes that the *CE* uses the Credit as the currency unit; examination of the various equipment tables and comparison with identifiable equivalent real-world goods appears to place the *CE* Credit at rough parity with the 21st-century Terran US Dollar, Euro, or Pound Sterling, with prices roughly consistent with what one would pay in a major metropolitan area such as New York. Descriptions are basic; there is no mention of minor distinctions in design or detail (such as longsword *vs* katana *vs* scimitar, all subsumed in 'sword', or coupe *vs* sedan *vs* station wagon/estate car, all subsumed in 'ground car'). That's not to say that the offerings in the catalog are scanty; where appropriate (such as with weapons), there are extensive lists, and some lists offer additional options (for example, adding laser sights or telescopic sights to a rifle).

Personal combat is round-based, with initiative being checked at the beginning of combat only. There are options based on the type of action and certain skill availability to temporarily adjust initiative for a particular round, and characters have a limited number of actions that can be taken in each round. The rules even encompass (potentially important) minutia such as panic fire, stance, thrown weapons, cover, communications, and so on. Vehicle combat is also supported, and there's even a brief discussion of how to handle personal/vehicle weapons firing at starship-scale targets. As injury can oc-

cur in combat, the effects of injuries, and what's involved in healing, are also covered.

Book 2: *Starships* covers travelling off-world, both interplanetary and interstellar. For interplanetary travel, it provides a table of travel times for various distances at various accelerations, and a formula for calculating the travel time for any distance not given in the tables (or for when more accurate figures are desired). For interstellar travel, all the details are discussed, including routine operations and finances.

Several topics not often encountered (at least in the games I've played in) are also covered, such as airlock requirements in ships and how big an airlock is, distress signals, ship-to-ship docking, boarding actions, and landing on worlds. Ship's security is also covered, with physical and electronic aspects of deterrence and detection discussed, and a few active measures to combat breaches.

On-world travel and encounters with the law are also discussed here, although one can argue that they're misplaced.

The mercantile system is a goods-based system, so you have a hold full of interesting and idea-promoting Grocery Products (6000 Cr/dton) instead of anonymous A-9 Ag Ri Cr6000. DMs are available for planetary trade codes and for broker skill, but are limited to the "largest" DMs (that is, if a good offers DMs for trade codes Ag and Ni, and you're on a world that has both trade codes, you don't get both DMs). This is ambiguous; should one consider a -3 DM to be larger than a -2 DM because -3 has a larger magnitude than -2, or should it be the other way around because if you plot both DMs on a standard number line, the -2 is to the right? I would prefer a statement that is less ambiguous, such as "Use the Sale DM that is most favorable to the seller; use the Purchase DM that is most favorable to the buyer".

Ship design and construction discusses the definition of the displacement ton, defining it as the volume of one tonne of hydrogen, and giving a numeric value of 13.5 cubic meters (but allowing round-

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ing to 14 to simplify calculations). Deck plans are implicitly drawn using squares of 1.5m by 1.5m by 3m high, making two deck plan squares equal to one displacement ton.

Both standardized designs and custom designs are discussed, with standardized designs giving a 10% discount on cost. Customized designs incur the cost of the services of a naval architect, at 1% of the final construction cost. A selection of standard designs, mostly at TL9 and TL11, are provided, but it is explicitly stated that the referee may designate other designs as standard if appropriate for the campaign. Design descriptions are given in block-text form, with no alpha-numeric profile string to summarize.

There are provisions for a few alternatives to the standard interstellar drive and power plant, with basic descriptions and differences in fuel consumption or performance noted. There are no explicit rules or guidelines for creating alternative technologies for these or other components, but the referee willing to put in a little number crunching work can probably come up with some designs that won't be too unbalancing for play, even if they result in a setting very unlike the default assumed CE setting.

Small craft are built using the standard starship design sequence, with some minor modifications (for example, omitting the interstellar drive). There are some other limitations on small craft, but those are set out clearly, and you should find designing starships and small craft both to be usefully quick.

Space combat rules parallel personal combat rules; there are naturally some differences. These center around the different length of a combat round in space, and provide for relevant character skills based on the character's assignment. Actions may be taken at the personal level, not just ship actions, but because of the difference in scale, most personal actions are irrelevant. Where they might matter (such as using psionics against an enemy ship or its personnel), they generally count as minor ship actions.

Special rules for such things as boarding actions and special weapons are included, as is a discussion of damage to ships and how it ultimately affects the ship. Damage control is included in the rules, as a significant action during combat. There are also provisions for using ship weapons against personal scale targets, just as personal combat provided for the reverse.

Book 3: Referees covers the minutia that are often ignored in play, but which really shouldn't be—things like encumbrance, environmental extremes and dangers, disease, and so on. The effects on characters of such things as poisons, acids, and diseases are covered, as is exposure to radiation, vacuum, weather, and so on.

It also covers preparation, from building worlds to building animals, defining adventures (with two structures for an adventure outlined, and others possible), setting up encounters and what will be needed for them, and even tips on handling the “Omygodididntplanforthat” situations that players always seem to manage to get into no matter how carefully you planned. The first thing that the rules say about refereeing is that the objective is to have fun. The second is called “Rule Zero”, and states that the referee always has the right to modify the rules.

There are discussions of difference in gaming style, improvisations, adjusting task rolls, avoiding task rolls (for those who take the position that ‘it's role-playing, not roll-playing’), dealing with situations not envisioned in the rules, and even playing solo as a tool for preparation.

Designing an adventure really happens on two levels, and while *CE* doesn't go into a lot of detail on the non-mechanical level, it does point out that an adventure needs a plot and conflict. Conflict is pointed out as not necessarily being combat or other violence, but instead is a struggle against some sort of opposition, whether deliberate and focussed against the player-characters, or just the conditions that the characters face in the process of accomplishing the mission. The plot is simply the synopsis of

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the adventure—what’s supposed to happen to accomplish the goal.

Overall, CE is an excellent, low-cost entry point into SF role-playing, and allows the player or referee to draw on a wealth of extant material for later ex-

pansion. It’s not groundbreaking for the player who has experience with any of what *Freelance Traveller* calls “Classic-compatible” *Traveller*, nor does it expand on what’s already out there—it fits into the slot of a “basic rulebook”. I’m not recommending either purchase or avoidance; if you feel it fits in your collection, well and good; if not, also well and good. 🌟

Kurishdam

Lecture Hall and Library

Jump Destinations: Geolan and Wasphome, Hamilton’s Star System

by Ken Pick

Only Jump-1 from both Telerine/Paryan System and Korvo/Virtchok System, Hamilton’s Star (Telerine *Asteron Chamilton*) is the third system in Telerine’s three-system pocket empire. Though deep within the Dole Moving Group, the system is technically not part of the DMG; its proper motion, greater age, different metallicity, and much higher Life Index mark it as an interpenetrating interloper.

Named for “Horrible Hamilton”, the Scout who first surveyed and cataloged the system shortly before the Long Night, Hamilton’s Star is a K4/K7 main-sequence binary star similar to 61 Cygni. The two orange dwarf stars orbit each other every 800 years, with a separation of 20 to 30 AU (Orbit 8-9); they are currently near periastron (20 AU/Orbit 8). Each component has a small planetary system.

Such a binary system in eccentric orbit tends to throw most of the protoplanetary matter out of the system during formation. Because of this, both stars’ planetary systems are close-in and low-mass, and the system has no Kuyper Belt, short-period comets, or circumbinary planets.

This system is unique in that both components have system main worlds. The second planet of Hamilton B (“Wasphome”) is the homeworld for a minor intelligent race, the Archoinsectoids cataloged as “Chitin A” and commonly called “Wasps”; the second planet of Hamilton A (Geolan) is a barely-

habitable human colony world, originally settled by its motherworld (the Helleanan Republic on Telerine) to control access to the system.

While access to Hamilton A is fairly normal, access to Hamilton B is restricted – Wasphome is red-zoned and interdicted – effectively blockaded. The Telerines maintain a heavy system defense presence insystem to enforce the interdict; unauthorized ships attempting to run the blockade *will* be fired upon by SDBs or automated orbital minefields. After the Elici Disaster, the Republic does not dare risk a “Chamax Plague” of highly-invasive alien species around any human-habitable real estate.

All ships entering the system must first proceed to Geolan for permission to access the system. All traffic to surface is by special Telerine insystem craft; the closest an offworlder usually gets is Thyrasfika Highport on Wasphome’s inner moon.

Hamilton A and B are currently a little over 20 AU apart – just under three light-hours. All telecommunications between A and B systems will have a minimum five to six-hour turnaround and one-way travel times by ship can vary from 5- 13 days:

Travel Times: Hamilton’s Star A to Hamilton’s Star B

1-G	2-G	3-G	4-G	5-G	6-G
12.7d	9d	7.3d	6.4d	5.7d	5d

A 1-G ship might be able to use its Jump drive to make a “Jump-0” between systems. Boosting out to safe jump distance from a K-class sun (“close neighbor world”) would add a couple days to the journey, so this trick would be slightly-faster only for 1-G ships – 10 days instead of 13.

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Hamilton's Star A (*Asteron Chamilton Alpha*, "The Prince Sun")

The main component of the system is a K4 orange dwarf with four planets.

Pyrak (X320000-0, Orbit 0) is a cratered rockball similar to Mercury, tidally-locked in a near-torch orbit. From Geolan, it is usually lost in the sun's glare, but makes appearances as a bright morning and evening star.

Geolan (B5F2568-9, Orbit 1) is the system main world – small and arid, with a Thin/Low atmosphere that is breathable over less than 10% of the surface. All traffic in and out of the system passes through its B-class port on its inner moon Geolan Alpha (BS00368-9); military traffic passes through the Telerine Naval station on the outer moon Geolan Beta (CS002M9-9).

Areos (SGG, 40 T-mass, Orbit 2) is a small gas giant with four moons, two large and two small. Areos itself resembles a smaller ringless Saturn in coloration and banding. The two inner moons are Size 3 iceballs resembling Europa and Ganymede; the outermost moon (DS00268-8) is the fueling station for the system, with a permanent population of around 600 maintaining a small fleet of fuel lighters for skimming and refining.

Hydrane (D9AA368-8, Orbit 3) is a large iceball with a methane atmosphere, like a cross between Europa, Titan, and Thelara (Paryan System) with two small moons. A secondary colony of around 9000 works drilling and extracting exotic organics from the under-ice world ocean. Much of the labor force are locals (Wasps), who take the cramped and Spartan conditions better than humans.

Geolan (Hamilton's Star A II)

Geolan B5F2568-9 Poor/NI Naval Base

Upon approach, Geolan appears similar to Mars but with less visible cratering and a mottled coloration of tawny sand and charcoal basalt as well as

Martian Red, with brownish patches surrounding intermittent lakes in impact-basin lowlands. Just south of the Equator, at the antipodes from where the overlapping mega-shield volcanoes of the basalt highlands rise out of the atmosphere, lies a small circular sea at the bottom of a deep impact basin similar to Mars' Hellas; a complex set of rift valleys like a deeper and steeper Valles Marineris extends from this sea a quarter of the way around the planet; this impact basin and rift valley system are the only habitable areas of the world and the only place on-world that has regular clouds and liquid water.

That appearance is accurate; Geolan is a slightly-larger Mars with rougher terrain and a slightly-thicker (Very Thin) atmosphere, still too thin to breathe except for one lowland region – the above-mentioned Circular Sea impact basin and attached complex rift valley, site of the surface colony.

Geolan Colony itself numbers about 600,000 humans (10% Telerine, 90% Korvan *metikoi*), mostly in two small cities at the Downport and down in the Rift itself. The Class B port facilities are limited to the Highport dug into the inner moon; the surface downport is Class D, located in the uninhabitable rim highlands (Very Thin atmo) to allow landing of partially-streamlined ships.

Planetary Geography

Not much larger than Mars but with much rougher terrain, Geolan is "Phaidonic", with a Thin/Low atmosphere which becomes thick enough to breathe only in the bottoms of the deepest rift valleys and impact craters. Less than 10% of the surface is habitable: the Circular Sea filling the deepest and largest impact basin and the river system in the Great Rift feeding it, where the air becomes thick enough to breathe. Only these lowlands are terraformable and potentially habitable. The rest of the surface is barren wasteland – unbreathably-thin air, wind-carved mountains, crater rims, and sand seas swept by dust storms like a more rugged Mars.

The Hydro of 2 (20%) is misleading; half of this area are the permanently-frozen polar caps and the

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other half are mostly night-frozen lakes in impact basins and the “frost ring” of the basalt highlands, with the only permanently-liquid water on-world in the great impact basin of the Circular Sea and the Great Rift feeding it.

The Circular Sea and Great Rift are also the only place on-world with actual weather – clouds, rains, storms, all below the Riftwalls. Only high-altitude cirrus clouds and the dust plumes of sandstorms break the sky outside the Rift.

Surface Conditions/Sky Picture

As a Phaidonic world, Geolan has two sets of surface conditions: in the Rift and the rest of the planet.

Common to both:

Geolan’s day is 52 hours long, with a year of 54 local days. The long suntide-braked day gives warm afternoons and cold nights – colder outside the Rift where the atmo is too thin to hold the residual heat.

The first thing a visitor will notice (in the pressurized downport) is the gravity – 2/3 gee, the same as Korvo.

The main sun (Hamilton A) appears twice “normal” size, with a distinct orange tint and visible darker starspots. Its K-class sunlight causes a spectrum shift, moving all colors slightly down the spectrum for a sepia-tone effect; artificial lights (such as within the Downport tunnels and greenhouses) appear unusually bluish in contrast.

The three other planets are all naked-eye visible; Pyrak as a bright orange Morning and Evening Star, peach-colored Areos just bright enough to cast shadows when both suns have set, and sepia-toned Hydrane dimmer but still bright in the night sky. Areos’ two inner moons are a test of naked-eye acuity.

The secondary sun (Hamilton B) appears as a super-brilliant orange star, bright enough by itself to illuminate the landscape in an orange twilight when A is down and B is up. A BY Draconis-type variable, its brightness fluctuates by almost half as its 21 Geo-

lan day (45 T-day) rotation brings massive dim starspots into and out of visibility. Its two outer SGG planets are visible through binoculars.

Geolan’s two moons are small, close-in, and irregular; only the inner moon Alpha is large enough to barely show a lopsided disc; the outer moon Beta is too small to resolve with the naked eye. Both hurtle through the sky like the fabled Moons of Barsoom – Alpha in only 1½ G-days and Beta in 3. Observed from the surface, Alpha’s short “month” results in a longer illusory month similar to Telerine’s Paryra.

In the Rift:

In the Rift, conditions are similar to the foothills of Korvo – Thin but breathable atmo, long days warming up in the afternoon but cooling down to extremely cold nights.

The first thing a visitor will notice at Riftbottom (if not previously acclimatized at the Port) is the Thin atmosphere, equivalent to medium altitudes on Korvo – the popping of the ears, followed by the shortness of breath and constant sinus headache of altitude sickness. There is little sunburn danger; the orange dwarf spectrum of the sun makes up for the thinner atmosphere. Then, when the main sun finally sets beyond the Riftwall, the long icy night; the thin atmo does not hold heat well. (Again, similar to the foothills of Korvo.)

The low gravity causes less pressure drop from altitude; however, “Circular Sea level” pressure is only half standard, so the limit of breathability (the transition between Thin and Very Thin atmo) is only around 1 to 2 km above the altitude of Phaidonopolis. Water boils at only 80 degrees C in Phaidonopolis, 70 at the limit of breathability a klick up the Riftwall. However, the Riftwall extends fifteen to twenty more klicks above that limit for its entire length.

In the Rift, a visitor is never out of sight of at least one Riftwall; at a minimum, the tops of one or both will be peeking over the horizon. Closer up, the Riftwalls are notched with canyons over Riftbottom taluses, with a peculiar “layered” appearance like taller mountains on Korvo – the (hypothetical) tree

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line (and occasional side-canyon glacier) near the bottom, a permanent “snow layer” above that, and wind-eroded rock formations above, too high for clouds to form or snow to fall. The upper part extends more than half the height of the Riftwall. Except for the terraformed area around Phaidonopolis itself, the terrain is stark and barren; no visible vegetation softens the canyons and taluses of the Riftwall.

Above the peaks of the Riftwalls, the daytime sky is deep blue, almost blue-black at the zenith, shading into lighter ochre-tinted “blue sky” on the wall-less horizon up and down the Rift. The brighter (Hamilton A) planets and brightest stars are visible in the daytime near the zenith, and clouds other than high-altitude cirrus form only in the bottom half of the Rift.

Outside the Rift:

Outside the Rift, the rest of the surface is barren wasteland – unbreathably-thin air, wind-carved mountains, crater rims, and sand seas swept by dust storms like a more rugged Mars. The sky is ochre from blowsand on the horizon, shading into dark indigo with the planets and brighter stars (including Paryan and Virtchok) showing through at the zenith. On the other side of the planet from the Circular Sea, the overlapping shield volcanoes of the basalt highlands actually extend outside the atmosphere.

Some of the other deep impact basins contain lakes, all orders of magnitude smaller than the Circular Sea. These lakes are normally frozen over, especially during the long night.

Peculiarites

The 52-hour day produces extreme temperature variations. Like most habitables with such long days, most locals have two sleep/wake cycles per local day, sleeping during the coldest and hottest parts of the day (late night and late afternoon).

Three languages are spoken (Telerine, Korvan, and Galanglic) in two alphabets; Telerine (represented by Greek) has its own unique alphabet.

As with most orange dwarf habitable zones, the hundred-diameter safe Jump limit is determined by the sun’s gravity well, not the planet’s. Use “close neighbor world” distance for the safe Jump limit.

Native Life

Most life-bearing worlds never get much beyond bacteria, and Geolan is no exception. Geolan’s Life Score of 4 (approximately that of Telerine) is just enough to (barely) oxygenate the atmosphere. Most native life is concentrated around the Circular Sea and its impact basin, the most complex forms being aerobic algae mats.

The land ecosystem (a “stripped-down Korvo” using Korvan-adapted flora and fauna) was imported during T-forming. Centered around Phaidonopolis, this transplanted biome is spreading up and down the Rift from its original site at Phaidonopolis.

Cautions and Hazards

The major hazards all have to do with the thin atmosphere, similar to Korvo except with less sunburn hazard.

At Port Geolan atop the Riftwall, the atmosphere is Very Thin bordering on Trace; all connections to the outside are by airlock similar to vacuum worlds, with emergency decompression shelters and compartmentation. The high-rent areas piercing the cliffs for the spectacular view are additionally compartmented, as only quartz pressure windows hold the atmo inside.

Even at Riftbottom, Geolan’s atmosphere is Thin; altitude sickness is common among visitors, and even Korvans need supplemental oxygen or compressor masks to breathe much above the altitude of Phaidonopolis. This is worse for visitors from thick-atmosphered worlds like Telerine, who will always develop altitude sickness on Geolan. Chitin A “Wasps” are limited to the pressurized Downport and special hyperbaric wings of hotels.

Even in Riftbottom, the thin atmosphere does not retain heat; coupled with the long day/night cycle, temperatures approach freezing during Riftbottom nights and always go below freezing on the

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Riftwall. Again, similar to the Korvan foothills; there is a reason why most of Riftbottom's population and imported biosphere are transplants from Korvo.

Allergies and bio-toxicity are often a problem on life-bearing colony worlds, and Geolan is no exception. Like the brine seas of Korvo, the Circular Sea is not only strongly alkaline but full of exotic mineral salts, both irritating and toxic; this is why the settled area is well up the Rift from the Circular Sea.

A hazard unique to Geolan are Mars-like dust storms. GPS and weathersats give advance warning, and everything shuts down for the duration of the dust storm; after the storm, the rusty-sand smell can persist for days. In the worst cases, the high winds can scour the mineral-salt deposits around the Circular Sea and blow up the Rift, tainting the atmo in the T-formed areas and burning the eyes and lungs with moderate-to-fatal results.

Outside the Rift, the hazards are those of any Martian world – Very Thin atmosphere (normally unbreathable), Desert World with no surface water, severe dust storms. The basalt highlands at the antipodes of the Circular Sea literally rise outside the atmosphere; the slopes of the mega-shield volcanoes rise from Very Thin atmo to Trace at the peaks.

Population and History

Geolan is a Telerine colony, planted a generation before the annexation of Korvo when Telerine's single superpower (the Helleanean Republic) was just expanding into its own pocket empire. Originally a small "trading post" colony supporting contact with Wasphome, Geolan expanded into a militarized blockade/control point when the Republic redzoned the system after the Eliki Disaster. Now all contact with Wasphome is under the direct control of Telerine through Geolan.

Telerine policy is that all its colonies must be self-supporting in minimal subsistence mode; the memory of the Long Night lingers. Accordingly, Riftbottom is being T-formed into "Korvo with

Rimwalls" for agricultural self-sufficiency in case interstellar contact should ever be cut off. Conventional on-surface agriculture is taking over from the original hydroponics caverns at Highport and the hydroponics greenhouses at Geolanopolis Downport, but still has a way to go. The main food crop is that Korvan staple, potatoes.

90% of the population are ethnic Korvans; only 10% are Telerines proper, and most of those live in Port Geolan, older of the two cities on-world. Due to inability to tolerate Thin atmo, Chitin A "Wasps" are found only in the Highport and Port Geolan.

Economy and Trade

Trade Class: Poor/Nonindustrial (small size/limited development)

Eaglestone Trade Index: 1 (500 passengers and 2500 dtons freight/week; 40-50% of that through freight traffic between Wasphome and Telerine, 20-30% in-system resource exports to Telerine)

Exports: Transshipments from Wasphome, exotic chemicals from Hydrane

Imports: Transshipments to Wasphome, seed loam from Telerine

Services: Refined fuel, ship servicing, small craft construction (B Port)

Geolan is mainly a transshipment port for freight and passenger traffic between Wasphome and Telerine, with a secondary Belter-based economy.

As a Telerine colony, all money is in the Telerine *drachma*: 100 *drachmae* = one Credit. There are no fractional units in circulation except for some older 50-*lepta* coins. The *lepton* (1/100 *drachma*) is used only for online calculations of extreme precision.

"Seed loam" is a concentrated soil amendment/soil fungus/seed culture used in terraforming. (Yes, you can make a run shipping (very special) dirt between the stars.) Frequent bulk-freighter-sized shipments can make the difference between a 500-1000 year terraforming project and a 100-200 year one.

Starports and Cities

Geolan has only two cities on-surface: Phaidonopolis in the rift valley near where it joins the

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Circular Sea impact basin and Geolanopolis (the Downport) dug in atop the Riftwall above, 30km distant horizontally and 15km vertically. The two are connected by pressurized hyperloop tube systems for passengers and freight. In addition, the Highport on Alpha was once a small city and remains a major (orbital) town. In the order a visitor will encounter them:

Alpha Highport

A class B highport located on the inner moon, Alphaport was the first settlement on Geolan, serving as a base for insystem exploitation, T-forming of Geolan's Great Rift, and "trading post" for access to Wasphome.

Geolan Alpha is a small moon of irregular shape, tidal lock keeping it oriented with its long axis pointing to its primary. Alphaport is tunneled into its surface like a giant planetoid-hulled space station. The moon's low surface gravity (only a couple percent of a gee) allows unstreamlined ships to "land" supported by special earth-fill cradles.

Alphaport was the original Telerine outpost in the system, established as a trading post and terraforming base well over a century ago when Telerine was first expanding out from Paryan System. When Wasphome was Redzoned post-Eliki Disaster, Alphaport became the main base to enforce the resulting blockade; military facilities have largely relocated to Beta, but a presence on Alpha remains.

The highport provides all B-port facilities and services for all ships (streamlined and unstreamlined), though the shipyards are designed around smaller insystem lighters of under 1000 dtons. Special sections of the Port handle local warehouse loading/unloading, small craft/insystem lighters, and what military traffic overflows from the main Navy facility on Beta. Ships land on-surface; the actual Port is tunneled deep into the moon.

At its peak, Alphaport had a permanent population approaching 30,000, self-sufficient with fusion plants and hydroponics; today, most of that popula-

tion (and hydroponics) has displaced to Geolan's surface, leaving only 6,000 in (not on) the moon operating the trans-shipment stop for Wasphome and Hydrane's exports, servicing the ships coming through and building/maintaining the insystem craft operating between A and B and building the special shuttles used to access Wasphome's surface. Over two-thirds of the original Port tunnels are abandoned and closed off, slowly outgassing to space through the rock of the moon; though the active portions are kept at Standard atmo and (mostly) at half a gee of induced gravity, the abandoned tunnels could be Thin, Very Thin, or even Vacuum. And all in the moon's micro-gee.

The tunnels of Alphaport are a huge sprawling maze of corridors, staterooms, and common areas like the subsector's largest and most randomly-arranged starship. Most of the human population is an even mix of Telerines and Korvans both ethnically and culturally, living in separate ethnic residential sections; Wasps in transit stay in a third dedicated section called Entomopolis ("Bugtown").

Geolanopolis Downport

A Class D downport, Geolanopolis is the original surface colony site, established as a "trading post" base for the system and Terraforming base for the Rift below over a century ago.

Since then, the Port has grown into a city of 90,000, a kilometers-wide "Alphaport with natural gravity" warren of dug-in multilevel tunnels and artificial caverns, with hydroponic greenhouses, pressure domes, and landing bays of up to 6000-dton capacity breaking the surface. This maze of tunnels is pressurized to Standard atmosphere, breathable by dense-atmo Telerines and Chitin A "Wasps", thin-atmo Korvans, and offworld visitors. (Better download a map as soon as you disembark; after 100+ years of tunneling, it's easy to get lost.)

"Old Town" is the Downport area itself; "New Town" lies along the Riftwall, with the new Akropolis (Central City) extending through the Riftwall cliffs with multi-story views of the Rift and far Riftwall through large pressure viewports. The view –

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far Riftwall on the horizon with ochre sky above and cloud systems forming below deep in the Rift – is worth the decompression danger.

The only permanent population of Wasps on-world is in Geolanopolis, thousands in their own dedicated Entomopolis. Though Entomopolis' atmosphere is human-breathable Standard, access is restricted; humans can enter by invitation only (escorted by a Wasp Emissary) and Wasps go outside only in groups accompanied by an Emissary who understands and can interact with humans.

Most of the human population here is Telerine, as is the atmosphere and cuisine; the general feel is "Telerine in tunnels". The main difference is less wine and (since Riftbottom settlement) more coca tea and chicha. Telerine (represented by Greek) is the most common spoken language.

Like Alphaport, all signs are in three languages: Telerine (with its own alphabet, represented by Greek), Korvan (represented by Quechua) and Galanglic (interstellar Common Tongue). Wasps do not have any single common language; different Hives interact linguistically and culturally through Emissaries.

The trip down the Riftwall is by hyperloop tubes, either 12-passenger or 60-dton freight capsules; both are pressurized, shifting pressure between Downport and Riftbottom conditions on the trip. Passengers and freight are separate systems using different sized tubes. Passenger capsules take only 10-15 minutes down into Riftbottom (with gravity assist) and 20-25 minutes up to the Rim.

Phaidonopolis (at Riftbottom)

At the bottom of the Rift and the other end of the hyperloop system lies Phaidonopolis, the official capital and largest city at 300,000, spreading out in a growing semicircle from the hyperloop terminals forming the core of its *Akropolis*.

Phaidonopolis is located in the Rift a few kilometers upstream from where the Rift enters the Circular Sea impact basin, by a series of small lakes

(improved by artificial earth-fill dams) on the main river running down the valley; these lakes provide water without the toxic salt contamination of Circular Sea brine.

If Geolanopolis is Telerine in domes and tunnels, Phaidonopolis is Korvo with Riftwalls and two suns, a smaller and newer Pumayaqta spreading down the talus. Much of the edge of the city is agricultural suburbs, a tight ring of agricultural areas and towns connected with the city's transport system.

Geolanopolis and Phaidonopolis are the only cities on-world; all other settlements are small villages, towns, and outposts working the land, limited by the slowly-T-forming arable land area. The T-formed area spreads up and down the rift from Phaidonopolis, first farming towns that could have come from Korvo, then smaller and more isolated villages amid smaller patches of terraced croplands, then T-forming outposts amid T-forming lichen and weeds growing out from their seed loam drop sites, then frontier areas being "crop-dusted" with seed loam as it arrives on-world, then finally the barren rocks and crags and red sand and dust of Riftbottom.

Tech Level Notes

As a Telerine colony less than a century old, Geolan's tech level is second only to Telerine itself – GPS, satellite phone/Internet coverage, full-function smartphones (at least in Geolanopolis and Phaidonopolis) and all the goodies of the early 21st Century. Like Telerine, GPS is accurate to within a couple meters, and Ransdell Metal battery technology from Bronson's Star is more like TL12-13.

The only drawback is all this high-tech is imported from offworld; Geolan colony is barely large enough to start its own production, and once you get away from Phaidonopolis the tech level can drop to TL5 or 6; small agricultural villages and T-forming outposts up the Rift do not have much in the way of manufacturing capability.

Government and Society

Geolan is a Telerine colony (Gov 6 Law 8), directly ruled by the Republic through an appointed

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Governor-General and a *Navarchos* (Admiral) in charge of the redzone blockade forces. The *navarchos* is headquartered in Alphaport; the Governor General in the *Akropolis* of Phaidonopolis, with alternate Standard-atmo facilities in Geolan Downport. Outside of Phaidonopolis, Korvan-style *ayllukuna* run themselves in the farm towns of Riftbottom.

As a Republic colony, Geolan retains the Telerine two-tier social system of Citizens (Telerine) and *Metikoi* (Korvans plus whatever Wasps are on-world).

Armed Forces

Geolan's only intrinsic armed forces are a single home defense regiment of Tech Level 9bis militia. Active-duty insystem military presence is entirely Telerine – primarily Navy with some protected forces for groundpounding.

At any given time, Ham A system hosts about 1000 dtons of Tech Level 10 SDBs, fighters, and armed small craft rotating to and from the Waspome blockade/interdiction force at Ham B. These SDBs and small craft provide system defense for Ham A, but the main focus of the naval presence here is maintenance, repair, and rear-area logistics for the blockade force.

Ground forces are represented by one or two TL10 Telerine protected forces battalions, primarily a reserve in case the blockade force requires surface operations.

All Telerine units insystem have the privilege of using a stylized wasp on their rondels and badges instead of the usual phoenix.

The Moons of Geolan

Geolan Alpha (BS00368-9) – Inner moon, Civilian/Commercial Highport, unusually small for its traffic volume. Described in Alpha Highport section above.

Geolan Beta (CS002M9-9) – Outer moon; Navy station of several hundred supporting the logistics tail of the redzone blockade. Undersized for its task;

the Navy facilities still overflow to Alpha. Closed to civilian traffic.

Hydrane (D9AA368-8)

The outermost world of Hamilton A, Hydrane is a snowballed super-Titan almost the size of Telerine with a surface temperature between Mars and Ceres; greenhouse effect from its moderately-dense methane/nitrogen atmosphere keeps the temperature from dropping further.

The planet is a frozen-over waterworld with a day only eight hours long, a giant Europa with atmosphere and a second crust of chemically-reacted “soil” over the frozen surface. The atmosphere is just hazy enough to blur surface features from orbit, block the light of all but the brightest stars, and show haloes around the suns.

In an arrangement similar to Zandisill Prime but smaller, an on-world population of around 9000 (more than half Wasp labor) staff several dome habitats around drill sites extracting chemicals from the ocean beneath the ice crust. Said chemicals are extracted and refined on-world before being shipped out in insystem lighters to Alphaport.

Gravity is 10% above Standard, with the sun an orange blur hurtling across the hazy sky; the two moons are barely-visible. Village-size dome habitats dot the low rugged landscape around the town-size dome array of the Downport, steam trailing from the vent stacks like smoke from TL6 industrial smokestacks, condensing into plumes of snow falling downwind.

The majority of the “permanent” population are Wasps, similar to Telerine's installations on Zandisill Prime; the insectoids from Hamilton B system take the Spartan conditions and crowding much better than humans.

Adventure Nuggets

- What lurks in the closed-off tunnels of Alphaport? Smuggler drops? Descendants of Waspome fauna dumped to avoid the blockade? Salvageable stuff? Homeless squats? The abandoned tunnels can be treacherous in and of

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themselves – pitch-dark, icy cold, in microgravity, some with Very Thin, Trace, or Vacuum atmosphere from leaks.

- First encounters with Chitin A Wasps, most likely an Emissary. Both highport and downport have Entomopoloi, and Alpha Highport is the main transfer point for Wasps going offworld. Novice Emissaries would be delighted to practice interacting with humans – especially Novices without much xeno-experience. All their training in humans has been from other Wasps, and the real thing is going to be very different; expect all kinds of *faux pas*.
- Riding out dust storms in or out of the Rift. Even in Riftbottom, dust storms can be serious business; outside the Rift, Geolan is not much different from Mars.

Hamilton's Star B (Asteron Chamilton Beta, "The Queen Sun")

Secondary star in the system, a K7 orange dwarf, also with four planets plus a small asteroid belt. Ham B itself is a BY Draconis-type variable whose brightness can vary through the formation of massive dark starspots on a complex cycle; the dominant cycle is the stellar rotation period of around 45 T-days (20 Waspome days), which rotates asymmetrical starspots into and out of visibility.

The planetary system is very symmetrical, with two rockballs in the inner system separated by an asteroid belt from two outer-system small gas giants.

Except for "Waspome", none of these planets has an official name. Since Waspome is a species homeworld, normally they would use the native names. However, Waspome's atmosphere is so congested and hazy the other planets and stars are not visible from the surface – only the suns and moons. Even Waspome is an externally-bestowed name; every native language on-planet has a different word for "the world".

Hamilton B I (X200000-0, Orbit 0) is a close-in airless rockball, lost in the sun's glare.

"Waspome" (X798877-7, Red Zoned, Orbit 1) is the system main world and homeworld of the insectoid "Chitin A" minor race, with a thick congested atmosphere and two small moons; the inner moon contains a Telerine naval installation enforcing the Redzone blockade, a C-class Highport serving permitted traffic to and from surface, and a Belter base serving the Belter operations in Hamilton Belt..

Hamilton B Belt (D000311-8, Orbit 2) is a thin asteroid belt, separating the inner-system rockballs from the outer-system gas giants. The Belt itself groups into two regions, with chondrites (stone asteroids) on its inner region and metallic on its outer. Like the belts in Virtchok system, Telerine companies are exploiting the Belt's mineral resources using local labor.

Hamilton B III (SGG, 50 T-mass, Orbit 3) is the main fuel-skim site for Ham B, a small gas giant with a ring and two regular moons, resembling a miniature Saturn with a slimmer ring. The only offworld presence is a small outpost controlling the fuel-skimming operations.

Hamilton B IV (SGG, 50 T-mass, Orbit 4) is a small gas giant with three regular moons, resembling Uranus in color and faint banding. To date, the moons are not settled, developed, or exploited.

"Waspome" (Hamilton's Star B II)

"Waspome" X798977-7 Alien Homew., Redzone

A warm, wet world with a thick congested atmosphere, "Waspome" is the homeworld of a minor intelligent race, the Archoinsectoids cataloged as "Chitin A" and commonly called "Wasps".

From approach, Waspome appears as a better-lit greenish Titan flanked by two small moons, with surface features all but hidden under a greenish haze. From orbit, the ghostly shapes of continents and oceans can be discerned.

Planetary Geography

Waspome is an old world (older than both Earth and the DMG worlds surrounding it) with less

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seismic/tectonic activity than Earth; its mountains are low, its seas are shallow, and its land area is broken up into no fewer than twelve small continents (two “major” and ten “minor”) and eleven large islands totaling less than half Earth’s land area.

Surface conditions/Sky picture:

Wasphome’s day is 55 hours long, with a year of $54\frac{1}{3}$ local days ($\frac{1}{3}$ of a T-year). Surface gravity is around 90% of a standard gee. But it is Wasphome’s atmosphere – dense, hazy, and lethally toxic to humans – that is the world’s trademark.

The atmosphere is dense, with about three times standard pressure at sea-level, heavily tainted by CO₂ to where it is unbreathable by humans. Layers of aero-plankton in the stratosphere obscure the surface features from orbit; like Venus or Titan, Wasphome looks like a featureless greenish sphere with vague continental features ghosting through the haze.

On-surface, the sky looks like greenish haze, with an orange blur of sun (“The Queen Sun” in most every native language) a third larger than “normal”; the two moons are barely-visible, featureless blurs a third and a fifth the apparent size of the sun. Ham A (“The Prince Sun”) appears as a super-bright orange star, blurred into an illusory disk, bright enough to light the land in a greenish-yellow twilight when the Queen Sun is down. Other planets and stars are not visible from the surface.

This is compounded by Ham B being a BY Draconis type variable, with massive starspots that can vary the brightness by a factor of two rotating in and out of visibility on a 20 W-day cycle.

The heavy greenhouse effect of the atmosphere evens out temperatures all over the world, with little variation from time-of-day or latitude; the climate is universally hot and wet, regardless of location or season. Horizon haze is very noticeable, and the dense atmosphere triples the force of all winds – especially the hurricanes and hypercanes arising

from the hot ocean. Wasphome has some storms that would not be out-of-place on a large water-world or small gas giant.

The default biome is “Green Hell”, a dense forest/jungle swarming with native life under an eternal yellow-green overcast, lit during the long night by the Prince Sun or bioluminescent “fireflies”. Like a late-Carboniferous Earth with orange-tinged black leaves/fronds and dwarf trees; a low stubby rainforest where it rains organic green slime as well as water.

Native Life

Life Score F (full complex ecosystem plus an intelligent native race). Most of the life-forms are known by their common or Telerine names, as the native names are hard-to-impossible to pronounce, and vary considerably from region to region.

Vegetation is normally dark, almost black in color, with a greenish or burnt-orangish undertone. Aero-plankton periodically rains from the sky, a thick and slightly-tacky organic substance called “skyfall” mixed in with normal rains. Unlike the similar “Ublek” of Khorlu, this substance can rain all year round, naturally fertilizing the vegetation into dense growth.

Terrain and vegetation varies quite a bit, resembling Earth in its Carboniferous era but with different forest biomes. Most vegetation is low and stubby due to the wind-force multiplier effect of the Dense atmo; trees are short and massive (about a third “normal” height), undergrowth is thick and dense.

Wasphome fauna has no phylum corresponding to chordates/vertebrates; instead, the most complex land and sea life are para-arthropods, filling most to all ecological niches expected to be filled by fish, insects, reptiles, and mammals. Sea life includes parallels to the Lace Crab and Anomalocaris of the Burgess Shale, sea scorpions, trilobites, and horseshoe crabs as well as separate phyla of pseudo-molluscs and various worms.

Land life is parallel to Terran insects, enlarged due to the Dense atmo allowing passive respiration:

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“dragonflies” half a meter long, meter-long centipedes and millipedes, soccer ball-sized “spiders”, and generally Carboniferous-looking insecta. As well as *periergoi* (“weird ones”) with no direct parallel on Earth; some of the mutant insects from “the Miasma” in Miyazaki’s manga *Nausicca: Valley of the Wind* would not be out of place (though there is nothing on-world like the gargantuan “ohmu”, though humans gave the largest species of Archoinsecta the name).

One of the flying genera of *periergoi* bears the Telerine name Ravdoi (“Rods”) – long, stiff-bodied flyers with multiple fused wings down the length of their bodies giving an undulating motion.

Other than that, most everything found among Terran insects can be found somewhere among Waspome para-insecta: Venomous bites, parasitic egg-laying, venomous stings, bioluminescence (like fireflies), squirting caustic or aromatic fluids (like bombardier beetles or vinegaroons), solitary, parasitic, or eusocial hive structures.

Note that these larger-than-Terran insecta cannot survive in Standard or Thin atmo; their passive respiration system (direct diffusion from spiracles) is the limiting factor in insect size. Insecta that large require Dense atmo to breathe; in Standard atmo the largest insectoids will be similar in sized to Earth’s and only the smallest of those could breathe in Thin atmo.

One peculiarity is that Terran biospheres are more compatible with Waspome life than Waspome’s biosphere is to Terran life. Most Waspome flora can coexist with Terran (at least in Dense atmo conditions) and most Waspome fauna can eat or digest most Terran plant material; only with Terran animal products does incompatibility/toxicity become a problem.

The opposite is not true; Waspome flora and fauna are toxic to Terran animals, though many of the nutrients are the same.

The most complex and advanced order (or subclass) of Waspome land life are the Archoinsecta. Unique to Waspome, these advanced insectoids fill the roles of Terran chordata (vertebrates), incorporating many features of reptiles and mammals such as closed circulatory system, internal mouth parts, and complex neural system. Archoinsecta have the following characteristics:

Exoskeletal – like all arthropods and insects, an exoskeleton of chitin which doubles as natural armor (up to Mesh or Cloth in the larger ones). Growth requires molting out of the old exoskeleton and letting a new one grow in. After molting, the Archoinsect loses all natural armor until the new chitin cures and hardens.

Hemimetabolic – do not undergo complete metamorphosis (i.e. larva/pupa/imago). Hatch as nymphs and grow to adulthood through a series of molts.

Hexapodal – six legs, anchored to the third, fifth, and seventh body segments (forethorax, midthorax, hindthorax).

Entognathous – mouth parts are internal, normally in the form of a short squid-like beak. The external insectoid mandibles may be retained as natural weapons and graspers, reduced to vestigial cheek plates protecting the hinge of the beak, or anything in-between. Normally retaining large external mandibles indicates a predator, but there are exceptions; many species of herbivores retain them as defensive weapons or for chopping and reaping plant material.

Exothermic – “Cold blooded” similar to reptiles; this is not normally a problem as Waspome’s greenhouse effect gives uniform temperatures over its entire “habitable” surface, with little seasonal or even daily variation. Dropping the temperature to near-freezing triggers a hibernation/estivation reflex in most Archoinsecta; if not, low temperatures trigger a sluggish torpor.

Dual Respiratory System – each thoracic/abdominal segment has spiracles leading to spider-type “book lungs” pumped by normal muscle activity; in their native Dense atmosphere, this passive system is their main respiration. A secondary set of

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airsacs serving as mammal-like lungs is used when exerting themselves beyond the capability of the book-lungs; this active system functions as an emergency overload in Dense atmo and as their main respiratory system in Standard atmo. The effect of this is that Archoinsecta of under 500kg can breathe Earth-normal Standard atmospheres, though their native atmo is toxic to Terran reptiles or mammals, lethally tainted.

Closed circulatory system like a reptile or mammal; their circulatory fluid resembles mammalian blood more than insectoid hemolymph, and looks kind of like urine – straw-yellow with a greenish tinge (i.e. “Zinc Chromate Yellow”). Instead of a single multi-

chambered heart, they have several single-chamber “strap hearts” distributed throughout their thoracic and abdominal segments.

Two large *compound eyes* with greater visual spectrum but less fine detail resolution than reptile- or mammal-style eyes.

High resistance to ionizing radiation – depending on family/genus/species, both safe exposure limits and damaging/lethal doses are from 10 to 1000 times higher than for a human.

All of Wasphome’s megafauna – most anything over 6-12kg – are archoinsecta, including the indigenous minor race themselves, the Chitin A “Wasps”. Some samples of the fauna and megafauna appear on the next page.

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Archoinsecta	Type	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds/Weaps	
Vanafsi Skathari (“Brutal Beetles”)						
(small)	Hunter	200kg	5D/3D	mesh	claws+1	A3 F4 S1
(medium)	Hunter	400kg	6D/3D	cloth	claws+2	A4 F5 S1
(large)	Hunter	800kg	7D/3D	cloth	claws+3	A5 F6 S1
Tromatiko Arachni (“Spooky Spiders”)						
(small)	Pouncer	100kg	5D/2D	mesh	teeth	As Fs S1
(medium)	Pouncer	200kg	5D/3D	cloth-1	teeth+1	As Fs S1
(large)	Pouncer	400kg	6D/3D	cloth	teeth+2	As Fs S1
“Pit Spider”	Trapper	50kg	4D/2D	jack	teeth	As Fs S1
Tousoi (“Them”)	Hunter	100kg	5D/2D	cloth	claws and stinger	A3 F7 S2
(swarmers)	Eater	25kg	3D/2D	mesh	claws and stinger	A0 F7 S1
Trogonoi (“Eaters”)						
(small)	Gatherer	12kg	2D/2D	jack	teeth and special	F4 A6 S2
(medium)	Gatherer	100kg	5D/2D	mesh	teeth	F4 A5 S4
(large)	Gatherer	800kg	7D/3D	cloth	claws+3	F8 A5 S2
“Ohmu”	Grazer	6000kg	9D/4D	cmbt	hooves and claws x2	F5 A5 S2
Other Animal						
“Web Spider”	Trapper	3kg	1D/1D	none	teeth + special	As F8 S1
Arthopleura	Gatherer	25kg	3D/2D	jack	teeth-1	A8 F5 S1
“Scorpios”	Hunter	6kg	2D/1D	jack	stinger	A5 F5 S1
Jakelopterous	Pouncer	100kg	5D/2D	mesh	claws x2	As F6 S1
“Roaches”	Reducers	1kg	1D/0	none	teeth-1	A7 F6 S1
Carnivorous plants	Trapper/Siren	n/a				As Fs S0

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Descriptions

(note: all these names are the Telerine names):

Vanafsi Skathari (“Brutal Beetle”) – most widespread megafauna predator; resembles a giant beetle. Large ones are solitary; smaller varieties hunt in small (1D) packs. “Claws” represent cheek-mandibles.

Tromaktiko Arachni (“Spooky Spider”) – main pouncer, resembling a six-legged spider; venomous bite. “Teeth” represent palp-mounted venom fangs. Special attack: Leapers – can change 1-2 range bands with attack leap; the smaller the type, the farther and higher they can leap.

“Pit Spider” – Burrowing Trapper in the manner of an ant lion. Venomous bite, bioluminescent patches. Unlike most Trappers, live in small colonies of up to 1D with networks of pit traps connected by burrows.

Tousoi (“Them”) – Pack predator resembling meter-long ants, with mandible bite (claws) and venomous sting. The basic version is territorial with fixed territory and a Queen/hive structure; the “swarmer” species are smaller but nomadic, encountered in swarms like giant army ants.

Trogonoi (“Eaters”) – A clade of herd animals resembling giant cockroaches or beetles. A genus of these were responsible for the Eliki Disaster on Telerine. The smaller ones have a “special” attack, spraying a caustic liquid to the rear when fleeing. One quasi-domesticated species is used to clear land of vegetation like a plague of ground-bound locusts.

“Ohmu” – Largest of the Trogonoi, so large they active-breathe constantly, giving off a constant low-pitched “unnh unnh” sound. Resemble huge beetles with thick carapaces and large mandibles used for chopping and reaping vegetation. Can just as easily attack (charging stampede) as flee. Hooves represent trample attack, claws the “reaper” mandibles.

Web Spider – Giant spiders, web and all. Some species domesticated for silk production.

Arthropleura – Giant millipede up to 2m long; wide and flat, like a long skinny trilobite. Amphibious (freshwater), with book gills along its underside.

“Scorpions” – Giant scorpions over half a meter long. Venom sting.

Jaekelopterus – Giant sea scorpion 2-3m long; aquatic (with book gills lining entire underside) but can haul out and survive on land for short periods. Attacks land-based prey from the water in the manner of a crocodilian; “claws x2” represent large pincers.

“Roaches” – Small omnivore scavengers; look like their namesakes.

Carnivorous Plants – Not as bad as the name implies; venus flytrap and sundew analogs sized around prey of 6kg or less; at most they could trap or entangle a man’s foot; “siren” types use pheromone-mimicking scents as lures. Useful as complication in other encounters; when fleeing from a chaser or stampeding Ohmu or when the Pouncer strikes, the giant flytrap traps your foot.

Cautions and Hazards

Though some of Wasphome’s fauna (Archoinsecta up to 500kg and the smaller para-insecta) can breathe Earth-normal Standard atmospheres, the reverse is not possible. If a human (or any other Terran mammal) were to stand unprotected on Wasphome, he would die within minutes from carbon dioxide/monoxide poisoning augmented by nitrogen narcosis and any allergic reactions from the alien biochemistry.

Humans can survive on Wasphome only in environmental habitats and/or breathing apparatus with trimix or heliox diving gas mixtures (and the accompanying voice pitch changes); the atmosphere is not only lethally tainted but at a surface pressure of 3000 millibars (three times Standard, the same as 20-30 meters underwater), the nitrogen partial pressure approaches long-term toxic levels.

Then there are the fauna. As in “Monsters from Green Hell”, hot jungles under a lime-colored over-

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cast haze by day and lit by giant “fireflies” at night, teeming with predators and nasty/giant bugs.

Wasphome is home to some interesting and dangerous fauna and megafauna, and about half the land area is uninhabited wilderness for one reason or another. Besides Archoinsect mega-predators such as Skathari and Arachni, swarm predators like Tousoi, and locust horde-herds of Trogonoi, relatively-“normal” para-insects include parasitic (lay eggs in host), venomous, and eusocial swarming (“killer bee”, “army ant”, or “locust”) species.

Population

“Bugs, Mister Rico! Millions of Bugs!” – literally. Over three hundred million of them, three times the population of Telerine and Korvo combined. A native minor race, highest of the Archoinsecta, cataloged as “Chitin A” and commonly called “Wasps” from their appearance – roughly human-sized, upright four-armed bipeds resembling wingless bees/hornets/wasps.

As Archoinsecta, they have all the Archoinsecta characteristics listed above. In appearance, the head appears somewhere between a wasp, hornet, or maybe mantis, with two huge compound eyes with 300-degree vision and antennae which serve both hearing and smell. The neck is noticeably slimmer, as are the “wasp-waisted” segments between the upper shoulders, lower shoulder girdle, and hips. A large wasplike abdomen of fused segments hangs behind the legs like an enlarged tail, containing the digestive system; except for the crop, the segmented torso is mainly used for respiration both passive and active. There is no stinger or wings. The four hands are four-fingered and the feet are four-toed, two forward and two aft in the manner of a roadrunner. The entire Wasp is covered in an exoskeleton of chitin; coloration and pattern varies from Hive to Hive, but the most common patterns are segmented “honeybee” or “yellow jacket” stripes, with elaborate natural tattoos around the head.

The exoskeleton also functions as Mesh-equivalent natural armor (Cloth-equivalent in the case of Behemoths).

Omnivore/Grazers with a bit of Hunter, they are highly eusocial with a specialized reproductive caste of 1-2% of the population, the remainder being naturally-neutered female “workers”, organized into “Hives” based around common ancestry. (“Hive” is a generic name for Chitin A social/kinship groupings, from a single pair of breeders and their offspring to clan/tribes of several intermarried breeding pairs to nation-state-sized groupings and alliances established by “intermarriage” exchange of breeders similar to human Feudalism.)

Despite their “hive insect” social organization and reproduction, they are *not* a communal hive mind but individuals, though of a species much more social than humans. Wasps will always join with others of their Hive/Overhive into herd-like groupings, and are prone to “lone-madness” when alone for extended lengths of time. (The main exceptions are Emissaries, who are selected from those least likely to go lone-mad.) Wasp Emissaries operating alone often “adopt” humans or other local races they interact with as “substitute Hives” and can get pretty clingy.

Wasps have three sexes (Male, Female, Neuter) organized into two castes (Breeders and Workers):

Brood Queens (Female, Breeder Caste) – the egg-layers of a Hive, around 2-3m tall with enlarged abdomens and ovipositors limiting their mobility. Note that they are not “swollen egg-factory sausages”, but can move around with assistance.

Unfertilized eggs (asexual reproduction, the great majority) hatch into Workers; fertilized eggs (sexual reproduction with a Brood Prince) hatch into future Brood Queens and Princes. The sex ratio among Royal nymphs is around three males (Princes) for one female (Queen).

Brood Princes (Male, Breeder Caste) – around 2-3m tall, in positions of authority and command as unlike Brood Queens they are fully mobile, resem-

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bling taller, larger, more “elaborately regal” Wasps. Princes interact with offworlders indirectly, through Emissaries.

Workers (Neuter, Worker Caste) – naturally-neutered females, 1.5-2.5m tall and of varying builds depending on Hive and specific Brood Mother; they are not otherwise biologically-specialized. Two specific castes of Worker are of interest:

Behemoths – a form of gigantism whose frequency can vary from Queen to Queen. Over 3m tall and built like bricks, massing up to a ton; used in war as Heavy Weapons/organic Battle Dress and in peacetime for heavy construction/excavation work.

Emissaries – Wasps specially selected and trained as heralds/diplomats/interpreters to interface between Hives, acculturated to both their home Hive and the Hive they’re emissaried to – including humans; it’s said that “You don’t know the Wasps; you only know the Emissaries”.

Wasp player-characters will almost certainly be Emissaries; Wasp Patrons will be Emissaries or Hives (Queens/Princes) working through an Emissary.

In addition, when removed from the pheromone aura of other Wasps, one in a thousand Workers will morph into a “proto-Queen” and start laying parthenogenic eggs which will hatch into clones of the mother. These are much less prolific than a true Brood Queen, laying single eggs at intervals.

Humans are often uneasy around Wasps, and (except for Emissaries) the feeling is mutual.

Humans find many Wasp mannerisms disturbing; complex mouth parts (inner beak, outer cheek-mandibles) and antennae in constant motion, unconsciously-synchronized movements and gestures within a group, and the appearance of a giant stinging insect. Emissaries to humans go out of their way to dress, act, and generally present as “normal”.

Wasps in turn find humans utterly alien, eldritch abominations from Beyond-the-Sky like something out of H.P. Lovecraft. The closest equivalent on their world is a worm or slug; other than that, humans are completely-different in *bauplan* or anatomy than

anything on their world. (At least humans have the idea of “bug” or insect; they had no such basis for description. Their biosphere has *no* genus even remotely resembling a Terran chordate/vertebrate.)

Encounters with Wasps would primarily be with Emissaries, either an Emissary representing a Hive, on their own (Detached Duty like a player-character Scout), or as interface to and accompanied by a group of Workers. Player-character Wasps would be detached-duty Emissaries or groups of Workers with Emissary interface operated as one.

History

Pre-contact

At the time of First Contact, nine out of ten civilizations are stuck at the Tech 3 Plateau, and the Wasps were no exception. Their Tech Level advancement had been extremely slow even before the plateau for a variety of reasons.

Wasp society was ultra-conservative to the point of stasis. Under their Hive/Caste system, the Princes and Queens made all the decisions and their first (and only) priority was preserving their lineage (Brood and Hive). Their communistic Hive economy prevented any concentration of private wealth which could be used to spark an Industrial Revolution to TL4; like several human tribal cultures with the same problem, any windfall to one had to be shared with all.

And Wasps were every bit of aggressive as humans at similar levels of development; their history was that of inter-Hive competition, inter-Hive warfare, and tangles of conflicting inter-Hive alliances negotiated by Emissaries and sealed by exchange of Breeders in the manner of feudal European political marriages. A “Game of Hives” in a Cosmic Egg where nothing existed beyond the yellow-green overcast above except the Queen Sun (Ham B), the Prince Sun (Ham A), and two lunar wanderers.

Then something came from Beyond the Sky.

First Contact

According to surviving Scout Service records from before the Long Night, Hamilton System was

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cataloged and first surveyed a few generations before the start of the Long Night. The system was named after the Scout in charge of the survey, one "Horrible Hamilton."

First Contact was attempted after detailed survey, and had to be done slowly and carefully. As far as the Scouts could ascertain from a distance, the natives had no concept of anything outside their world and their biosphere no phylum corresponding to chordates/vertebrates – humans would be utterly alien, "Fungi from Yuggoth" literally coming out of Nowhere, completely outside even the natives' imaginings. A botched Contact could get violent – the natives were easily as aggressive and competitive as humans, and nobody wanted to risk "kicking over the wasps' nest".

"Alien Abductions" were used to gather intelligence and attempt contact under controlled conditions, but immediately ran into a major problem – the abducted Wasps went "lone-mad" upon the separation from their Hives and immersion among these *things*.

The breakthrough came when they got an Emissary – a trained interface diplomat resistant to lone-madness and isolation from their Hive. With this Emissary they were able to establish some rudimentary communication, and with this communication came another problem: How to make actual Contact without triggering an inter-Hive war or causing fatal trauma to the civilization.

Two things worked in the Scouts' favor – the group structure of Hive society provided more of a stabilizer than any human society would have and (unlike Asimov's classic "Nightfall") only a few Wasps would experience what lay Beyond-the-Sky: a skyful of stars and other worlds. Hives would be contacted one-by-one, learning from each contact.

There was still massive disruption and a couple inter-Hive wars, but otherwise the Wasps weathered First Contact without too much damage; surviving

Scout Service records show limited Amber Zone contact, xenological/cultural studies and documentation, some resource extraction, some established trade/tech transfer, some big-game hunting. And some accounts of "Men Who Would be King" adventurers "pulling Von Danikens" on the Wasps with varying (and sometimes fatal) results.

Then came the Long Night, and the ships from Beyond-the-Sky stopped coming.

The Long Night

Wasphome weathered the Long Night pretty well; without offworld imports, their society drifted back to what it had been before First Contact, with some scavenged higher tech and memories and history-becoming-legend of ships and alien things who came from "stars" and worlds Beyond-the-Sky.

According to various Hives' legends, some humans might have been stranded on-world but none survived for long. Surviving records and legends are inconsistent, suggesting sporadic offworld contact for a time – probably random raiders and pirates grabbing what they could. The abandoned Highport on the inner moon was stripped and salvaged sometime early during the Long Night.

Second Contact

As the Long Night drew to a close, other now-independent worlds in the surrounding Dole Moving Group began to stir; acquiring Jump Drive technology, they started to scout and expand outsystem, contacting the other known worlds in their vicinity. The closest of these to Hamilton's Star was the dense-atmo near-waterworld of Telerine, only one parsec distant.

Second Contact from Telerine followed the pattern of First Contact but was much less disruptive; this time the Hives had archives and legends of what lay Beyond-the-Sky and the Telerines had surviving Scout Service records. Both sides had some idea what to expect.

Two-three generations ago, Telerine's single superpower formally annexed Hamilton's Star, reac-

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tivating and renaming the abandoned pre-Long Night highport and making contact and trade overtures to the Hives. Specialized cadres of Emissaries were surgically-altered and trained to interact with humans, and Wasps began to be used as grunt labor outsystem (such as Paryan and Virtchok outer systems and Zandisill). Unlike those other *metikoi* the Korvans, Wasps could handle high-radiation environments and “spam-in-a-can” crowded habitats much better than humans.

Then came the Eliki Disaster.

The Eliki Disaster and Redzone

Imported Wasphome fauna broke containment and overran the smaller Republic island of Eliki on Telerine, crowding out and exterminating the island’s existing Terry/Terraforming biosphere. Not only invasive species, but highly-invasive to human-habitable real estate.

The Republic’s first reaction was to deploy its Navy under a war footing and shut down all travel into or out of Hamilton System. Some human cultures would have gone to a Final Solution of orbital bombing, but Telerine was conflicted. Eliki was no deliberate act of war, yet Wasphome life had showed itself as dangerous, able to take over human-habitable worlds and crowd out most all other life. And since Telerine had annexed the system, Wasps were legally *Metikoi* (resident non-citizens), just like the Korvans and many humans on Telerine itself. And Wasps were already preferred offworld for high-radiation and overcrowded environments.

The solution finally agreed on was to Redzone Wasphome and blockade the world, allowing only limited and highly-controlled contact.

The Redzone Interdiction

The basic premise of the Redzone blockade is simple: No Wasphome fauna capable of breeding can be permitted offworld, including Breeder-caste Wasps.

No technology that could give Wasps their own offworld capability is permitted on-world. (This is an effective limit of TL7, the Tech 7 Plateau.) This also applies to high-tech that they could reverse-engineer; high-tech electronics are in a limbo between permitted and forbidden, as TL11+ solid-state electronics are near-impossible to reverse-engineer from TL7.

Telerine controls all traffic to and from surface, enforcing the interdiction with SDBs and orbital minefields. All ships entering the Ham B system must proceed to Thyrasfika Highport on Wasphome’s inner moon and check in. Any unauthorized ship insystem will be hailed; any ship attempting to approach the planet itself *will* be fired upon by Telerine SDBs and orbital minefields.

All business is conducted at the Highport; only specially-built insystem shuttles and lighters (built at Port Geolan) are allowed to enter atmo and land on Wasphome.

These non-starships are deliberately “retro” low-tech with a minimum of TL8+ components, largely-manual controls, and minimal avionics. (Think of 1950s/early 1960s concepts of “future spaceships”.)

Any necessary TL8+ components on these shuttles are rigged with destruct charges. These are not “blow up the ship” charges, but only enough to wreck the high-tech equipment without much collateral damage.

Pilots for these shuttles form a special Guild, proud of the fact they have to manually “fly the ship” without fly-by-wire or computer assist.

These shuttles only operate between Thyrasfika Highport and about a dozen E-class downports, maintained and operated by Telerine-vetted and contracted Hives, with Telerine naval and protected ground forces standing ready for rescue and recovery. Having one of these downports is very advantageous for a Hive.

The Wasps’ reaction to this is mixed; Hives keep trying to get around the blockade and make direct contact with Beyond-the-Sky and the Telerines keep

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trying to prevent it. Smaller vetted Hives play off larger unvetted ones, and all use offworld Emissaries as spies and tech-pirates for their Hives.

Economy and Trade

Trade Class: "Semi-Agricultural" (Between Ag and generic)

Eaglestone Trade Index: 1 (300 passengers and 1500 dtons freight/week; almost all with Telerine through Geolan)

Exports: Mostly processed and exotic agricultural products – Concentrated foodstuffs for offworld Wasps, organic chemicals (exotic proteins), high-tensile "silk" fibers, chitin-based organoceramics, even infertile eggs.

Imports: Offworld manufactured goods, TL 7 maximum; dextrose-based sweets.

Services: Big-game hunting (in some places).

Except for population, Wasphome most closely matches the Agricultural trade classification. Accordingly, most of its exports are processed agriculturals, traded for offworld Tech 7 goods. Imported technology is limited to Tech Level 7 by the Telerine interdict; nothing higher-tech than their own.

The Hives chafe under this restriction, and try to get higher-tech through the blockade whenever possible. It is an open secret that Emissaries double as industrial spies for their Hives.

Thyrasfika Highport

Though classified as an X port, Wasphome actually has a Telerine-run C-class highport and system defense base on its inner moon named Thyrasfika ("Wasp-port"). All traffic to Wasphome goes through this Telerine-run highport; the accompanying naval station enforces the Red Zone interdiction. This is enforced by insystem Telerine forces and orbital minefields.

Thyrasfika Highport is *the* center of activity for the Ham B system.

Here Emissaries for offworld are surgically-altered and implanted to be able to speak human languages.

Here apprentice Emissaries practice interacting with humans, often with no clue; there's a difference between being taught alien personalities and culture and actually experiencing it.

Thyrasfika is the base for most all Belter operations in Hamilton's Belt.

All traffic to and from Wasphome goes through Thyrasfika; offworld starships (including player-character ships) will get no closer than this Highport. All cargo bound for the surface is transferred to special shuttles and lighters; these are the only craft permitted to enter atmo and land.

Thyrasfika is also the transfer/embarkation point for all Wasps going offworld (Emissaries, trade expeditions, or Wasp labor for Paryan, Hamilton and Virtchok Belts, or Zandisill). Wasps are preferred for these tasks because of their high tolerance for both radiation exposure and tight quarters. Emissaries normally travel Middle Passage for maximum human interaction time and Workers in Low Passage taking advantage of their hibernation reflex – at near-freezing temperatures, they conk right out.

And the base for the Redzone blockade/interdiction force; there is a heavy Telerine military presence of Naval personnel and Protected Forces (including Laconian mercenaries) for surface commando operations.

Put the above three together and Thyrasfika becomes a hotbed of Casablanca-style spy activity – Emissaries gathering intelligence about the greater universe (and/or the blockade) and/or trying to smuggle in forbidden technology. Both sides know how the game is played and that the other side knows. (And they know the others know, and the others know they know they know...)

Thyrasfika Highport is similar to Alphaport on Geolan Alpha, tunneled deep into the small moon. The major differences are more Telerines, less Korvans, a larger military presence, and a huge Entomopolis taking up half the Highport accommoda-

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tions. Total permanent population is around 2000 (half military personnel) with an equal (mostly Wasp) transient population at any given time.

Some of these Port tunnels date from before the Long Night; when the Telerines moved into the system after Second Contact, they discovered a pre-Long Night port that had been evacuated and stripped. No human remains were found; apparently the old port had been evacuated and abandoned after being salvaged/stripped. It was just a matter of rebuilding the existing facility back into operation.

What “downports” are in use on-surface are primitive Class E downports. Many have adjacent environmental facilities for visiting humans, using heliox and/or trimix diving gas mixtures to provide human-breathable atmo under Waspome pressures. (The heliox/trimix has the expected changes on voice pitch; referees and players are encouraged to run communications to and from these in squeaky helium falsettos.)

Tech Level Notes

Waspome was stuck at the Tech 3 Plateau (pre-industrial) at the time of First Contact, just before the beginning of the Long Night. Interaction and trade had only begun when interstellar contact ceased; Wasp civilization was still reeling from First Contact with these eldritch abominations from beyond the sky.

When the Long Night ended and Telerine expanded out to Hamilton’s Star over a century ago, the Wasps were still at TL3bis, just starting an Industrial Revolution but unable to complete it due to fits and starts between Hives and the damping effects of their eusociality.

The Wasps handled Second Contact better than they had First Contact; trade with Telerine became established, Waspome Highport was founded, Gelolan was T-formed and settled, and their Tech Level increased through imports, reverse-engineering lower tech from the imports. Then came the Eliki Disas-

ter and the Redzone went down. Waspome was around TL7 at the time, and the Redzone stopped all further tech imports, effectively freezing Waspome at the TL7 Plateau, unable to advance from Industrial to Information Age without advanced electronics. A live operator still remains the best control system.

Waspome remains around TL6bis (between WW1 and 2) to this day; the major anomalies are electronics and chemicals:

Electronics are barely TL5, without even vacuum tubes due to difficulties with the thick atmosphere; have you ever tried to build a vacuum tube in 3 atmospheres? Instead, they use a sort of primitive capacitance technology, even bulkier and less efficient than vacuum tubes. With no compute power, live operators become the main control system.

Solid-fuel rocket technology and its chemical/industrial base are around TL9, just the opposite.

With the thick atmosphere, local aircraft need only between half and a third the lifting surface of Standard atmo; this gives any Wasp-designed aircraft strange stubby proportions. And would make hovercraft very practical if they had a better power source than combustion engines; as-is, Wasp hovercraft tend to be large and heavy.

Another peculiarity has to do with their eusocial structure where the group always takes precedence over the individual; for instance, use of mass transit instead of private vehicles, communal facilities instead of personal.

Government and Society

“Wasp” society is based around the “Hive”, a small breeding “group/line marriage” of Brood Queens and Brood Princes and a much larger population of neuter Workers. These Hives fill a similar niche to a Vargr extended Pack or a Korvan *ayllu* and are fiercely competitive with other Hives, warring on each other or forming alliances by exchange of Queens and Princes with other Hives to group together into larger Overhives, the largest of which approximate nation-states.

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Government of a Hive is a combination of Gov C (Charismatic Oligarchy, the Breeder Caste), Gov 5 (Feudal, in relationships and alliances-by-exchange-of-breeders between Hives), Gov 0 (Family bonds predominate, as each Hive is a heavily-extended family), and Gov 7 (Balkanized, from the vast number and variety of independent Hives).

Brood Queens and Princes rule, Brood Princes command when away from home, Emissaries interact with other Hives (including offworlders), and Workers and Behemoths do their thing.

Language and secondary customs can vary widely from Hive to Hive; Emissaries exchanged between Hives act as linguistic and cultural interpreters as well as generic diplomats.

By human standards, all Hives operate under "True Communism"; the Wasps' extremely social nature naturally subordinates the individual to the collective and automatically coordinates the whole. Hives *do* compete with each other, both economically and violently; outside the Hive there is always the Other, just as among humans with their much smaller troop-size limit. The Emissary caste originally developed as a corps of professional diplomats to regulate this inter-Hive competition and conflict.

Within the Hive, the individual will almost always defer to the group. Like several human societies, an individual takes the career and life expected of her for the common good of the Hive, with her own wishes or desires secondary to the collective.

However, the Hive (through the Queens and Princes) does take into account individual talents and aptitudes when assigning Workers to career paths and functions. A Worker satisfied with her job and position is more of an asset to the Hive than an unhappy one. Just that there are more needed functions and jobs than there are satisfied Workers.

The main exceptions to this are Emissaries, who are selected from those more resistant to loneliness and more comfortable with outside-the-Hive situations. (Similar to Droyne "Sports".)

Despite their communistic psychology and sociology, Wasps do have the concept of private property, just it normally applies to personal possessions and not much else.

Psionics

Wasps are very slightly psionic – mostly basic Telepathy, i.e. Life Detect and Telempathy, both mostly within their Hive kin-group. Humans are not really sure how much of this is truly psionic and how much is pheromone scent interaction.

It is possible some of the Breeder castes (Queens and Princes) might have actual trainable psi talents, most likely Telepathy and Awareness. Emissaries and various other "sports" may also have psi talents, but to a lesser extent.

Religion/Philosophy

Before contact, Wasps had no concept of anything beyond their world, and their belief systems reflect this.

Wasp "religion" is more a set of folk beliefs which vary from Hive to Hive, but all have some things in common. Such as basic cosmology, which echoes the Hive structure of their society:

The Godhead is female, a Cosmic Queen who laid the Cosmic Egg of the World (Wasphome) which in turn hatched all life.

Below this all-Mother are lesser supernatural beings – the equivalent of Princes and Workers – echoing the Hive structure of their society.

And the physical Cosmos, a geocentric pocket universe consisting of the World (the Cosmic Egg), the Greater and Lesser Suns and Moons, and not much else. Nothing else was visible through the perpetual yellow-green overcast which roofed the world and rained skyfall.

Then came First Contact. Like their original pre-contact society, this cosmology took a beating from the revelation of an entire galaxy and universe Beyond-the-Sky. By the time of Second Contact, the disruption had damped down into an interpretation that the above Cosmology was for Wasps and only

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for Wasps; the Others from Beyond-the-Sky would have their own Cosmos and Cosmology for them.

This causes some difficulty when going offworld into the Cosmos of the Others, but so far the Wasps have been able to handle it without major problems. The main unsease is what happens to Wasps who die offworld, away from not only their Hive but the Cosmic Egg – do they ever find their way Home?

Armed Forces: Telerine

The bulk of Telerine naval forces in system are dedicated to enforcing the Red Zone – about 2000 dtons of Tech Level 10 SDBs, fighters, and orbital minefields (fire as turret or bay missiles), sharing the military section of Thyrasfika Highport with two or three battalions of TL10 protected forces. These ground forces are primarily intended for commando operations, inserted, recovered, and given air cover by state-of-the-art armed small craft without the TL restrictions of the commercial shuttles.

Within the Telerine military, Thyrasfika has the reputation of a not-unpleasant but very boring peacetime posting. The Highport isn't all that large, there's not that much to do outside Cyberspace, most of the Naval personnel are maintenance and logistics, fighter jocks, or blockade ship crews rotating to base, and the ground forces on-station primarily drill and practice *Entomokynigi* ("bug-hunting") on maneuvers in the unoccupied pre-Long Night tunnels.

Armed Forces: Native

Native forces are entirely at the Overhive level, totaling around 100 divisions (200 brigades, 400 regiment-equivalents), mostly Tech Level 7 infantry with Behemoths as "organic powered armor" packing heavy weapons. Organization can vary from Hive to Hive to Overhive to Overhive.

None of these ground (and supporting marine and air) forces are off-planet, and are mostly used against other Hives on this balkanized world.

The dense hazy atmosphere favors shorter-range engagements; shotguns (and their relatives the LAG and RAM grenade) dominate as small arms. Heavy weapons are mostly rockets and missiles (including gyrojet direct-fire artillery) reflecting their advanced solid-fuel rocket technology; though TL7, they do have TL8-equivalent LAGs and RAM grenades. Tac missiles are wire- or radio-command guided, with some heavy ballistic missiles similar to a solid-fueled Redstone. WMDs are chemical (organophosphates and/or chlorinated hydrocarbons) or entomological (invasive species swarms) instead of nuclear; even pre-blockade, the Telerines made sure they did *not* give Wasps nuclear tech.

There has been some talk of Wasp mercenary companies. Wasphome could support some 40 regiments of mercs for dense-atmo offworld use, but such companies would have to be commanded by a Brood Prince, which are not allowed offworld. Some units commanded by non-breeders (including specialized Emissaries) have been experimented with.

The Telerines have additionally surrounded the planet with a ring of orbital minefields; these minefields *will* fire automatically on any approaching ship (as turret or bay missiles) without proper IFF. Shuttles and lighters to and from surface ports are given the proper one-use IFF codes at Thyrasfika Highport.

Adventure Nuggets

- "Bored soldiers are dangerous", and Thyrasfika is a very monotonous and boring posting. Expect some of the Telerine military onsite to cut the boredom in various creative (and borderline-insane) ways. The least hazardous of these is exploring the old tunnel systems.
- Big-game hunting on Wasphome – some Hives invite offworld hunters to try their luck with local Big Dangerous Game for some hefty amounts of Telerine Drachmae or offworld Credits (or maybe minor offworld technology). Hunting Brutal Beetles or Spooky Spiders through an al-

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ien jungle on a hostile-environment world from a heliox-atmo base camp...

- And what happens if the life-support fails or goes wonky in that base camp?
- Wasp with a Secret – she’s a spontaneous breeder on the run, trying to suppress it with do-it-yourself hormone treatments. If she’s found out, the Telerines will deport her back to Wasphome permanently; acculturated to human society and customs, she finds other Wasps as alien as they find humans.
- It is an open secret that Emissaries double as spies for their Hives, gathering intelligence both political, newsworthy, and industrial/technological – anything that might give a Hive an advantage over other Hives or enable Wasps to get offworld through the Telerine blockade and take their place with all the others. A player-character Wasp will almost always be an Emissary (with or without an escort of other Worker castes possibly including Behemoths). Any PC who becomes a companion of a Wasp Emissary could easily find him/herself in the middle of a Spy Thriller.
- Or a dangerous smuggling run, trying to get past the Telerine blockade. Hint: A brute-force blockade run is *not* going to work. You have to get sneaky.
- And once you’re on-surface, now what? The local atmo is unbreathable, and the Telerines will intercept you (or their minefields shoot you down) if you try to boost out. The Hive you’re dealing with is obviously not one of the Treaty-vetted ones, and you’ve just ridden down in a high-tech treasure trove without any of the Telerine lighter/shuttle limitations. What’s to prevent the locals from just taking your ship?
- And the Telerine blockade force above – having to mount an expedition to destroy the ship before the Wasps can reverse-engineer it. This could be a protected forces commando raid to

take the ship back and fly it out, or a simple artillery missile drop – a force with near-space control can shoot up anything on-surface at leisure. Even low-yield nuclear weapons would be a possibility – a couple kilotons would definitely leave nothing salvageable, and radioactive contamination would be mitigated by the local fauna already being highly-resistant. Don’t know about the smugglers, though.

Designer’s Notes

Hamilton’s Star began when a random system generation using *Traveller Book 6: Scouts* resulted in a pleasing small symmetrical orange dwarf system – two rockballs in the inner system separated by an asteroid belt from two small gas giants in the outer system. When the Chitin A “Wasps” were first developed, the second world in this system was modified into their homeworld and continued from there.

The Dole Moving Group had too few multiple-star systems, so the system was made a binary by rolling another four-planet orange dwarf system, seeing what came up, and fitting the two together with 61 Cygni as a pattern. When the solar spectral classes were adjusted for the relative atmospheres of the two system main worlds, the first system rollup became Hamilton B and the second Hamilton A, placed as close as possible according to the Scouts rules for binary system orbits.

When the trip times between A and B were calculated, they were found to be as far apart in travel time as two adjacent systems on a *Traveller* map – two systems for the price of one.

System nomenclature for Ham A was taken from an elemental pantheon in Wayne Shaw’s “Mageworld” D&D campaign of the late Nineties, organized around personifications of the classic Four Elements:

Geolan = Earth (somewhat surface-habitable)

Aeros = Air (gas giant)

Pyrak = Fire (Mercuriform in a near-torch orbit)

Hydrane = Water (frozen waterworld)

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Thin/Low atmo was obviously inspired by “Canyon” in Larry Niven’s Known Space series; Geolan’s small size and low Hydro suggested Mars, so the world was conceived as a Mars with a single habitable lowland area.

Ham B system nomenclature was much simpler, as with their homeworld’s dense hazy atmo only the suns would be visible from the surface. So they’d have no names for anything other than the world and the suns.

Wasphome was originally designed as a homeworld for the Chitin A minor race, with the concept that they could tolerate Earth-standard conditions but humans couldn’t survive theirs. Its high Life Score made the system much older than the Dole systems, making a common origin impossible. The world itself and its biota became a tribute to 1950s “Big Bug” monster movies and derivative 1960s toy lines which provided a ready-made nomenclature.

Wasphome would make a great alien world for adventuring, but *humans can’t survive there.* 🌌

Doing It My Way

Benefits and Burdens: Roleplaying Character Traits in Classic *Traveller*

by Michael Brown

Traveller is, of course, a roleplaying game. All such games call for a modicum of acting skill by referees and players alike. Not to insult the average gamer, but some players have more acting chops than others. Fortunately, some game systems such as *GURPS* (Steve Jackson Games) and *HERO* (Hero Games) use the idea of purchasing character traits; primarily as a method of game balance, also offering excellent roleplaying hooks. These traits are known by many names, but broadly, they’re classified as advantages (a.k.a. “Virtues,” “Merits,” “Edges”) and disadvantages (a.k.a. “Flaws,” “Hindrances”). Simply put, they help to shape and define a character, transforming him or her from a two-dimensional cardboard cutout into a living, breathing individual with a backstory and purpose.

Classic *Traveller* obviously used no such system. The original books took the route of speed and simplicity, leaving it to the players and/or referee to assign traits and fill in backstory. But a traits system could be useful for those who want to combine the simplicity of Classic *Traveller* with the richness of detailed character traits.

We’ll use a system of Benefits (character advantages) and Burdens (character disadvantages) to help define *Traveller* characters and give players hooks on which to base roleplaying. We’ll refer to them collectively as traits during discussion.

Assigning Traits

There are three ways referees and players can assign Benefits and Burdens to characters: simple assignment, substitution, or point-based assignment. The referee may of course think of others:

Simple: The referee and player meet and agree on a few traits based on the character concept. For example, a referee allows each player to have up to four traits. A player who wants to play an ex-Marine might choose Battle Impulse and Pain Tolerance for Benefits (reflecting the hero’s combat experience), and Addiction and Temperamental (to reflect an ongoing struggle with PTSD). This method may take place after character generation.

Substitution: This must be taken during character generation and allows a player to simply select a Benefit (or an additional Benefit level) instead of a skill; or select a Burden/level in lieu of a failed Survival or Aging throw, with the referee’s permission.

Point-based: This must also be taken during character generation and resembles one of the points-based systems mentioned above. The referee assigns each trait a point value and then gives each

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player an allowance to spend on those traits. Of course, Benefits would cost points while Burdens would “give back” points. It’s highly recommended that the referee require all points to sum to zero.

Regardless of the method chosen, each trait is expressed in levels, just like skills gained during character generation. Level effects are given under the trait descriptions below. Also, where traits are described as using a fraction of their levels, any results should be rounded down before application where necessary.

Traits marked with an asterisk (*) require discussion between the referee and player as to the details of the trait.

Benefits

Acute Senses: One sense of the hero’s choice (sight, hearing, etc.) is above the norm for his or her race, with each level adding a DM of +1 to the throw to use it. Only one sense may be so designated.

Aspiration*: The adventurer has adopted a higher purpose in life, and all actions are motivated by that intent. $\frac{1}{5}$ of the Benefit’s levels add a positive DM to any skill or ability used in pursuit of the goal.

Attractive: The hero is considered beautiful by his or her racial and cultural standards. Each level adds +1 to Reaction throws.

Battle Impulse: The PC has superior reflexes honed by training or time spent in combat zones. Each level of the Benefit adds to Initiative throws per Book 1. In addition, the Benefit adds $\frac{1}{3}$ of its total as a DM vs. surprise.

Born Lucky: The hero is one whom luck just seems to follow around. The Benefit’s levels become a pool of DMs the player can use however (s)he wishes, but when they’re used up, they cannot be used again until the next gaming session. Alternately, the referee can simply allow the player to dictate one Critical Success per game.

Charismatic: The adventurer has a great deal of charm and personal magnetism. The Benefit adds its

levels as a positive DM to Reaction throws. Note that this is independent of Attractive (above) or Unattractive (below).

Favor*: Someone owes the hero for performing some deed (saving a life, perhaps) or as some other reward. The levels indicate either the number of favors owed by individuals, or a single favor owed by a figure whose relative power and influence is indicated by the number of levels. For instance, 1 might be an individual of relatively equal power or influence, while 5+ might be a subsector-spanning organization or a very powerful individual such as an Imperial noble. This Benefit is expendable; once a favor has been called in, it’s gone.

Flexible: The adventurer is able to contort his or her body in ways others cannot. Each level of this trait adds +1 to DEX throws only for the purposes of escaping traps or bonds, squeezing into or out of tight spaces, or simply impressing an audience.

Good Reputation: The hero is considered reliable and trustworthy. This Benefit adds $\frac{1}{2}$ of its level as a positive DM to Reaction throws. Note that given the vast distances involved in Charted Space, the referee may declare that the hero isn’t widely enough known to enjoy this trait.

Healthy: The PC is especially fit. This may be due to a specific fitness regimen or just plain good genes. Levels of the trait are added to the hero’s END before determining injury damage, chance of contracting disease, and the number of full-power blows or swings allowed in combat.

Hypoalgesic: The individual has an exceptionally high capacity for pain. $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Benefit’s levels are applied as a negative DM to any damage the hero takes. Minor pain (small cuts, injections, etc.) may be ignored at the referee’s discretion.

Innate Bearings: A PC with this ability has an innate sense of direction. As long as (s)he has a specific starting point, (s)he can intuit distance and direction travelled, similar to an Inertial Locator (Book 3). Note that this ability functions on any world, independent of a magnetic field or landmarks.

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Insight: Some people simply know things, with no apparent reasoning process involved. Heroes with this trait can use superior deduction or intuition to solve problems. Each 3 levels of Insight acts to INT when he or she is attempting to make a judgment from information gained during an adventure. *Example:* a PC needs to determine where brigands have taken his kidnapped companion. Faced with a lack of concrete clues, he applies his Insight bonus to his INT, makes the throw, and thus can make a good guess where his friend has been taken.

Intuitive Liaison: The hero is able to adapt his or her personality, mannerisms, and speech to fully resonate with an audience. Each level of this Benefit adds a positive DM to Liaison skill. For PCs without Liaison skill, it adds ½ of its levels to Reaction rolls.

Network: The PC has built a number of contacts that provide information, aid, and even money. Like Favors (above), the levels indicate either the number of individuals in the network, or a single contact's relative power and influence; see Favors for an example. This Benefit is not expendable.

Prime Directive: The hero has a non-interference deal with an individual or organization. The levels indicate the number or relative power of the others as suggested in Favor, above. The entire agreement becomes null and void should either side willingly violate its terms.

Proprioceptive: The hero has superior balance and spatial perception in regards to using his or her body. This Benefit adds its levels as a DM to DEX throws when such are necessary and to Zero-G Combat skill (*Book 4: Mercenary*).

Ready Accommodation: Similar to Network (above), the hero has built an association of contacts that provide guaranteed accommodations or friendly hiding places on short notice. The levels indicate either the number of individuals in the network, or a single contact's relative power and influence; see Favors above for an example. The levels may also

indicate the relative quality of the lodgings: 1 may mean a room in a flophouse or space on an old Army buddy's couch; 5 might mean an opulent suite in an upscale hotel.

Sacrosanct*: The hero is immune to one or more laws, usually minor, but the rare adventurer might enjoy immunity from prosecution from a major law. This may be due to some sort of legal arrangement or informal agreement. The Benefit's levels indicate the number of laws the hero is immune to, or, alternatively, the relative power of the law. Note that the Imperium would never agree to overlook crimes like murder, slavery, or mass destruction.

Stylish: The individual is up on cutting edge fashion, personal style, and the latest trends. Whenever the hero declares that (s)he's "dressed to impress," (s)he adds the Benefit levels as a positive DM to reaction throws.

Spatially Aware: This Benefit grants superior 3-dimensional sense, which the hero can use to quickly calculate vectors and trajectories in all three dimensions. Each level of the Benefit adds a +1 DM to the following skills: Navigation, Pilot, Ship Tactics, and Zero-G Combat. Note that this Benefit supersede Proprioceptive, above.

Substance Resistant: The PC suffers no ill effects from ingested chemical substances. Typically this is alcohol—(s)he can drink every else in the bar under the table—but might instead be drugs. The Benefit adds its levels as a positive DM to the adventurer's END for purposes of determining intoxication or other ill effect.

Sultry Voice: The hero has a particularly attractive voice; every 2 levels of the Benefit adds +1 DM to reaction throws if (s)he speaks. Note that this Benefit works even over a communications link or if the hero is otherwise not in sight.

Total Recall: The adventurer possesses the fabled "photographic memory." (S)he can recall specific details of every encounter or event (s)he's been involved in. (To simulate this, the player should be

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allowed to make as many notes as necessary or use recording devices.)

Willpower: The individual has superior force of will. Each level of the Benefit grants a +1 DM to the PC's resistance throw vs. physical or psychological coercion (END or INT, respectively.) This is useless against psionic manipulation.

Worldly: the PC has "been around the block," and is a virtual database of experiences. Each level of the trait adds to the adventurer's Tactics skill. If the adventurer doesn't have Tactics, (s)he may spend one combat round remembering a past situation applicable to a current problem, gaining $\frac{1}{5}$ of the Benefit's levels as a positive DM to formulate a plan. ("Being pinned down by pirates like this reminds me of that time we...")

Burdens

For brevity, Burdens that are the direct opposite of a Benefit are simply listed as Burden: (Benefit), with any additional effects or rules noted. Simply reverse any DMs granted by the Benefits to get the Burden effect.

Addicted: The hero is psychologically or physiologically dependent on a chemical substance (i.e., a drug or alcohol) and must indulge daily or lose the number of Burden levels as physical damage until (s)he does. The PC can try to resist; each level of the Burden acts as -1 DM when determining the chance to do so. If the throw comes up a natural "2," then the hero binges for 2D-END hours (minimum 1). The PC may not also be Substance Resistant (above.)

Bad Reputation: (Good Reputation).

Born Loser: (Born Lucky). If using the alternate rule, the referee gets to dictate one Critical Failure/Fumble per game to affect the hero.

Compulsion*: The hero heels an irresistible urge to engage in a particular activity for a number of times per day equal to the levels of the liability. The hero's efforts to resist take a -1 DM per level of the Burden. Some common compulsions are shopping,

gambling, sex, and hoarding; the referee may think of others. For compulsions for things like alcohol or tobacco use, see Addicted, above.

Ethical*: The adventurer is governed by a strict personal code which forms the basis for his or her actions. The hero may add other ethics which dovetail with the personal code. Examples include a doctor's Hippocratic Oath, or the ancient Victorian codes of proper social conduct. The levels of the liability indicate the hero's strength of commitment to this code: 1 may indicate that (s)he struggles to live up to its precepts; 5 may mean an unshakeable adherence. Note that others may try to take advantage of the hero based upon knowledge of this code and its details.

Honest: The hero cannot or will not practice deception of any kind. Every two levels of the Burden equals ± 1 DM to others' reactions to the hero, based on their dedication to honesty. For example, a group of law enforcers would react positively to a truthful hero, while pirates would react negatively to someone so forthcoming about nefarious activities. If the hero is forced to tell a lie, (s)he must throw vs. INT with the Burden's levels as an unfavorable DM; failure means the truth comes out regardless. Note this is independent from Ethical, above—an unethical person may still unfailingly tell the truth.

Hyperalgesic: (Hypoalgesic). All damage that gets through armor is doubled. In addition, the levels subtract from the hero's efforts to resist physical coercion.

Impaired Senses: (Acute Senses)

Impulsive: The adventurer is prone to rash actions. If the hero tries to resist plunging into a situation before thinking it through, each trait level imposes a -1 DM to his or her efforts to do so. Such individuals also tend to act out of sheer ennui. The combination of this and Overconfident (below) is particularly dangerous.

Indebted: The hero owes money. The levels indicate either the number or creditors or the relative power of a single creditor; see Favor above for ex-

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amples. In addition, the levels indicate the number of additional throws on the Cash Mustering Out table for his or her career; the result is the total amount of money owed. This is independent of a starship mortgage (*Book 2: Starships*.)

Inept: The hero may be trained, but his or her motor skills aren't equal to the task. Every three levels of this liability counts as -1 DM against one skill of the hero's choice (except Jack of All Trades.) Note that this may force a skill level to go negative.

Irresolute: The adventurer has poor decision-making skills, or a mental issue that causes frequent confusion. Either way, each level of this liability is -1 against the PC's INT for purposes of making a decision. The referee may rule that emergencies are exempt from this Burden.

Lascivious: The hero is governed by an unusually strong desire for amorous liaisons. The downside is that it may cause him or her to act inappropriately in pursuit of that desire; each level of the Burden is a ± 1 DM on the Reaction throw table (depending on the target) and against the hero's efforts to resist hitting on someone. PCs with this liability often have the stereotypical "girl (boy) in every port."

Law-Abiding: The hero will not willingly break the law under any circumstances, as long as the laws of the particular world are clear. Levels of the liability indicate the strength of conviction: 1 might be someone who occasionally bends a rule or two; 5 is someone unshakably honest.

Lightweight: (Substance Resistant).

Minor Dependent(s): The PC has one or more young (or unhatched eggs) which must be cared for at all times. Note that most worlds legislate harshly against neglect. The levels indicate either the number of dependents or the age in years of a single dependent in multiples of 3.5.

Oath*: The adventurer has taken a vow to perform some action or service. Typical acts include exacting revenge, finding someone or something, or

righting a past wrong. The vow drives the PC's actions; the liability's levels indicate the strength of the PC's conviction to carry out the terms of the oath. This is different from Obsession below as an Oath can be imposed externally (e.g., by an organization.)

Obligation: (Favor). The PC owes someone a favor; one day, they'll collect. The levels indicate the same as Favor above.

Obsessed*: The hero is fixated on accomplishing a goal to the exclusion of anything else. This may or may not have a higher purpose. The Burden imposes a -1 DM to any attempt to sway him or her from the self-appointed task. Note this is different from Oath above, as an obsession is totally self-directed and internally driven.

Overcautious: The hero avoids even minor danger whenever possible. Such individuals are typically considered cowards. $\frac{1}{2}$ of the levels are applied as a negative DM to reactions by individuals who respect bravery. If forced into a situation where (s)he must face danger, $\frac{1}{5}$ of the levels are applied to any of the adventurer's skills used during the event.

Overconfident: The adventurer is convinced that (s)he's more powerful or capable than in reality, and acts accordingly. Such behavior can spill over into narcissism, and can get the individual in big trouble. This has nothing to do with whether the individual is actually proficient.

Pacifist: The PC avoids violence of any sort and will try and disengage from it as quickly as possible. If forced into a situation in which (s)he must employ violence, the levels serve as a negative DM to any skills used until the adventurer or the opponents have left the area.

Phobia: The hero has a deep and unreasoning fear of something, and will avoid being exposed to the feared thing at all cost. Almost anything can be a phobia; lists of known phobias are easily found. The levels act as a negative DM to the hero's efforts to stay in the area of the feared object. If the throw fails, (s)he must immediately leave by the most direct route. Note that this may put the hero in more

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danger. The levels can also serve as a rough indicator of the power of the phobia: 1 could indicate something rarely encountered, while 5 could be a common object or event.

Self-Indulgent: The hero willingly overindulges in food (gluttony) or the acquisition of wealth (greed). To such an individual, there can never be enough of either. If the hero tries to resist, the trait's levels become a negative DM to such attempts. $\frac{1}{5}$ of

the levels become a negative DM on Reactions from those who discover the character's proclivities.

Stress Paralysis: The PC is easily overwhelmed by stressful situations. This most commonly happens in combat, but can occur in other demanding instances. The PC reacts as though Surprised (per Book 1), with the trait's levels becoming a negative DM for this purpose. The affected character throws vs. Surprise (with the same DM) each combat round until (s)he recovers or the stressor ends.

Unattractive: (Attractive). 

Critics' Corner

Mongoose Traveller 2nd Edition: The Pirates of Drinax: The Theev Cluster

reviewed by Megan Robertson

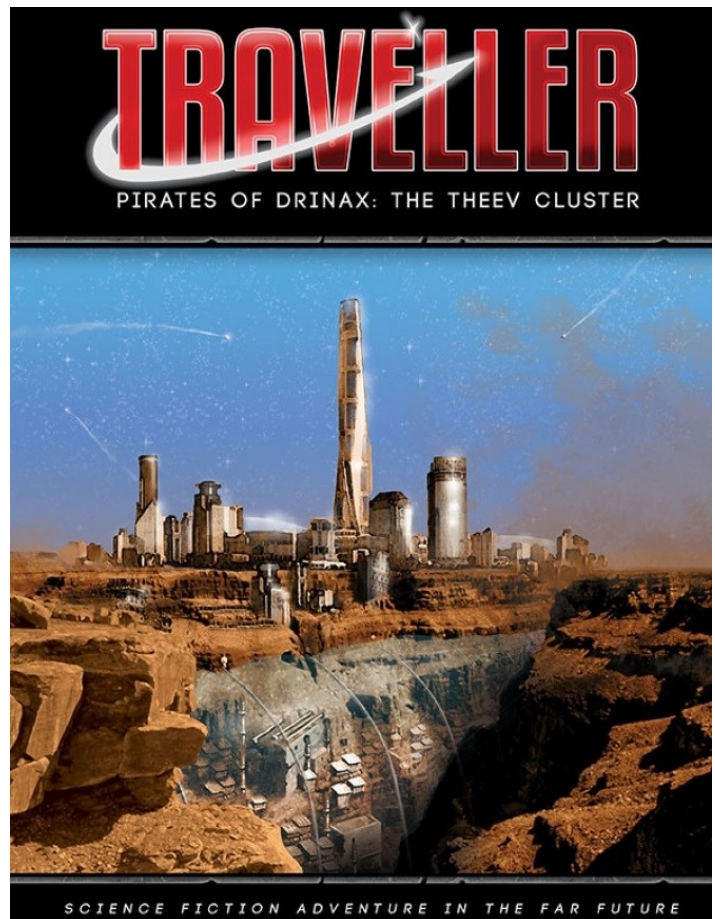
The Pirates of Drinax: The Theev Cluster. Martin J. Dougherty.
Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>
17pp., PDF
US\$5.99/UK£4.80

This review originally appeared on rpg-resource.org.uk in Oct. 2016.

In the middle of the Sindal Subsector you'll find the three systems that make up the Theev Cluster. Strategically important, it has a bad reputation as a pirate hotspot that encourages many merchants to go the long way around to wherever they are going. They are also remarkably hostile towards the Imperium. For most *Traveller* players I've met, it's their kind of town!

The Introduction gives the history and background of the cluster along with a map of part of the Sindal Subsector to help you get located. It winds up with a discussion of the Imperial Navy's dealings with the locals.

We then move on to the first of the systems, Vume. It's probably the least hostile system, but that doesn't mean it's a very welcoming place—and that's not just because the main planet is an airless, waterless rockball of a world! Most life is found on



the orbital highport, although people venture to the surface to explore some ancient ruins... billed as an Ancient site although nobody is really sure if it was them or some other long-lost race who built them. They're now inhabited by some quite peculiar folks.

Next we read about the Theev system. Now a bit of a backwater if not pretty much abandoned altogether, it used to be part of a major trade route.

Critics' Corner

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Their highport was bored out of a moonlet artificially placed in a geostationary orbit around the main world. It is not recommended to break the law here, as they don't go in for the niceties of law courts and endless appeals—perpetrators are merely shown out of an airlock... and that's the official law enforcement by a black-robed bunch called the Widows. Travel to the downport is discouraged, and as the world is arid and very dusty, people generally only go there on business—or hunting for rumoured treasures outside of the controlled environment that protects the one inhabited city that has grown up around it. The place is ruled by the Pirate Lords, and the Widows enforce their rule at least in the Upper City. The Lower City is darker and meaner...

Finally comes Palindrome, the third system in the cluster. It's a run-down backwater, even the

highport is scruffy and half-abandoned, even though it still claims to be Class B. The planet below is uninviting, with a thin atmosphere and little surface water and a single domed settlement called Astrogo which is run as the personal property of a retired pirate, the Lady Yemar. Here, the standard of living is high, supported by a TL of 12, and the community is quite insular and inward-looking. It is a good place to find those 'special' items not on sale elsewhere, and a haven for fugitives. The place is quite welcoming to outsiders provided they don't strut around in Imperial uniforms.

This is an intriguing group of worlds likely to prove popular with the ethically-challenged. Each is brought to life in the concise notes provided, though you will have to provide even the notable inhabitants and any maps you might need; even the rest of the systems are not well-developed. When your party decides to go 'shopping', send them here. 🌐

Active Measures

The Skywhale

By Steve Hatherley

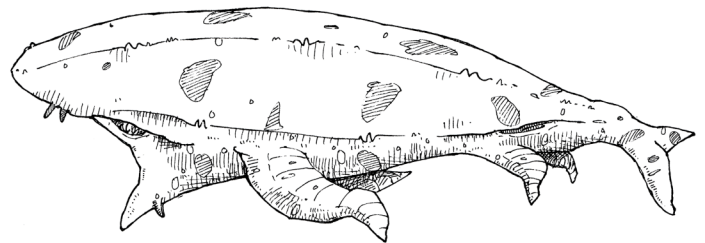
This adventure was obtained from the author's blog, with permission,

Player Information

The Skywhale is a ten-metre long herbivore native to the great jungles of Gaea/Albadawi 0702. It floats majestically through the treetops feeding on the swarms of insect-like life there. They are completely harmless and are the star attraction of several zoos in the subsector.

Eneri McAllan is the owner of such a zoo and he has a problem—Bruce, the older of a pair of skywhales, has fallen ill. Being completely unable to diagnose the problem, McAllan wants to transport the creature back to Gaea and the expert, Doctor John Allwood. Alas, his keepers have fallen ill and McAllan has proposed that the players accompany the creature to its homeworld.

Should they agree, they will be paid Cr50,000 for their troubles. Should Bruce die then he requests that the players fetch him another. McAllan will double the adventurers' fee if they are successful (Bruce lives, or they return with a fresh specimen.)



Referee Information

Bruce isn't ill, she's pregnant. Not enough is understood about skywhales to diagnose this—they are quite rare and their reproduction has been a complete mystery. McAllan believes Bruce to be masculine, and always uses the masculine pronoun. In common with much Gaeian fauna, the skywhale has a very complicated life-cycle.

The Gobani is a large (hippopotamus-sized) amphibious creature that is known to reproduce by

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Active Measures

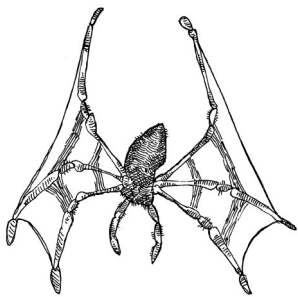
(Continued from page 34)

budding. The animal has hardly been studied, but near the end of their thirty years they slowly transform into the skywhale. They lengthen considerably and lose a lot of mass while creating the helium sacs. The skywhale then lives for another century or so before dying.

Not enough research has been done on either creature to understand their full life-cycle. Spectacular as they are, there is a wealth of more interesting creatures: Glitterwings, Screaming Ab-Dabs and the Jala'lak, for instance. John Allwood intends to change this knowledge, but he is only one man.

The Gobani is the neuter sex, the skywhale just after transformation is the male. After several decades the gradual change to female takes place. When the male skywhale is mature, he produces a kind of floating seed, which is then picked up by any receptive female. This happened at the zoo, Bruce's younger companion being male.

The skywhale gives birth to an ambulatory sperm which looks like a coin sized spider with wings. The hatch in their hundreds from the female, killing it in the process. Then they glide to the ground and go in search of gobani. When they find a gobani they bury themselves into the skin and, drawing nutrients from the bloodstream, the process of budding begins.



Such is the method of reproduction.

Unfortunately the spiders are not intelligent and tend to bury themselves into anything. Usually they die in the process but often produce painful cancerous lumps that seem to contain embryonic somethings. The female usually tries to position herself above a group of gobani before giving birth to maximise effect, but this naturally doesn't always work out.

If the adventurers have a starship then McAllan will pay all their expenses—provided they are adequately recorded. The skywhale will require a special chamber for itself, which will take up about 10 tons of cargo space.

If the players are without a ship then one will be chartered for the journey. It will be a Subsidized Merchant on a regular passenger run. The players will be totally responsible for Bruce.

Bruce looks quite ill—he has not been eating and is growing decidedly worse. As the journey progresses he starts to develop bright purple blotches on his ventral surface. This gets worse until finally he gives a low moan, rolls over and gives birth. The spider-like things hatch in their hundreds and immediately begin their search for gobani.

They will get everywhere, and it will not be long before they begin finding their way to the crew and passengers. The process is surprisingly painless—the spiders are equipped with very efficient sets of pincers, and several people may become infected without realising it.

The wound will swell into a painful growth as the sperm tries to follow its programming. It will defy medical texts and the medics aboard will be unsure as how to proceed without the aid of a fully equipped hospital. Naturally a gobani will not appear (indeed, given time the growth will die and fall off of its own accord), but the half formed embryo that eventually appears could be quite alarming.

If the players are in their own starship this will prove worrying enough, if they are in the chartered merchant then the captain will be breathing down their necks. The players could be in considerable trouble. Worse, they could be in trouble with the quarantine regulations...

Eventually they will arrive on Gaea. Allwood will be easy to find unless he is on an expedition, and will be very interested in the adventurers' account. Finding another skywhale requires setting out (after getting through the exhausting paper-

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work) into the jungles and capturing one. Good luck...

Library Data

Skywhales: A airborne filter feeder native to the jungles of Gaea/Albadawi 0702. They seem to be a mutant form of the amphibious gobani, a curious creature that reproduces by budding. Skywhales produce their lift by generating helium in small air sacs that cover the creature. They grow up to ten

metres in length, but rarely weigh more than 200 kg. They live for about 100 years.

Gaeen Jungles: A vast, ancient expanse of jungles. They have been present for approximately fifty million years and the vast spectrum of life there often has exceedingly strange life cycles.

The jungles are home to savage, feral Jala'lak which frequently attack travellers to their temples. As such the forest is rated as an Amber Zone by the Traveller's Aid Society. ☸

Confessions of a Newbie Referee

A Column by Timothy Collinson

#26: Be Careful What You Wish For

I wrote last time about how I came to offer *The Traveller Adventure* for a group of complete newbies (and one old-timer) having longed for a regular group. The first evening seemed to go as well as I could expect with the slight wrinkle that the amateur dramatic pro – if that's a thing – couldn't make our first session at rather short notice. I'd suggested he take on the part of Gvoudzon knowing it needed a bit of pre-planned theatre as he's thrown out of the Museum of Aramis with some lines to learn. I reckoned he'd be great at that. Everyone else would get randomly assigned characters on the night.

Not to worry, I thought it might actually work out quite nicely as it gave the others, as the *March Harrier* crew, a chance to get to know each other, bond a little and explore the underground city of Leedor. In fact we had so much fun seeing the creatures (some real, some holographic) in the park's zoo, gambling at the wamp-rat races on the seedier side of town and dealing with the energetic Bwap factor that we only barely touched on anything actually printed in the book. As ever, I may justly be accused of over doing it on the sub-creation to give the place a sense of reality.

Anyway, we finished on the 'cliffhanger', if you can call it that, which would result in the introduction of Gvoudzon next time. Yes, enough fun was

had that everyone was keen to book a second date a couple of months later. I guess that's a success!

However, that still wasn't enough for J, the work colleague who'd bravely tried out TravCon in March and loved it. How can I play more *Traveller*, she would ask? I knew the feeling but with Chronic Fatigue already limiting my evenings out to once a month (usually Library book group, now alternating with TTA), I didn't think it was sensible to try another evening game, fun though that might have been. I also thought about trying out some of the 'solo' adventures (one player, one referee) I've written but decided that might be a bit intense.

It happened though, that D, the Gvoudzon player, and one other from TTA were willing to try out a lunchtime session once every other week or so. Just an hour, and a change from the usual Scrabble or cryptic crosswords of lunchbreaks in any case. The idea was that I would develop my (non-existent) off-the-cuff ability and would do no preparation for these sessions at all.

J had already been generating a character or two and had a nigh-on seven-foot army sergeant ready to go, D would carry over Gvoudzon and continue to play a Vargr separated from his pack but in an alternate universe to TTA, and E would create a brilliant archaeologist to join the excitement. I now have not just one on-going campaign but two! Is this wise? It's certainly fun! ☸

Martial Artist: A Career for Mongoose Traveller (1st Edition)

by Steven Pustay

You've dedicated your life to developing your skill in a method of hand-to-hand combat, whether as a sport, self-defense or a means of self-cultivation. Along the way, you may inspire others or help pass on your enthusiasm and love of the fighting arts to them.

Qualifications

-1 DM for every previous career. Skills listed are mandatory, except where separated by *or*.

Competitor: any two of Str 7+, Dex 7+, End 7+; Athletics *or* Melee (specialty) 0

Instructor: Int 6+ *or* Edu 6+; Melee (specialty) 1+

CQC Trainer: at least one prior term in relevant Law Enforcement or Military career; this career is typically only found in Military services and Law Enforcement agencies; Gun Combat (any) 1, Melee (any relevant such as knife or unarmed) 0; Int 6+ *or* Edu 6+

Other Benefits Notes

The options for weapon (#4) and armor (#6) are intended for CQC instructors who presumably are either currently serving or have previously served in a military or law enforcement capacity. If the character is a weapons-based martial artist, such as a kendoka (one who practices kendo, fighting with the samurai sword), the Referee could allow them the opportunity to choose a high-quality weapon of that type if the number is rolled.

Ranks and Benefits

Rank	Competitor	Skill or Benefit	Instructor	Skill or Benefit	CQC Trainer	Skill or Benefit
0	Rookie		Assistant		Trainer	
1		Melee 1		Instruction 1		Instruction 1
2			Instructor		Instructor	
3	Veteran	Discipline 1		Leadership 1		Leadership 1
4			Master			
5	Champion	Broker 1		Social Science 1	Chief Instructor	Admin 1
6			Grand Master			

Assignments

Choose one of the following:

Competitor: You are a competitor, and fight in tournaments, matches, and duels.

Instructor: You share your knowledge of martial arts and self-defense with others.

CQC Trainer: You train others for the reality of close quarter combat, combining techniques of melee fighting and close range shooting.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Competitor	End 7+	Dex 5+
Instructor	Dex 6+	Soc 6+
CQC Trainer	End 6+	Int 6+

Mustering Out Benefits

	Cash	Other Benefits (see note, left)
1	500	Contact
2	1,000	Ally
3	2,000	+1 Str or +1 Dex
4	5,000	+1 End/Weapon
5	10,000	Middle Passage
6	20,000	+ 1 Soc/Armor
7	30,000	TAS Membership

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Explanation of Ranks and Benefits

Competitor

Rank 1: Melee 1 reflects the PC gaining fighting proficiency (if they don't already have it) after many rounds of sparring, grappling, or "ring time".

Rank 3: Discipline 1 reflects the learned ability to keep focus despite pain, again, something gained from experience fighting.

Rank 5: Broker 1 represents basic knowledge of contract negotiation. A character that achieves this rank is likely something of a sensation and might have been approached to fight professionally.

Instructor

Rank 1: Instructor 1 reflects the PC's polished ability to pass on information to those less skilled.

Rank 3: Leadership 1 represents the ability to move beyond rote instruction, providing inspiration to students. Additionally, the instructor with *Leadership* can act in the role of coach or mentor, preparing students for sparring matches or fights, and analyzing the results afterward. (Optionally, allow a character serving as a coach to use this skill to increase the initiative of a fighter as per the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, p.56).

Rank 5: Social Sciences 1 reflects the instructor's deepening appreciation of their martial art and its philosophical, historical, and cultural background (for specializations like history, philosophy, etc.). Alternately, it may reflect the Instructor's deepening understanding of the human person and how to motivate (for specializations like psychology or sociology, etc.).

CQC Trainer

Rank 1: Instructor 1 reflects the character's polished ability to pass on information to those less skilled. Because of the dynamics of close quarters combat (simulated or real), chaos is the norm.

Rank 3: Leadership 1 allows the Trainer to organize and rally the trainees, to get them to work together (since CQC requires the ability to work as a team, not only as an individual).

Rank 5: Admin 1 represents the expanded roles that experienced CQC Trainers take on, such as running a training program at a military base (or something similar); this requires the ability to keep records of training, navigate through the hurdles of military or government bureaucracy, etc.

Skills and Training

	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)	Competitor	Instructor	CQC Trainer
1	Strength +1	Athletics (Any)	Admin	Athletics (Any)	Athletics (Any)	Athletics (Any)
2	Dexterity +1	Deception	Advocate	Discipline	Discipline	Gun Combat (Any)
3	Endurance +1	Diplomat	Art (Any)	Melee (Specialty)	Instruction	Instruction
4	Medic	Discipline	Medic	Melee (Specialty)	Melee (Any)	Melee (Any)
5	Carouse	Melee (Any)	Social Science (Any)	Stealth	Leadership	Recon
6	Gambler	Trade (Any)	Craftsman (Weapon)	Streetwise	Persuasion	Stealth

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Explanation of Skill Choices

Personal Development

Strength +1, *Dexterity +1*, and *Endurance +1* represent the general increase in physical condition that any physical training represents.

Medic represents a character's ability to handle injuries, especially those that come from training, physical exertion or as a result of fighting. This is basic competency, representing first aid, and should not be taken from this table more than once.

Carouse and *Gambling* are common ways of socializing.

Service Skills

Athletics represents the increased knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of the human body, and the ability to get increased performance within those limits.

Deception means the character can recognize and perhaps use the various kinds of deception present in the world of martial arts – this might include various means of cheating in a match, setting up cheap shots, etc. as well as faking various techniques.

Diplomat represents the character's ability to tactfully navigate through the various cultures, governing bodies and/or regulatory commissions surrounding their martial art without giving undue offense to others, bruising egos or committing cultural *faux-pas*, etc.

Discipline here (borrowed from *High Guard*, p.39) represents the character's ability to stay on task in the face of distraction and discomfort, in this case, from the pain and shock of jarring physical blows.

Trade (Any) represents the fact that few martial artists can actually make a living in martial arts, and most hold down a second job (or a 'day job'). This skill can be replaced by any other skill which would allow a character to make a living (such as *Computers*) while training in martial arts; a skill from a prior profession or career path might fit in well here.

Advanced Education

Advanced Education represents intellectual and artistic skills that may be taken in the exploration of the martial arts, or skills that may of necessity be acquired during a martial artist career.

Art represents artistic endeavors associated with certain martial arts, such as calligraphy or playing certain musical instruments. In certain forms of martial arts, the focus may be on meditation and movement, rather than fighting; in those, *Art (Dancing)* may be an appropriate skill.

Social Science represents the study of various contexts of martial arts, such as philosophical and historical.

Admin represents the business skills for e.g., running a dojo or negotiating a contract to be an instructor at one.

Advocate represents knowledge of laws relevant to martial arts, such as those regarding use of force or fighting, etc., how to avoid law suits, etc.)

Medic represents a knowledge of first aid and sports medicine, especially the types of injuries that can be incurred in martial arts competitions or fights where martial arts are used.

Craftsman (Weapon) represents knowledge of weapons, both care and creation, used in the martial artist's specific style. This generally represents blades or cudgels, but is not necessarily so limited, and represents a martial artist's interest in crafting the kind and quality of weapon they themselves would want to use.

Specialty: **Competitor Skills**

Athletics, *Discipline*, and *Melee* have all been previously explained.

There are arguable similarities between the Martial Arts Competitor and the general Athlete as conceived in *Career Book 2* (Spica Publishing). Based on

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those similarities, *Stealth* and *Streetwise* are adopted from the latter: *Stealth* represents the superior physical self-control of the martial artist, which can include, when necessary, being light of foot. It might also be useful for the competitor to sneak back to their room after a night of carousing without alerting the coach. *Streetwise* represents their ability to see and head off trouble outside the ring since a wise fighter does not want exert their energy before a fight unnecessarily and would want to avoid injuries that could negatively affect their abilities.

(Of course, PCs being PCs, these might not be the case!)

Specialty: **Instructor Skills**

Athletics, *Discipline*, and *Melee*, described earlier, represent the Instructor's continuing to gain skill in their specialty, or in other martial disciplines. This may give them new insight into body positioning, mechanics, etc.; also, increased skill in a specialty allows them to instruct students at a higher level.

Instruction represents the ability to pass on one's knowledge to those who are less skilled, and willing to learn.

Leadership represents the Instructor's ability to inspire the student(s), and see the Instructor as a mentor and model, and as a coach rather than just a trainer in competition.

Persuade represents the instructor's ability to motivate students to push themselves beyond their limits and carry on with training even when they've hit a plateau.

Specialty: **CQC Trainer Skills**

Instruction, described earlier, represents the CQC Trainer's ability to pass on his knowledge.

Gun Combat covers marksmanship techniques optimized for shooting at extreme close quarters.

Melee (Any) represents a character's trained ability to utilize different melee weapons, including hands, feet, elbows and knees or knife, blunt objects, etc., when a firearm is not accessible or desirable.

Stealth allows a character to move quietly to gain surprise on an opponent, making most use of angles of approach (such as "cutting the pie") and cover.

Recon is the opposite side of the coin and represents a character's situational awareness, in this case, to reduce the opponent's ability to approach without warning.

Athletics because close quarters combat is physically very demanding and may involve movement around, over or through obstacles (walls, windows, furniture, etc.) in a dynamic manner.

Sources of Inspiration

Career Book 2 (Spica Publishing, 2009)

Athlete (Player/Trainer/Manager), pp.14-15

Signs and Portents, #76 (Mongoose Publishing, 2010)

Duelist (Fencer/Pistoleer/Champion), "Duelist" by James Desborough, pp.52-3

<http://mongoosepublishing.com/pdf/sp76.pdf>

Blog (Mongoose Publishing, 2011-Oct-13)

"Martial Arts in Traveller"

<http://blog.mongoosepublishing.co.uk/?p=71>

Traveller: The New Era (GDW, 1993)

"Martial Artist" career, p.48

Notes on Mishaps and Events

For some mishaps or events, you are instructed to roll on a table that is not included with this career. In such cases, the source of the table will be indicated as shown:

TCR *Traveller Core Rule Book*

(Mongoose Publishing)

CB1 *Career Book 1* (Spica Publishing)

CB2 *Career Book 2* (Spica Publishing)

CB3 *Career Book 3* (Spica Publishing)

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Doing It My Way

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Mishaps

2d6	Mishap
2	You were severely injured in a fight or training accident – roll twice on the Injury Table (TCR, p.37 or CB2, p.5) and take the lower result.
3	You are distracted from your training by a lover or friend and your performance begins to suffer. Gain a Rival.
4	A competitor or rival instructor attempts to destroy your reputation and your career. Gain an Enemy.
5	You get into a brawl with a drunk local. Roll Melee (any) 8+ or End 8+. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table. (TCR, p.37 or CB2, p.5)
6	You develop a rivalry with another competitor or trainer. Gain a Rival.
7	A rival uses dirty tricks to get you out of the fight. Roll End 8+. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table. (TCR, p.37 or CB2, p.5)
8	You can't make a living like this! Enter the Drifter career next term (unless you are serving in the Military or Agent careers, in which case you are reassigned to specialty in those professions.)
9	You are accused of using underhanded means to defeat an opponent or defame a rival. Guilty or not, take -1 Soc.
10	You engage in a drunken brawl with a local. Roll Melee (any) 8+ or End 8+. If you succeed, gain an Enemy. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table. (TCR, p.37 or CB2, p.5) Gain a reputation as a thug and take -1 Soc.
11	A side business or other duty begins to consume so much time that your performance drops off. Take a -1 to your benefit roll for this term.
12	You are constantly on the move, going from tournament to tournament, teaching on the seminar circuit or temporary duty assignments and have no chance to set down roots or form attachments. Gain 1 contact.

Events

D66	Event
11	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap Table, but you are not ejected from this career.
12	You engage in grueling training in a wilderness environment. Gain +1 Survival.
13	A fellow competitor or sparring partner takes a disliking to you. Gain a Rival.
14	Over-training takes a toll on your body. Roll End 8+. If you fail, roll twice on the Injury Table (TCR, p.37 or CB2, p.5) and take the lower result.
15	One of your matches is especially well remembered, making you a minor celebrity among martial arts aficionados. Gain a +1 DM to any single Benefit roll.
16	You gain something of a following in martial arts (or self-defense, combatives or military, etc.) circles. You do not gain fortune or increased Social Standing, but a +2 DM to any personal interaction with your supporters.
21	You are sued by someone (perhaps a former student or someone you encountered in a fight outside the ring) claiming physical damages and medical expenses. Guilty or not, roll Advocate 8+ or Soc 8+ or lose a Benefit roll.
22	Due to your skill, you attract a group of admirers. Gain 1D3 contacts.
23	You are approached by organized crime to fix a match. If you accept, throw Deception 8+ or Int 8+. If you succeed, gain +1 DM to a Benefit roll. If you fail, take -1 Soc. If you refuse them, gain an Enemy.
24	A factor from a rival dojo, school or fighting league approaches you to fight or teach for their school. If you accept their offer, gain a +2 DM bonus to any one benefit roll. If you refuse, gain a +2 DM bonus to your Advancement check and gain a Rival, the school or organization which tried to recruit you.
25	As someone who competes or teaches on the seminar circuit, you travel frequently and have many opportunities to take in new and unusual experiences. Gain +1 in any skill.
26	You are embroiled in a scandal at your school, dojo or fight promotion. Throw Int 8+ to avoid losing 1 Rank. Gain +1 Advocate or +1 Deception.

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Events (cont'd.)

D66	Event
31-36	Have a Life Event! – Roll on a Life Event Table (TCR, p.34, or CB1, pp.12-13)
41	You are approached by unsavory characters who would like you to use your talents to help them collect on some debts. If you agree, gain +2 to your next Benefits roll, but take -1 Soc as word gets out that you use your skills for questionable purposes. Optionally you may freely transfer to the Rogue (Enforcer) profession any time after this utilizing your new connections. If you turn them down, gain a Rival (organized crime family). If you turn them into the police, gain an Enemy (organized crime family).
42	Your side business struggles and begins to flounder. Throw Int 8+, or an appropriate skill used for business, such as Advocate, Computer, Trade, etc.) 8+. If you fail, lose 1 Benefit roll. Regardless, gain +1 Admin.
43	You are pressured to fight in a particularly prestigious tournament. Roll Melee (specialty) 8+. If you succeed, gain +1 Soc and a bonus of 10,000 credits. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table. (TCR, p.37 or CB2, p.5)
44	From your extensive travels in the seminar or tournament circuit, you make useful connections. Gain 1D3 contacts in appropriate fields (martial arts, law enforcement, military, etc.)
45	You are asked to train an up-and-coming fighter. Gain +1 Instruction or +1 Leadership.
46	You have the opportunity to make money betting on yourself in fights through intermediaries. If you choose to do so, gain a +1 DM bonus to any one Benefit roll, +1 Gambling and gain an Enemy in the underworld. If you choose not to bet, you emerge none the richer, but perhaps a little wiser.
51	You are caught up in politics between competing organizations or fight promotions. Gain +1 Advocate, +1 Carouse, or +1 Diplomacy, but also gain an Enemy.
52	Something really weird happened. Roll on the “Unusual Event” table. (TCR, p.34 or CB1, p.12)
53	You are approached to act as a stunt double or to choreograph a fight scene for a holo-movie. Gain +1 Art (Acting), +1 Athletics (Any) or +1 Deception.
54	You cross train in another martial discipline. Gain +1 Melee (Any) or +1 Gun Combat (Any) outside of your specialty.
55	You establish a thriving side business to supplement your meager income. Gain +1 Trade (Any) or +1 Admin.
56	You are hired to act as a bodyguard. Roll Int 8+ or Dex 8+. If you succeed, your quick thinking or quick reactions saves your client’s life. Gain an Ally.
61	You spend time studying the cultural or philosophical side of your art. Gain +1 Social Science (any) or +1 Edu.
62	Your discipline and skill have impressed a Noble. Gain an Ally and a +2 DM to your next advancement roll.
63	You manage to capitalize on your fame as a martial artist to gain media exposure. Gain +1 Carouse, +1 Deception, +1 Persuade, or a +2 DM to a single Benefit roll. Your media exposure also gains you a Rival.
64	You are assigned to teach new students or recruits. Gain +1 Instruction, +1 Leadership, or +1 Deception.
65	A well-known martial artist takes you under his wing. Gain +4 DM on your next Advancement roll and gain a Contact.
66	Your accomplishments in the martial arts have gained widespread attention and approval. Gain an automatic advancement.

Notes

The Mishap and Events tables are inspired primarily by those from Career Book 1 (Spica Publishing) and Career Book 2 (Spica Publishing). Some ideas were taken from Entertainer profession Life Events table (p.19, TCR) and the Duelist Life Events table (Signs and Portents #76, p.53)

For characters who are still serving in the military or law enforcement, at the Referee’s option, the player can roll on the appropriate table for their branch of service as it might be the case that their current assignment is only a collateral (part-time) duty, which means they do it in addition to regular duties (as an infantryman, detective, etc.)

In order to make the Events table as applicable to all as possible, I think I did not put as many in that applied specifically to CQC Instructors. Many of the events can be altered easily enough to apply to them. Of course, Referees can alter the events to suit their own needs!



Stranded

by Jeff Zeitlin

Constellation Lines is an interface line, homeported at Kresh, on the Imperial border in Old Expanses, and connecting the Yesta cluster in the Imperium (Old Expanses/Ile subsector) with a cluster of worlds straddling the Ral Ranta border (Hinterworlds/Cimeon subsector). Recently, a number of minor problems have all come to a head more-or-less at the same time, and the planetary government at Kresh has suspended the company's license to operate. As part of the suspension, all accounts have been frozen (though not seized), insurance coverage placed in abeyance (though not cancelled), and so on. In short, the company still exists, but is not being permitted to operate until certain of the issues have been addressed. It's not clear whether the company will have to declare bankruptcy as part of the cleanup.

The company operates a fleet of J3 merchant ships, ranging in size from 600-1000 tons. Some are pure freighters, some are mixed-use.

Part of the problem stems from a technically legal, but quite unusual arrangement: The ships' captains are empowered to maintain a ship's account separate from the company accounts, and use that account for speculative trading in cases where the standard guidelines for risk are exceeded—but where the captain or the crew member with the highest broker/trader skill believes that the actual risk is lower than the guidelines say it is. The company starts the accounts with a certain amount of 'seed money'; once that seed money is doubled, the original balance is returned to company accounts, and the ship may trade on what's left. Captains and broker/traders who manage to lose the seed money are generally instructed to find other employment, but not otherwise penalized.

With the company in financial difficulty, there is an argument with the creditor committee that the ships' accounts should be considered company as-

sets and impounded along with the rest of the assets. Under the law, the account is considered 'part of' the ship, so cannot be impounded—nor any action against them taken—until the ship is in port and has been served with appropriate papers.

One of the ships, the *Ral Renter* (a *Naklaad*-class merchant, cargo variant), is arriving. It receives orders from the company not to dock, and to stand by for further orders. The captain takes the ship's cutter—alone—to try to get clarification.

What's Going On?

There are a number of situations that the company's problems have caused:

1. There is actually no way for the company to avoid liquidation. The ship will be seized if it docks. They were ordered to stand off because the exec who issued that order is actually trying to 'cut a deal' with a shady syndicate—a deal that would benefit him, at the expense of the company's creditors. It is not clear whether the stand-off order is actually legal. The captain of the ship is in on the possible deal; he and the exec—and a few others in the company—have been skimming from the accounts for years. The purser can figure out that something is up if he goes over the ship's books with a fine-tooth comb, but he won't be able to figure out the details, or who is involved.
2. The holds are filled with a mix of prepaid freight and speculative cargo. The recipients for the freight are waiting for it; delay in unloading will cause them some difficulty, as the shipment is necessary for them to maintain their own production—if they have to shut down production, even temporarily, it will cause delays in delivering product to their customers, which will in turn cause further similar delay and problems. The resultant liability could be considerable. It is not clear whether that liability would attach to the company, or to the ship—it depends on whether the standoff order is legal, and whether the shady dealings get 'busted'.

Active Measures

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3. The speculative cargo has all of the proper paperwork showing that it's a legal cargo, and the cargo does match the manifests if checked. However, if the purser goes over the books as described in 1, he can't find a record of the funds used to purchase it, and the risk on the speculation is clearly outside the risk parameters set by the company for direct use of company funds.
4. A SPA boat approaches the ship, demanding to be allowed aboard for inspection. A pre-docking inspection is not unusual; normally, it's just a check of cargo vs manifest plus a few safety checks. They provide assurances that they are not going to take any action that would be prejudicial to the ongoing negotiations. The SPA finds some violations, and state that the violations must be corrected before they will be granted docking clearance. Normally, the company would send out a repair ship to address the issues, or would arrange for the ship to be towed in instead of docking under their own power. With the company in disarray, however, neither is likely to happen soon, even in the absence of the questionable stand-off order.
5. Because of the financial situation, the company has stopped paying salaries. The families of the crew are beginning to suffer; with the crew not having income and the company in trouble, neither they nor their families can get credit. If the

crew leaves the ship, to find berths that pay, they will be deemed to have mutinied and lose their standing as creditors. Additionally, if the ship is left with no crew aboard, it will be deemed abandoned and open to salvage, which includes anything, freight or cargo, in the holds.

Adventure Possibilities

There are several roles that the PCs could be cast in: they could be the crew of the ship, looking to supply the ship, find a way to get money to their families, get the repairs done, get the freight to its consignee, and so on. They could be outsiders in a position to help the crew achieve one or more of those aims. They could be representatives of the syndicate, trying to figure out a way to double-cross the executives they're dealing with. They could be representatives of Constellation, doing a mandated audit of the company's assets before the company is formally placed into liquidation.

Referees should consider other twists to the situation: for example, Constellation might actually be aware of the skimming, and, working with the SPA and the planetary courts and law enforcement, have 'faked' the financial difficulties looking to smoke out the skimmers—and when they poke their heads up, they're nabbed, and the financial difficulties quickly get resolved (which includes paying back salaries, with bonuses). Or, the financial difficulties are due to the company trying to prevent a hostile takeover. Or, the 'shady syndicate' is in fact a cover for a competitor attempting a hostile takeover. 🌟

The Shipyard

Naklaad-class Interface Merchant

designed by Timothy Collinson

[The description follows *Mongoose Traveller 1st Ed.*; *Cepheus Engine* and *Mongoose Traveller 2nd Ed.* details are given in square brackets.]

Interface lines put many demands on their ships. The varied situations they face demand good Jump capability to avoid worlds or work around rifts; decent manoeuvrability to deal with threats from the

environment or opposition; and the need for ships at the smaller end of the scale to be able to carry as much in the way of cargo and passengers as possible. The *Naklaad*-class has been designed to meet those often conflicting needs in as efficient way as possible and has served well on the Imperium's trailing border out to the Hinterworlds.

Based on an unstreamlined conglomeration of two hulls, the *Naklaad* offers functionality that can't

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be found in similar sized craft. With 182 tons [CE 159, MgT2 214] set aside for cargo in the mixed-use variant and 218 tons [CE 198, MgT2 252] in the cargo only variant, as well as the option of carrying as many 14 double berthed passengers (more if crew double up), the vessel can get goods and people to where they need to be. It carries a standard 50-ton cutter to assist in cargo operations as well as a 4-ton air/raft for crew use. A Jump 3 drive offers flexibility in the thinner regions of space around Ral Ranta and aids in moving around awkwardly placed systems. The manoeuvre drive gives speed when necessary and if need be allows the main hull to land on worlds with sizes well above normal. Self-sealing crystaliron armour offers four points of protection.

Generally, the ship doesn't land on worlds, using high ports where available or staying in orbit and using the cutter for delivery. However, with two-sophont hours of EVA work the five connecting struts and integrated airlocks can be detached to allow the main hull to land. In this configuration the hulls are classified as 'standard'.

"She flies like a rump pig, but she's our pig and she's as reliable as the Dauphin Quasar – got me out of a tight spot more than once." – Dalyte Oosma, Captain of the Hinter and Yon.

The main (starboard) hull carries over half the cargo, the passengers if any and houses the manoeuvre drive and power plant; the secondary (port) hull holds the remainder of the cargo space, the cutter berth and the Jump drive. If specified before construction, the ship can be built with the secondary hull to starboard and the internal layout reversed.

320 tons of fuel (240 for the Jump drive and 80 tons for the power plant) offer one Jump 3 and up to eight weeks of operation. [MgT2 250 tons of fuel]

The Main Hull

The forward end of this hull is given over to fuel although most of the fuel tankage is located in half decks situated on ventral half decks below both

main hulls. [MgT2 All fuel is on the half decks.] On the port side there is a generous ship's locker and on the starboard side an air/raft bay. These can be switched over during construction or in dry dock during annual maintenance. A large hatch on the hull allows egress of the air/raft, depressurizing the hanger. Both are accessible via iris valves from the bridge aft which contains a standard fit out for mixed cargo and passenger vessels of this size. The standard computer specification is a Model 2, Rating 10 [MgT2 Model/10] but this can be modified if required. Basic civilian electronics are fitted as standard. The forwardmost interconnect is accessed from the bridge.

Aft of the bridge are twelve staterooms on the passenger/cargo variant, with the three forward of a full beam passenger lounge designated for crew although depending on exact crew numbers and whether double occupancy is used, some of the other staterooms (usually the starboard trio) may be used by crew as well. Often such usage will depend on whether gunners or stewards are carried and the exact passenger numbers if the line can make the extra Credits with paying sophonts. On the cargo variant there are only six staterooms and the passenger lounge becomes a crew lounge.

Each of the staterooms has an escape pod located in the deck. One of the advantages of the *Naklaad*-class is the fractionally larger than normal stateroom size – attractive to both passengers and crew. These intrude through the fuel deck to allow quick egress in an emergency. There is no access to the escape pods from the fuel deck although they can be seen as cylindrical 'pillars' between the baffles during cleaning or repair of the tanks. The passenger (or crew) lounge gives access to the second, #2, interconnect with the secondary hull although this one is often not used and is sometimes not present.

After the living area is the main (#1) cargo hold. This can accommodate up to 98 tons [CE 90, MgT2 141] of cargo across the full width of the hull (120 tons [CE 110, MgT2 154] on the cargo variant). The

(Continued on page 46)

The Shipyard

(Continued from page 45)

'outer' bulkhead – on the side away from the secondary hull – has large cargo hatches for loading and unloading. Two interconnects are located here giving access to the #2 cargo hold in the port hull.

"If I could change one thing, it would be putting the repair 'bots back in – I understand they were in the original design but cut as a cost saving measure. Typical." – Dalyte Oosma, Captain of the Hinter and Yon.

Aftmost in this hull is engineering space which contains the manoeuvre drive and main power-plant. There are ten tons of fuel processors here capable of processing 200 tons of fuel per day, allowing complete replenishment from wilderness refuelling in 40 hours. The final (#5) interconnect is located here giving engineers easy access between the engineering spaces as well as an emergency exit if needed. Alternatively, there is a double sized airlock to the exterior. 20 low berths can be found here on the passenger/cargo variant. Located in this space is access to the dorsal triple turret armed with a beam laser, missile battery and sandcaster.

Secondary Hull

On the port side of the secondary hull (starboard in the reversed configuration) is a bay for the cutter.

Like the cargo space the outer hull contains a hatch for egress and there is enough room around the cutter to allow fairly easy manoeuvring. Running alongside this space is a crew lounge and galley with two additional staterooms. The forward stateroom is a little larger and usually designated as the captain's cabin. On the cargo only variant the lounge is converted to cargo space and an additional ventral turret is located here, accessed through the fuel deck from outside the Captain's cabin.

Aft is the secondary (#2) hold which can accommodate 84 tons [CE 69, MgT2 75] of cargo on the passenger/cargo variant and 98 tons [CE 88, MgT2 100] on the cargo variant. Again there are loading hatches on the outer hull. Aft of the hold is a second engineering space containing the Jump drive and a smaller power-plant to maintain life support and station-keeping thrusters when the hulls are separated. One again, there is a double sized airlock to the exterior; on the cargo variant this is brought forward although some original models of this variant retain it in its original position.

"She's not pretty, she's not everyone's first choice, but she can move and she gets you where you want to go in the hinterlands." – Dalyte Oosma, Captain of the Hinter and Yon.

Cepheus Engine

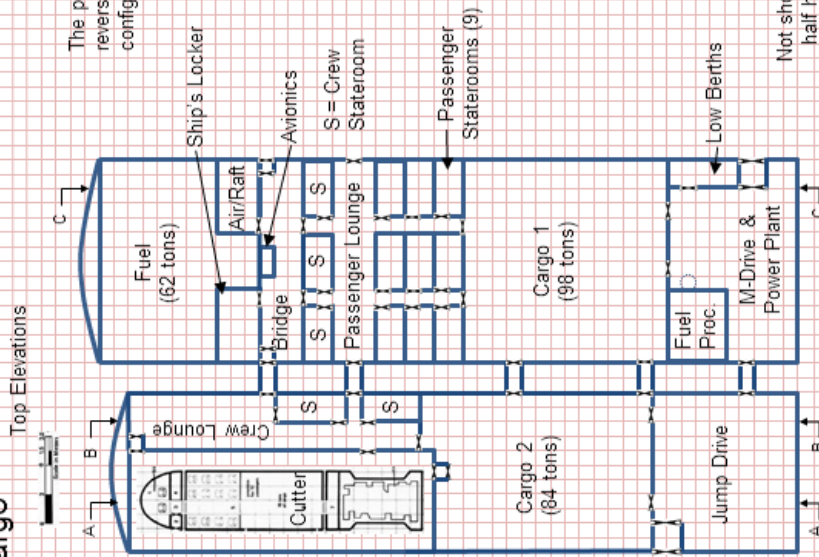
Using an 800-ton hull (16 Hull, 16 Structure), the *Naklaad*-class is an Interface Merchant. It mounts Jump drive K, manoeuvre drive G and power plant K, giving a performance of Jump 3 and 2-G acceleration. Fuel tankage of 320 tons supports the power plant for 8 weeks of power and one Jump-3. Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model 2. The ship is equipped with Basic Civilian sensors (DM-2). There are 14 staterooms and 20 low berths in the mixed-use variant; the cargo-only variant has 8 staterooms and no low berths. The ship has 8 hardpoints and one ton allocated for fire control. Installed on one hardpoint is a triple turret (Beam Laser, Missile Rack & 12 standard missiles, Sandcaster & 20 sandcaster barrels); the cargo-only variant equips a second hardpoint identically. There is a 65-ton Cutter hanger and 5-ton Air/Raft hanger. Cargo capacity is 159 tons (198 tons in the cargo-only variant). The hull is Standard and armoured with Crystaliron (4 points), has fuel scoops and 10 tons of fuel processors capable of handling 200 tons of fuel/day. There are 28 Escape Pods (16 in the cargo-only variant), sufficient for every stateroom under double occupancy (although this is rarely the case). The ship requires a crew of 7: Pilot, Navigator, Engineer x 2, Medic, Steward & Gunner; the Steward is replaced with a second Gunner in the cargo-only variant. The mixed-use variant can carry up to 14 additional passengers at double occupancy and 20 low berth passengers. The ship costs MCr340.835 (MCr337.86 for the cargo-only variant) and takes 92 weeks to build.

(Continued on page 48)

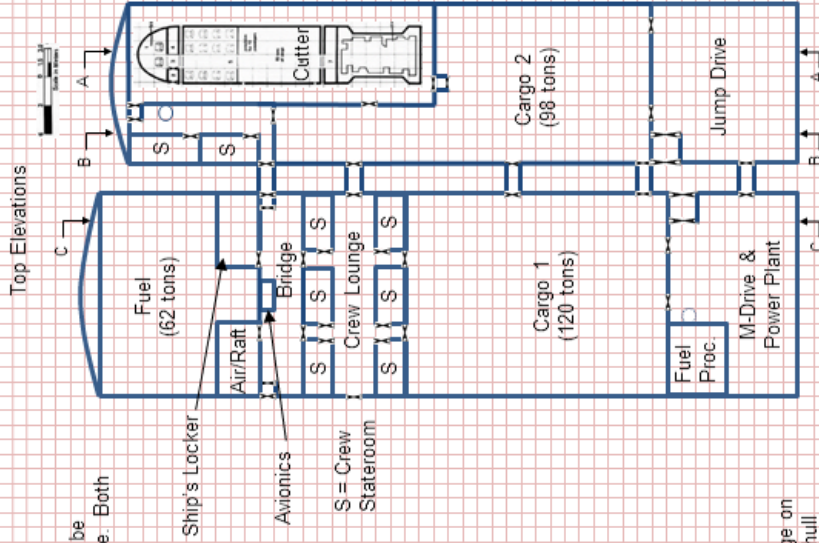
Naklaad-class Interface Merchant

800-tons, TL12, Jump 3, Manoeuvre 2

passenger/cargo variant

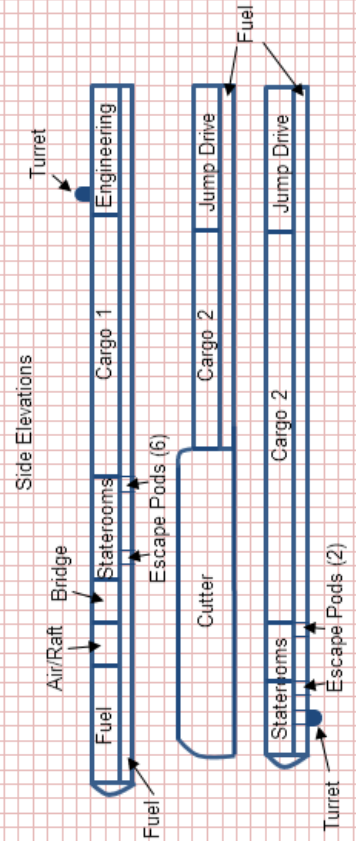
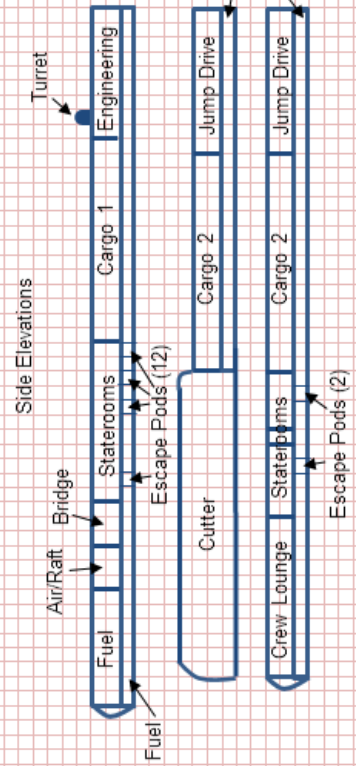


cargo variant



The port and starboard hulls can be reversed at the construction stage. Both configurations are shown.

Not shown: 250 tons of fuel tankage on half height decks beneath each hull



(Continued from page 46)

Cepheus Engine (Cont.)

Notes: Table includes both Mixed-Use and Cargo-Only variants; where data differs, Cargo-Only variant data is shown in *[bracketed italics]*.

Naklaad-class Interface Merchant TL12 (Cepheus Engine)		Tons	MCr
1	800 tons (8) Crystaliron (4 points)	40	80 16
2	M2 = G	13	28
3	J3 = K	55	100
4	PP = K	31	80
5	Jump Fuel = 0.1 x 800 x 3 = 240; PP Fuel = 10 x 8 = 80	320	
6	Bridge	20	
7	Model 2 (Rating 10)		0.16
7a	Auto Repair Evade (Rating 10) (DM -1) Fire Control (Rating 15) Jump Control (Rating 15) (No Jump Tapes Installed)		1 6 0.3
8	Basic Civilian Sensors (TL9) (DM -2)	1	0.05
9	Pilot, Navigator, Engineer x 2, Gunner, Steward, Medic [<i>Pilot, Navigator, Engineer x 2, Gunner x 2, Medic</i>]		
9a	Staterooms x 14 [8] Low Berths x 20 [0]	56 [32] 10 [0]	7 [4] 1 [0]
10	Fuel Scoops Fuel Processors Cutter Hanger Escape Pods x 28 [16] Air/Raft Bay	10 65 14 [8] 5	1 0.5 13 2.8 [0.8] 1
11	Triple Turret (TL9) Beam Laser 1D6 [x 2] Missile Rack (+12 Missiles) [x 2] Sandcaster (+20 barrels) [x 2]	1 [2]	1 [2] 1[2] 0.765 [1.53] 0.26 [0.52]
12	Cargo	159 [198]	
13	Cost		340.835 [337.86]

Mongoose Traveller 1st Edition

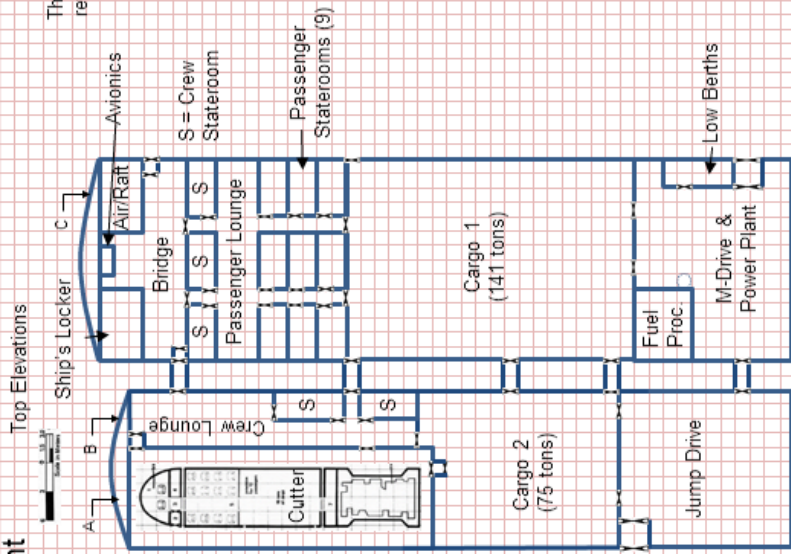
Notes: Table includes both Mixed-Use and Cargo-Only variants; where data differs, Cargo-Only variant data is shown in *[bracketed italics]*.

Naklaad-class Interface Merchant TL12 (Mongoose Traveller 1st Ed)		Tons	Price (MCr)
Hull	800 tons Hull 16; Structure 16		80
Armour	Crystaliron Self-sealing	4 points	40 16 8
Jump Drive	K	Jump 3	55 100
M-Drive	G	Thrust 2	13 28
Power Plant	K		31 80
Bridge			20 4
Computer	Model 2	Rating 10	
Electronics	Basic Civilian	-2 DM	1 0.05
Weapons	Hardpoint #1 [Hardpoint #2]	Triple Turret [x 2] (beam/missile/sand)	1 [2] 1 [2]
Fuel	240 tons Jump 80 tons PP	One Jump-3 and 8 weeks of operation	320
Cargo			182 [218]
Staterooms	14 [8]		56 [32] 7 [4]
Low Berths	20 [0]		10 [0] 1 [0]
Extras	Fuel Scoops Fuel Processors Escape Pods x 14 [8] Cutter Air/Raft	200 tons/day	1 0.5 1.4 [0.8] 28 0.275
Software	Jump Control/3 Manoeuvre/0 Evade/1 Fire Control/2 Auto Repair/1 Library	Rating 15 Rating 0 Rating 10 Rating 10 Rating 10	0.3 0 1 4 5 0
Total Tonnage and Cost		800	366.685 [363.085]

Naklaad-class Interface Merchant

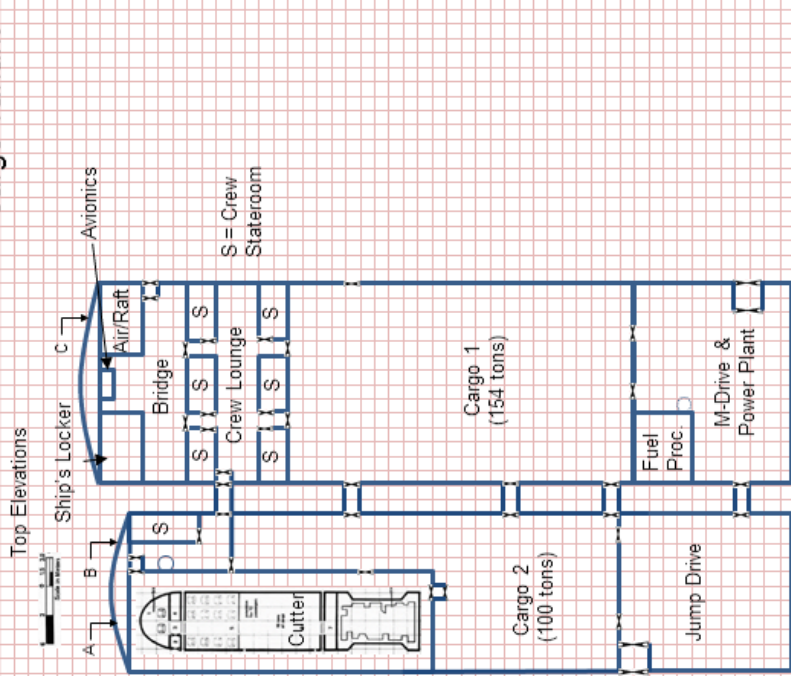
800-tons, TL12, Jump 3, Manoeuvre 2

passenger/cargo variant

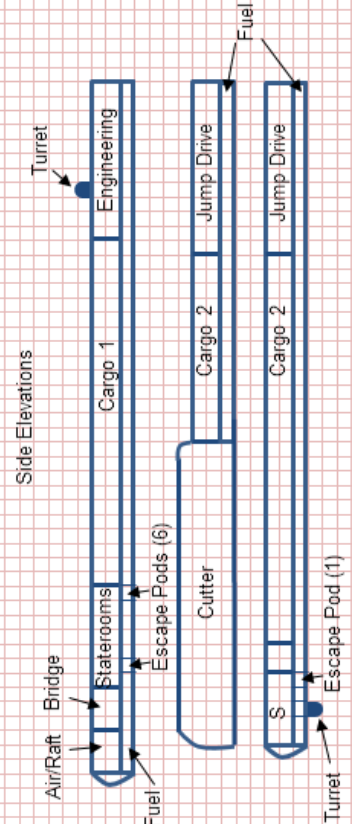
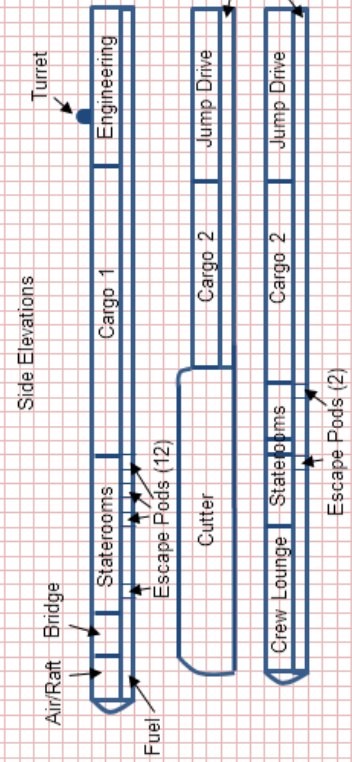


The port and starboard hulls can be reversed at the construction stage.

cargo variant



Not shown: 250 tons of fuel tankage on half height decks beneath each hull



Dawn Adventures 1: The Subterranean Oceans of Argos Prime

reviewed by Megan Robertson

Dawn Adventures 1: The Subterranean Oceans of Argos Prime.

George Ebersole.

Gypsy Knights Games <http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com>

53pp., PDF

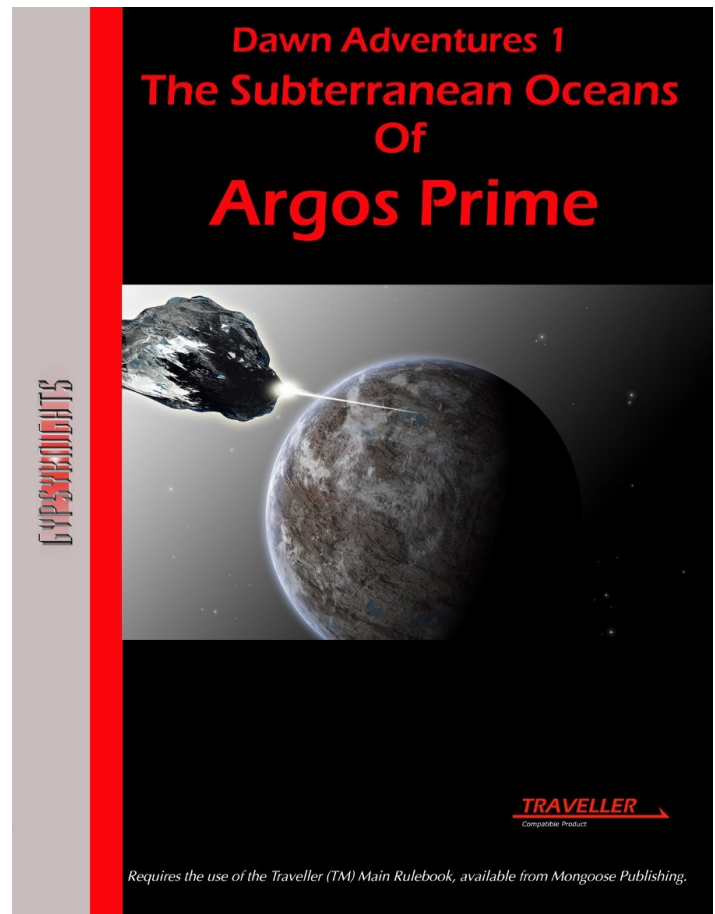
US\$5.99/UK£4.81

If you think *Traveller* is all about exploring new worlds, then this adventure is for you... because in it the party is hired by the Cascadia Colonization Authority to go explore parts of Argos Prime, a strange world where the surface is barren and the interior contains bodies of water and other necessities for life. It's set in the Gypsy Knights Games custom universe, but it ought not be too hard to find a suitable location in your own campaign setting if you prefer. Likewise, pre-generated characters and a survey ship are supplied, but are not essential.

There is a map of the Dawn Subsector with brief details of all its worlds, two of which have already been settled by the Cascadia Colonization Authority (the Dawn Subsector is next along from Cascadia). The target world, however, has been independently colonised by peoples of Greek and Slavic origins although negotiations are in progress to plant a colony there as well. The Argos Prime government has also allowed a couple of mining companies to begin work, primarily in the world's two asteroid belts but also on the surface... unfortunately these companies do not get along, and bickering has turned to brawling on more than one occasion.

Full details of Argos Prime are provided—everything from physical geography (quite remarkable and unique) to government and cultural information. System data is also provided as well as maps of Argos Prime, both the frigid surface and the subterranean areas where people can live. There are also full details and deckplans for the ship provided.

Then things get interesting. Rather than a fully-scripted adventure, you are provided with a situa-



tion, a disaster (which is variable in nature; you decide how severe it is) and some suspects... the aim of the adventure is for the party to figure out what—and who, if applicable—caused the disaster... and they thought that they were here just to survey and assess potential locations for new colonies. There is much tension and distrust between various factions and organisations, which is likely to spill over into events.

The parameters for the surveys are laid out precisely: both location and what the party needs to do whilst they are there. Charts are supplied from which you can give them the relevant data once they settle down to collect it, and each location to be surveyed is detailed as well. Also, random encounters tailored to each location are supplied to liven things up a bit.

Then we get to the impending disaster. The general nature is outlined in some detail, but its severity and just where it happens is left to you. The party will—assuming that they survive—be hauled off

(Continued on page 52)

Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 51)

their survey duties and asked to investigate. Six different options for what caused it are provided, along with a whole bunch of NPCs to question and various 'clues' which may or may not point to the guilty parties, depending on whom you decided was behind it all. Red herrings abound and it can be quite easy for the party to go off along a completely different track—it's recommended that you limit the red herrings so that the party do eventually home in on the correct suspects. Or of course you may decide

that it was a freak accident and, despite all the evidence to the contrary, nobody was responsible. Then the party will have to debunk all the conspiracy theories flying around!

Overall it's a delightful mix of exploration and investigation with an innovative methodology that allows you to determine what was actually going on without having to make everything up for yourself. Great fun—but it repays careful preparation although it is well-enough organised that you could run it on the fly if necessary! 🌟

Active Measures

Getting Off the Ground

Ordnance

by Michael Brown

Synopsis: The heroes face danger from an unexploded mine.

Location: Any system that saw action during a previous conflict (such as the Fifth Frontier War, for example.)

Requirements: A starship. At least one of the PCs must be ex-Navy. Demolitions skill would be useful.

Players' Information

Soon after the adventurers' ship exits jumpspace insystem, the proximity alert suddenly sounds, and the ship suffers a hard jolt. There is (luckily) no breach, but an examination of the ship's exterior shows that a large metallic object is attached to the ship's hull. The group's ex-Spacer recognizes it as a mine of a particularly nasty design, doubtless left over from the previous battle, and which has ever since waited for an opportunity to complete its lethal mission.

Referee's Information

The mine is designed to attach itself to the hull of a passing ship (use the Starship Combat Hit Location chart in *Book 2: Starships* to determine where), but delay detonation until it detects other ships

nearby, thus doing as much damage to multiple ships as possible. The simple answer would seem to be stay away from other ships, but the mine also has a timer, counting down to detonation regardless in 10(1D+3) minutes (A scan of the device detects this.) It's shielded enough, however, that the team can't simply press a few buttons and get rid of the thing. Disabling it means an extravehicular excursion and gaining access to its interior. The heroes defuse the mine on an 11+ (DMs: Demolition skill; Electronics skill, +1; bulky vacc suit gloves, -2), taking 10(1D+1) minutes to do so. Any critical failure instantly detonates the mine. Once defused, it is easily removed. 🌟

Your Input Helps

Freelance Traveller is always on the prowl for new ideas for sections of the magazine, as well as new material to include. If you have ideas, whether for sections or specific articles you want to write, and you want to propose or discuss your ideas, please email editor@freelancetraveller.com.

We've also updated our submission guidelines so that you can get all the important information in one place, set out clearly. The revised guidelines are on the inside back cover of each issue. 🌟

Off the Wall: Starship Interior Decoration

by Timothy Collinson

Arlen led the four travellers through the airlock into the Passengers' Common Room, the last stop on his short tour of The Frabjous Day before they lifted in a couple of hours. "You can use this lounge all through the week in Jump and fix snacks over here. If you need a crew member just press this and we'll get to you as soon as we can."

The Free Trader was battered but the upper deck had just newly been recarpeted, so there was an air of freshness. "Over here you can see the Captain's collection of paintings of the Day by various passengers we've carried." Arlen gestured at a bulkhead with a dozen or more pictures of varying degrees of quality. The less said about a couple of them, the better. "And here," he said proudly, "is a genuine iris-valve leaf from Emperor Cleon's time."

Starship interior decoration can be as varied as the designs of the ships themselves and no two ships will be identical, save, perhaps, those of the more obsessive and unimaginative of the great liner companies. However, certain themes recur and may add to the flavour of an adventure, extend role playing interactions, or even become part of the events of an adventure. Whether it's a particularly attractive—perhaps valuable—holographic artwork on a bulkhead, or a vintage weapon—is it functional?—that could be grabbed in combat, there are any number of possibilities.

Warships are likely to have fairly functional décor. Indeed, 'décor' might be stretching the meaning of the word. Plain and easy to maintain will be the order of the day. Not quite bare steel or crystaliron, but only one step away from that. Decks—particularly in hard-wearing fighting areas, busy common rooms, or gangways—will be extremely durable and carpeting, etc., if used at all, is likely to be reserved for staterooms or officer country; even then perhaps only for the higher ranks. For the lower ranks the environment may be more utilitarian and again it will depend on both the design of ship

or the levels of morale the military wish to maintain. Stories of the lower decks of Nelson's flagship, HMS *Victory*, where the wounded were brought for treatment or to die, being painted red to hide the blood slopping around are generally discounted by historians. However, some starship navies may colour their medical area decks red to remember this tradition. Imperial Navy ships may be extremely uniform throughout the Imperium; planetary starships and spaceships may show wider variation.

Bulkhead decoration will depend on the style of the ship and the atmosphere the Referee wishes to establish. They may be purely functional and carry cables, pipes, ducts and such like so that the actual surfaces are obscured, or panelling may be used to give a very 'clean' look which can then be left plain, or lit, or decorated as desired. Think of the difference between vessels such as *Serenity* or *Red Dwarf* and various incarnations of the *Enterprise* on *Star Trek*. Perhaps like the latter, there are models of previous bearers of the same name on the Bridge, or a series of paintings, photographs, or holographs in a main reception atrium. A *Traveller* starship might even have 'display cases' of older technology from the past of the Third Imperium, from handheld computers, through models of 'famous' (widely used) Jump Drive configurations, to actual components. And, of course, the archaic-weapon-on-the-wall has long been a decoration choice. Whether the weapons or components are actually of any use should it come to a fight or an emergency will depend on the Referee or the ingeniousness of the Players.

Commercial vessels are naturally likely to show even greater variation than various military ships. Sibling ships of the great liner companies may have familiar themes and similar styles across all the vessels of a fleet. This provides passengers with a sense of familiarity if they regularly use the same line, as the company brand—perhaps unconsciously—seeps into the customer's psyche. On the downside, it can also create a sense of unreality as you could be anywhere and there's little to differentiate one voyage

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(Continued from page 53)

from another. More upmarket lines will be aware of this and have design teams decorating cabins and lounges in fashionable but distinct—and in some cases distinctive—ways. They may opt for the ancient traditionalism of chrome and steel minimalism, or try out new style fauxwood and leather furnishings that give a more natural feel. Artwork may decorate bulkheads in public spaces: paintings, photographs, holographs—all of which may be moving or still. Screenwalls may provide the illusion of cool forests, tropical beaches, deep ocean creatures or simply feed live images from space around the ship. Sculptures in a huge variety of media from bronze to howood, from laser light to scented smoke, might stand alone or be placed on plinths or in alcoves. Such artwork may be cheap reproductions or be valuable and unique items that are selling points for the company drawing the higher class of passenger. Some commercial lines are so well known for this that there is considerable kudos to be gained in certain art communities in having your work selected for such display. Naturally, such valuable pieces will be well protected by the latest technology against any attempt at theft or damage.

Smaller shipping lines or individual traders won't go to such extremes, of course. The margins they're working on, the passengers they're more likely to carry, won't allow or demand such extravagance. But that's not to say that the interiors of such ships won't be attractive and kept as neat and up-to-date as funds and taste allow. Captains and owners will be well aware that passengers, and crew as well, cooped up in confined spaces for at least a week, will need to make what provision they can in order to make the best impression on passengers and potential passengers and maintain morale amongst their customers and crew alike. Those who really do let their ships fall into some state of *déshabillé* will find that any passengers they do find will be that much more disreputable or desperate and

crew turnover may be much higher. Of course, that's not to say that crew areas will always be as well looked after as the more public spaces—many's the captain who has shaved a few credits off maintenance bills by concentrating on the paying passengers rather his crew. On the other hand, purely cargo vessels or, say, scout ships, won't have quite the same considerations and could have little regard for their living environment. Referees may wish to emphasise the decrease in morale should this be the case. While costs to keep the decoration up to scratch can be assumed to be included in the usual maintenance costs, PCs who skip on this payment will find it's not only the Jump drive causing problems. Alternatively, they may wish to spend additional credits to improve morale, or attract a better class of passenger.

Alien vessels may or may not conform to some of the norms above. Other races may decorate the interiors of their vessels in wildly different ways—from the traditional garishness or the graffiti of the Vargr to the open grass of the K'kree. Vargr may add paintings of charismatic leaders, past deeds of corsair bands, rank or pack insignia, or display armour—perhaps that of defeated enemies. The Aslan have their love of organic, rounded, natural forms shaping their architecture and may use etchings and embroidery for decoration. There is also their spontaneous art and vessel bulkheads may be adorned with *takuhakil* glyphs or even more likely the almost compulsory epic *Yoyeaokhtef*. Zhodani are known for their fine arts and might use pleasing murals. The Darrians have a wide variety of gravitic art that could be on display: flame sculptures, flowing water, even falling petals, falling snow or incense smoke. Even here, however, there are likely to be wide variations from the cultural norm and there are opportunities for the Referee to subtly indicate something 'not quite right' for PCs who are on the ball. There may also be human vessels who prefer grass for flooring for example. There may be aliens out there whose 'animal' trophies include humans!

(Continued on page 55)

(Continued from page 54)

The interior decoration of starships is a great way to add atmosphere to *Traveller* and can certainly spice up the otherwise routine tour of a ship that PCs might take on boarding a new vessel or be expected to provide to their embarking passengers. And for those adventures which centre around exploring an abandoned vessel, it can make all the difference between ‘yet another starship’ and somewhere really memorable. The *Annic Nova* adventure in the very first issue of *The Journal of the Travellers’ Aid Society* and revisited in *Compendium 2* is a fine example. Materials, décor, furnishings all play their part in providing the referee with descriptions of sights and sounds and even smells. In all this, safety shouldn’t be forgotten and however additional furnishings and fittings are arranged, items will almost certainly be securely fixed. Should grav plates fail, the last thing anyone needs is a bust of Emperor Strephon or a rug from that bazaar three worlds back floating around as an obstruction.

The following tables may be used individually for spaces on board a vessel (from staterooms to lounges, from the bridge to the cargo deck) to provide variety and interest. Or they might be used at a ship level to give themes across certain classes of vessel. Alternatively, they could be used to unify an entire campaign. The referee should, as ever, consider the needs of the adventure and the preferences of players or the atmosphere he or she wishes to create.

Table 1 provides various styles of decoration that a Referee might wish to implement. Naturally, the imaginative referee can add additional styles or change existing ones. Roll 1D6, or choose based on your image of the ship.

Table 2 offers deck styles. Note that, in general, cost increases further down the table. Choose based on your image of the ship, or roll 1D6 and apply all relevant DMs as shown.

Table 3 offers a variety of decorative features. Choose based on your image of the ship, or roll D66.

Table 1: Style

1	Natural: organic shapes and natural decoration predominate.
2	Clean: a minimalist style with smooth surfaces and very little on display as it were. This may blend into #3 where items are hidden behind or stowed behind access panels.
3	Access panels: whatever material the panels are made of, this style looks similar to the #2 although there may be some differentiation between panels—whether in markings or function (light fixtures, stowage areas, hiding trunking).
4	Utilitarian: pipes, plumbing, wiring, ducting—all run unhidden through the ship. It’s easy to access but harder to clean and may snag on clothing, etc., more easily.
5	Display objects: throughout the ship there are items visible all over the place—whether it’s personal possessions in cabins, open shelves stowing items in plain view, or any number of items from Table 3.
6	Cluttered: this is #5 taken to extreme where virtually nothing has a stowage place or it might represent early TLs where physical controls make up almost all available surfaces.

Table 2: Deck décor

0	Grating: gratings or grill made from the substructure of the vessel—steel, crystaliron, bonded superdense, etc. Often in walkways rather than ‘full’ floors and often in sections for easy removal to access space beneath, although some areas may be suspended within a larger space. Can include ladders (stairs).
1	Bare substructure: undecorated material of whatever the ship is constructed from: steel, crystaliron, bonded superdense, etc.
2	Painted substructure: as above but decorated, possibly very plainly, with a paint covering. Various grades of paint may be used for durability and different kinds of paint maybe appropriate: anti-slip, smart paint, etc. May include markings for safety, direction, etc.
3	Hard synthetic flooring: laminates, heavy duty carpeting, plastics.
4	Hard natural flooring: wood, stone, shell or animal carapace.
5	Soft synthetic flooring: carpeting, rugs.
6	Soft natural flooring: grass, sand, soil.
7	Exotic: other types of specialised flooring such as ice, or flooring specific to individual crew or passenger requirements.
DMs	-2 Early ships of a TL -2 Engineering spaces -1 Military shios +1 Passenger liners +2 Luxury passenger liners +2 Highest passenger class areas of liners

Note that some spaces may be decorated in more than one way, or using combinations of materials or items.

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Table 3: Bulkhead décor

11	Paint: usually applied directly to surfaces for color, protection or texture; may be applied in multiple layers and may range from plain single colours to complex decorative motifs. Depending on TL may vary from very basic through thermochromic, photochromic, electrochromic, or psichromic which can change colour under various conditions, to 'smart paint' which can detect underlying faults, or programmable paint which can have colour and pattern adjusted. Formal pictures in paint may be more properly considered murals.
12	Graffiti: informal paint which can be applied to a variety of surfaces in this table often carrying some semantic content from slogans to identity 'tags' but may be simple - or indeed crude - illustrations.
13	Murals: pictures painted directly onto a bulkhead (or deck, or deckhead where appropriate) and usually of a larger size. They may take advantage of the space they are applied to by incorporating architectural features or give illusions of extending the environment.
14	Wallpaper: not necessarily paper, but any form of wall covering that is applied to bulkheads with adhesive (or on some very high TL ships using gravitics). May be plain or patterned, cheap or 'designer'.
15	Natural/Synthetic fabrics - natural fabrics are made of naturally occurring fibres from plant material, leather, animal skins and fur, silk and analogues from a variety of creatures. Synthetics are any fabric made using sophont-made fibres used as a bulkhead covering or partial covering and may blend with furnishings.
16	Brick: lower TL bricks may only be a cladding or 'effect' decorating a bulkhead, but at higher TLs plasteel and other brick material may become the actual bulkheads.
21	Upholstery, padding: soft, padded textiles fixed to the bulkheads either for fashion or comfort. Particularly useful in areas which regularly experience zero or low g such as recreational areas.
22	Tapestry: woven fabrics which may contain intricate pictures or geometric patterns
23	Glass, mirrors: glass (or transparent substitutes) may range from decorative material mounted on bulkheads to see-through walls. It may also include portholes or windows which may or may not need—if they are part of the hull—protective coverings which may be automatic (depending on battle state, light conditions, etc.), locally controlled, or controlled from the Bridge. Mirrors may be smaller or larger and affixed to the wall, or may make up an entire wall covering. Higher TLs allow glass analogues to be as armoured as desired.
24	Water, ice, smoke: from water—or other liquid—features to ice sculptures or even smoke effects these may be relatively low tech or use gravitic technology to enhance the 'decoration' or limit its effect. The gravitic tech may have its own backup systems and power in case of main grav failure. Aliens may require ice walls and/or flooring along with considerably lower temperatures. The Darrians, for example, are known for their smoke sculptures.
25	Decorative plants, floral arrangements: from isolated flowers or plants, in alcoves, on shelves or in wall troughs, to full bulkhead coverings.
26	Vines, hydroponic plants: rather than simple decoration, these may act as wall 'decoration' but may also practically contribute to a ship's atmosphere and food stocks. It might also be combined with a strip of soil flooring around the edges of a room.
31	Panelling, tiling: this may be wood, moss, synthetic wood, or other material (from terracotta through ceramics to metal) panels or tiles for fashion, decoration or function; functional panels of varying tech levels to either cover basic bulkheads or to cover underlying infrastructure such as pipes, wiring, ducting; or it may include lighting panels. Wood in particular may be carved—roughly or ornately. Panels may or may not be removable. Tiling is not normally removable although on occasions it may that one tile can be removed to access an awkward emergency stopcock for example, or to create a well hidden space. Mosaics of small tiles in geometric patterns or intricate pictures may be fashionable.
32	Shelving, racks: from book shelving to the latest media storage, from <i>objets d'art</i> to knick-knacks. Shelves may be made from a variety of materials and fixed to the walls or complete units covering the bulkheads. Racks may be less 'formal' shelving of metal and probably of greater width/height. At higher tech levels, shelves or racks can track their contents and alert users to missing items or items that are out of some pre-set order.
33	Cabinets, lockers: cabinets may be considered shelves with doors which may be opaque or transparent to show off the contents. They may or may not be lockable and of varying degrees of security. Lockers are more robust units which may be attached to or actually comprise the walls.
34	Computer displays: these may be terminals or monitors used for anything from the limited operation of a nearby piece of equipment or machinery, to fully functional control consoles or entertainment units. TL will determine how they look and function—from cathode ray tubes and physical keyboards to hi tech touch panels or holo displays with synaptic input.
35	Viewscreens/screenwalls: usually much larger than the previous entry, these may be used as large screen computer terminals or as a high tech equivalent of murals taking up an entire wall and able to display a wide range of 'scenes' (from relaxing sea views to high octane atmospheric re-entry) or art works. They may also simply be used as a 'viewports' to the external environment of the ship, feeding in whatever camera or instrument views the vessel offers. They may be fixed to the bulkhead or form part of it.
36	Collections: this is really a catchall for all the possibilities that aren't specifically mentioned in the next twelve items. They may range from useful (galleyware—pots and pans, crockery—or gadgets), through valuable scientific collections (fossils or insects or ancient artifacts—or, indeed, Ancient artifacts), to collections of little value save to the owner (e.g. clothing or hats, or the Navigator's own watercolour collection).

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Table 3: Bulkhead Décor (cont'd.)

41	Swords/melee weapons: these may be archaic or vintage and range from a pair of crossed cutlasses to the hilts of out-of-fashion laser foils; an ancient axe to a set of beautifully ornate daggers. Whether these 'decorations' are still strong and sharp, or too fragile or valuable to be used is left to the referee and/or the PC who would need to maintain them.
42	Bows or thrown weapons: bows long and short, crossbows, slings, spears, bolas etc.
43	Pistols, longarms: from flintlocks to full-bore rifles. (FGMPs will almost certainly be replicas or permanently 'decommissioned' to meet standard customs regulations!)
44	Helmets, shields, armour: these may be of ancient enemies or relatively recent gear with insignia still proudly displayed.
45	Ceremonial weapons, artifacts: perhaps more ornate and decorated than utilitarian, but the full panoply of war has often included items which hold much significance outside of their supposed design use. These may still be being used in the relevant ceremony.
46	Alien weaponry or armour: much as the above but from further afield and more exotic looking. As usual, it may or may not be functional; it may be exotic or awkward enough that it can't actually be used by humans.
51	Paintings, drawings, photos, etchings: any of a wide variety of 'flat art' or 2D artistic productions. May be professionally created by artists of note, reproductions of mass produced 'classics', or might be the Chief Engineer's daughter's latest crayoning.
52	Maps, posters, noticeboards: again, largely two dimensional depictions usually with information to convey rather than having intrinsic artistic merit although that's not to say the two are mutually exclusive. May be fixtures on the wall or take up a large part of the bulkhead. Maps may be slightly 'raised' relief maps; 3D holoprojections of maps might be more usually considered under #34 or possibly #56.
53	Sculptures, carvings, statuary: 3D art in all its manifestations. These may be mounted on the wall (or displayed on shelves or in cabinets), or set into alcoves built into bulkheads. A wide variety of material may be in use from wood or stone, to bronze or plasteel.
54	Animal trophies, sports trophies: safari ships particularly may be decorated with trophies from the hunt: animals or parts of animals preserved to show prowess. Sports trophies may be serious recognition of an athlete's skill, or may be simply be the local dockside soccer 'cup' played between crews in loading bays. Trophies may also be for other games—board, computer, virtual world.
55	Jewellery, gems, crystal: from the small and valuable, to the large and common, from the simple to the ornate. Most will be displayed in lockable cabinets.
56	Sound/light scapes: possibly very low tech, possibly employing high tech means of producing the effect, these may be aural or visual art works or mixtures of both. Some may even include scent. The Zhodani might add thoughtscales using subtle colours, odours, noises and patterns to trigger calming or exciting or curious thought patterns.
61	First aid gear: from small packs/boxes/bags of emergency items through to more fully developed trauma gear. If there's no time to get to a sick-bay, it might just save a life. This may be tucked away in lockers or behind marked panels or clearly on display for all to see and grab quickly.
62	Bulkhead patches: and other gear useful for at least temporary fixes to hull breaches.
63	Respirators, vacc suits: and any of a range of emergency clothing in between. Again, depending on vessel, use and need these may be stowed in lockers or immediately accessible.
64	Rescue balls: stowed, these 5x10cm cylinders may be a familiar sight on many <i>Traveller</i> ships where they assist in survival where vacc suits are not (quickly) available or accessible. May be on display or in lockers or behind panels.
65	Escape pods: access to an escape pod, usually clearly marked. See <i>Technical Manual 1: Reprieve-class Escape Pod</i> by Donovan Lambertus for excellent descriptions, detail and visualizations of this.
66	Exercise gear: from straps through weights to massage units, this allows a certain amount of exercise to be taken without taking up too much floor space. It may, of course, be combined with a gym area to provide a more fully featured work-out.

Advertising may be present within the decorations—or even floor coverings—and be either subtle, blatant or the sole purpose of the decoration.

Objects on Table 3 (from #36 onwards) may be loose and thus be easily accessible but perhaps a

danger in the event of grav failure; or fixed and harder or impossible to remove depending on the item in question and the nature of the fixture. Some may be found in alcoves (sculptures, floral arrangements, holodisplays) or on plinths rather than fixed to the wall.

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Appendix - Notes on representations of décor in Traveller art

For all the depictions of starships from the outside, there is very little to guide the referee on internal descriptions. One notable exception to this is ‘*Annic Nova*’ in *Compendium 2*, reprinting—with Mongoose rules—the old adventure by Marc Miller who evidently had a very clear visual sense of the strange vessel. The present author has also made a tiny contribution to the subject in the same volume - see the section “A Lick of Paint” in ‘A Helping Hand’ on p.125 of *Compendium 2*.

There are, however, a few pieces of art which may be helpful in the various Supplements, Books and other volumes Mongoose has produced.

Book 6: Scoundrel, p.37, shows some wall markings and either windows or a viewscreen. The first edition of *Supplement 1: 760 Patrons* includes organic looking walls and decoration on p.63 although there is no evidence that this is necessarily a vessel; there is also some airlock decoration on p.65. An ornate frame around a viewport and possibly some machinery decoration is shown on p.6 of *Supplement 11: Animal Encounters*. *Supplement 12: Dynasty* includes some decking on p.86, and *Adventure 1: Beltstrike* shows lockers, flooring and deckheads on p.58.

Book 2: High Guard, as might be expected, has a number of illustrations in this vein. On p.9 there is a section of wall and some ceiling lights; p.49 includes what are possibly some panels or lights and some decoration; p.61 has panels or lights again and a couple of other bits of furniture. Shown on p.70 are some flooring and overhead panels—the latter being removed or replaced and showing girders behind. Some control panels are shown on p.77, possibly in engineering or on a bridge, and p.151 shows a *Star Trek* style bridge. Various other illustrations show different bridge-like spaces: *Aramis: The Traveller Adventure*, p.131 and *The Spinward Marches*, p.19 are two. *Supplement 9: Campaign Guide* on p.75 shows wall screens and a holotank—although not necessarily shipboard. Corridors—also not necessarily onboard ships—can be seen on p.10 of *Tripwire* and p.43 of *Alien Module 3: Darrians*.

Book 1: Mercenary p.100 shows a wall full of weapons in what is most likely a weapon shop but could conceivably be an armoury or trophy wall on a ship. The dull walls of what could well be a military vessel appear on p.75.

Going beyond the Mongoose books, the *Reprieve-class Escape Pod* volume mentioned in the main article shows a corridor with decoration in colour on p.15 and the interior of an escape pod on p.9. 🌟

Up Close and Personal

Denizens of Marburg

by Timothy Collinson

In an off-the-cuff series of lunchtime Traveller games at work, where I’m supposed to be making it up as we go rather than preparing manically, we naturally encounter all sorts of NPCs. Some I’ve seen coming and sketched some notes for prior to the session, and some have appeared de novo as we played. Oddly, it doesn’t seem to matter how they originate as to whether they become

memorable or not. The games aren’t quite as off-the-cuff as I’d imagined because once we get going from a critical decision point, there are two or three weeks between sessions in which it’s all too easy to generate all sorts of plot and detail and handouts, etc., in odd moments of down time and thinking.

Three NPCs in particular have stood out in our memories and as they all happen to be more generically useful in places other than Marburg on Regina (where the players encountered them), I offer them here for others to make

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use of as they will. Surely other gaming groups need fixers, hackers or companions on a fairly regularly basis!

I should add that neither these fully worked up versions of characters, nor the maps for that matter, were generated on the fly but the core concept of each character is as we encountered them. We're using Mongoose Traveller 1st edition rules, but GURPS stats are presented for any who find them useful or because you can extract some additional character details from the Advantages and Disadvantages.

Cepheus Engine variations are also given as they're not quite the same. The skill list is rather more limited than an equivalent Mongoose Traveller skill list with Deception, Investigate, Persuade, Stealth and Survival being rather useful skills that are no longer present. Of course, the rules do say that the referee may "add other skills as needed to better fit the universe they have created" but this conversion limits itself to the listed skills.

Marburg is a city on the continent of Noncredo on Regina (Spinward Marches 1910 A788899-C) some 1000km from the capital Credo where the starport lies. Marburg has a spaceport of its own, Letishka Down as well as an old port along the river now more normally used by grav traffic. Two maps have been generated and are included, and again these could be used for any reasonably equivalent continent or city (TL8-12ish, some hydrographics and probably a breathable atmosphere). Noncredo is the continent—based on the shape seen on the standard map of Regina; Marburg is a fair sized city of perhaps 200,000 people. For a world map of Regina see *Grand Survey* (DGP, 1986) or *World Builder's Handbook* (DGP, 1989). For its system details see *Book 6: Scouts* (GDW, 1983).

Marburg, like any city, sports a collection of interesting and colourful characters of varying savouriness. Given the penchant for PCs to look for (and find) trouble, these four personalities might prove useful.

"Sniff"

Sniff grew up on the streets of Marburg and although he's turned his back on his thievery, some would say he remains pretty close to the bone with his ability to source weapons, armour, drugs and other equipment for low life in the city. It doesn't seem to matter how illegal or unobtainable something might be, Sniff can usually get hold of it—for a price. His personal hygiene may not be up to much but he knows his territory and he knows his sources. Many have thought he was an easy target for a scam or an underpayment, but he's smarter than that. He's well known in Old Town and a mention of his name will quite literally bring him sniffing around. He's lanky and rat-faced with long mousy-blond and ill-kept hair; he doesn't seem to know what a handkerchief is but he has a sleeve which is quite sufficient thank you. Hence his name which is the only one anyone knows him by. He might typically ask: "So, What are you looking for?" in something of a stage whisper, and might typically say (after a sharp intake of breath): "I can probably get that. Can you definitely pay?"

Although he's easy enough to find in the taverns of Old Town, he has a string of out of the way meeting places for the actual exchange of gear and money. It might be a quiet glade in a coniferous forest just out of town, a scrap metal yard with teetering piles of junk and poorly built retaining walls, or a disused power station that is supposed to become an art gallery if the city's funding ever comes together. He'll have several hidey-holes as well as multiple routes out in case of trouble.

Mongoose Traveller 1st Edition

"Sniff" 457733, age 27, Rogue: Thief, Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 4 (-1), DEX 5 (-1), END 7 (+0), INT 7 (+0), EDU 3 (-1), SOC 3 (-1)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Comms 1, Deception 1, Melee (any) 1, Gun Cbt (slug pistol) 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 1, Athletics (any) 0, Carouse 0, Engineer (any) 0, Gun Cbt (energy rifle) 0, Recon 0

Mongoose Traveller 2nd Edition

"Sniff" 457733, age 27, Rogue: Thief, Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 4 (-1), DEX 5 (-1), END 7 (+0), INT 7 (+0), EDU 3 (-1), SOC 3 (-1)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Deception 1, Gun Cbt (slug) 1, Stealth 1, Melee (any) 1, Electronics (comm) 1, Streetwise 1, Athletics (any) 0, Carouse 0, Engineer (any) 0, Gun Cbt (energy) 0, Recon 0

Cepheus Engine

"Sniff" 457733, age 27, Rogue, Rank 2: Soldier

Characteristics: STR 4 (-1), DEX 5 (-1), END 7 (+0), INT 7 (+0), EDU 3 (-1), SOC 3 (-1)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Bribery 1, Comms 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Liaison 1, Melee Combat (any) 1, Streetwise 1, Athletics 0, Carousing 0, Engineering 0, Gun Combat (energy pistol) 0, Recon 0

GURPS

"Sniff": [100 points]

Race: Human

Ht 5' 7" Wt: 90lbs Age 27

Attributes:

ST 8 [-20]; DX 9 [-20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 9 [-10].

HP 8 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 14 [20]; FP 9 [0].

Basic Lift: 13; Damage 1d-3/1d-2; Basic Speed 5 [10];

Basic Move 5

Appearance:

Skinny [-5], lank hair, unattractive [-4]; Odious Personal Habit: nervous with habit of sniffing and using sleeve as handkerchief [-5]; Poor [-15]; Reputation +2 [10]; Status -1 [-5].

Languages:

Galanglic (Native) [0]; Reginan Street Patois (Native) [6].

Social Background:

TL12 [0]; Cultural Familiarities: Third Imperium (Native) [0].

Advantages:

Acute Hearing +4 [8]; Business Acumen (Streetwise) +1 [10]; Smooth Operator +2 [30]; Contact Group (criminal suppliers) [30]; Lighting Calculation [2].

Disadvantages:

Oblivious [-5]; Overconfidence [-5]; Slight smell [-1].

Skills:

Area Knowledge (Marburg on Regina) IQ+2 12 [4]; Current Affairs (Business) IQ+2 12 [4]; Detect Lies Per+0 14 [4]; Fast Talk IQ+2 12 [8]; Gambling IQ-1 9 [1]; Gun DX+1 10 [2]; Hold Out IQ+1 11 [4]; Melee Weapon (Knife) CX+1 10 [2]; Merchant IQ+5 15 [20]; Smuggling IQ+3 13 [12]; Stealth DX+2 11 [8].

Teeda "The Duchess" Womsinnor

Teeda Womsinnor is good with computers. Really good. She's grown up with them and lives for the things. If she's not building one, she's hacking into one. She's already making a name for herself under her pseudonym The Duchess—an obscure pun on the Ghost level rank she aspires to. She doesn't ask questions about who she's working for or what she's doing and is beginning to accumulate quite a stash of money from her work and a reputation amongst the criminal elements of the city or orbital station where she's encountered. With her cropped black hair and pale complexion, she makes Sniff look overweight. She keeps herself to herself and is nervous around people. She might typically ask: "Am I saying the right thing?" She might typically say: "Can I get into the system? Here look, I already have..."

The key thing about The Duchess is that you'd be unlikely to meet her. Invariably, contact would be made via highly encrypted comms. She can work her magic pretty much any time; she can obtain data, she can prepare for a job, or she can 'virtually' accompany a physical break in to hack electronic locks or computers for her standard fee plus 50%. She will almost certainly present herself in her comms link ups with some form of avatar which will vary but may start with a pink and primed 'Duchess' character with lapdogs, but change to a ninja outfit when 'accompanying' a heist, or perhaps a chariot-riding Romanesque triumphal entry on the successful completion of a job. Those who have met in her person are few and far between and have cer-

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tainly gained her trust somehow—through long association or by dropping the right name.

Mongoose Traveller 1st Edition

Teeda “The Duchess” Womsinnor

679985, age 24, Cybernet: Cyberhacker [*Supplement 8: Cybernetics*], Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 6 (+0), DEX 7 (+0), END 9 (+1), INT 9 (+1), EDU 8 (+0), SOC 5 (-1)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Computers 4, Investigate 1, Streetwise 1, Admin 0, Carouse 0, Cybernetics (chrome) 0, Cybernetics (limbs) 0, Life Science (any) 0, Life Science (any) 0

Mongoose Traveller 2nd Edition

Teeda “The Duchess” Womsinnor

679985, age 24, Cybernet: Cyberhacker [*Supplement 8: Cybernetics*], Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 6 (+0), DEX 7 (+0), END 9 (+1), INT 9 (+1), EDU 8 (+0), SOC 5 (-1)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Electronics (computers) 4, Investigate 1, Streetwise 1, Admin 0, Carouse 0, Cybernetics (chrome) 0, Cybernetics (limbs) 0, Science (any) 0, Science (any) 0

Cepheus Engine

Teeda “The Duchess” Womsinnor:

679985, age 24, Technician, Rank 2: Supervisor

Characteristics: STR 6 (+0), DEX 7 (+0), END 9 (+1), INT 9 (+1), EDU 8 (+0), SOC 5 (-1)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Computer 4, Comms 1, Streetwise 1, Admin 0, Carousing 0, Electronics 0, Mechanics 0, Sciences (physical sciences) 0, Sciences (social sciences) 0

GURPS

Teeda “The Duchess” Womsinnor: [100 points]

Race: Human

Ht 5' 3" Wt: 80lbs Age 24

Attributes:

ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

HP 10 [0]; Will 14 [10]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [3].

Basic Lift: 20; Damage 1d-2/1d; Basic Speed 5 [-5];

Basic Move 5

Appearance:

Very skinny [-5], pale, uses avatars in electronic interaction; average wealth [0]; Reputation +2 x ½ x 1 [5]; Status 0 [0].

Languages:

Galanglic (Native) [0].

Social Background:

TL12 [0]; Cultural Familiarities: Third Imperium (Native) [0].

Advantages:

Alternate ID [15]; Less Sleep [4]; Signature Gear (Computer equipment) [2]; Shtick (Avatars) [1].

Disadvantages:

Chronic Pain (Severe, 2 hours, <10) [-10]; Loner [-5]; Low Self-Image [-10]; Proud [-1]; Shyness [-5]; Unfit [-15].

Skills:

Acting IQ+2 14 [8]; Admin IQ+0 12 [2]; Area Knowledge (Marburg on Regina) IQ+2 14 [4]; Artist (Illusion) IQ+2 14 [12]; Computer Hacking IQ+3 15 [20]; Computer Operation IQ+4 16 [12]; Computer Programming IQ+3 15 [16]; Current Affairs IQ+2 14 [4]; Research IQ+2 [8].

Briz and Garv Theekston

No one is quite sure if they are brother and sister or husband and wife or something else, but they are excellent at working together to pick up marks. If they've (rarely) misjudged a situation it's a work of art watching them switch with each other to match the interests of any particular client. They can communicate with one another through a private gesture language and when not working they love hiking together in the hills outside of Marburg; they've even crossed The Northern Track of the Great Desert, a well-known long-distance trek.

Either might typically ask: “You've met my partner, haven't you?” They might typically say: “It's not the speed, it's the length that makes endurance feats work for us.”

Mongoose Traveller 1st Edition

Brizelda Theekston 8C8946, age 30, Companion: Heterae [*Career Book 2*], Rank 3

Characteristics: STR 8 (+0), DEX 12 (+2), END 8 (+0), INT 9 (+1), EDU 4 (-1), SOC 6 (+0)

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Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Persuade 2, Carouse 1, Deception 1, Gambler 1, Language 1, Melee (any) 1, Steward 1, Streetwise 1, Survival 1

Equipment: Cr10,000, Ally, Contacts x 2

Garvin Theekston 88B746, age 33, Companion: Heterae [Career Book 2], Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 8 (+0), DEX 8 (+0), END 11 (+1), INT 7 (+0), EDU 4 (-1), SOC 6 (+0)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Streetwise 2, Carouse 1, Navigation 1, Stealth 1, Steward 1, Deception 0, Persuade 0, Physical Science 0

Equipment: Cr10,000, Contacts x 2, Enemy

Mongoose Traveller 2nd Edition

Brizelda Theekston 8C8946, age 30, Companion: Heterae [Career Book 2], Rank 3

Characteristics: STR 8 (+0), DEX 12 (+2), END 8 (+0), INT 9 (+1), EDU 4 (-1), SOC 6 (+0)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Persuade 2, Carouse 1, Deception 1, Gambler 1, Language (any) 1, Melee (any) 1, Steward 1, Streetwise 1, Survival 1

Equipment: Cr10,000, Ally, Contacts x 2

Garvin Theekston 88B746, age 33, Companion: Heterae [Career Book 2], Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 8 (+0), DEX 8 (+0), END 11 (+1), INT 7 (+0), EDU 4 (-1), SOC 6 (+0)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Streetwise 2, Carouse 1, Navigation 1, Stealth 1, Steward 1, Deception 0, Persuade 0, Physical Science 0

Equipment: Cr10,000, Contacts x 2, Enemy

Cepheus Engine

Brizelda Theekston 8C8957, age 30, Entertainer, Rank 3

Characteristics: STR 8 (+0), DEX 12 (+2), END 8 (+0), INT 9 (+1), EDU 5 (-1), SOC 7 (+0)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Advocate 2, Carousing 1, Bribery 1, Gambling 1, Linguistics 1, Melee Combat (any) 1, Steward 1, Streetwise 1, Tactics 1

Equipment: Cr10,000, High Passage, +1 EDU (=5), +1 SOC (=7)

Garvin Theekston 88B747, age 33, Entertainer, Rank 2

Characteristics: STR 8 (+0), DEX 8 (+0), END 11 (+1), INT 7 (+0), EDU 4 (-1), SOC 7 (+0)

Homeworld: Regina (Spinward Marches 1910, A788899-C Ri Cp)

Skills: Streetwise 2, Carousing 1, Navigation 1, Steward 1, Tactics 1, Advocate 0, Bribery 0, Sciences (physical sciences) 0

Equipment: Cr10,000, High Passage x 2, +1 SOC (=7)

GURPS

Brizelda Theekston [100 points]

Race: Human

Ht 5' 6" Wt: 130lbs Age 30

Attributes:

ST 9 [-10]; DX 14 [80]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 9 [-10]

HP 8 [-2]; Will 11 [5]; Per 10 [0]; FP 10 [3]

Basic Lift: 16; Damage1d2-2/1d-1; Basic Speed 7.75 [0]; Basic Move 7 [0]

Appearance:

Very attractive, shapely figure; bright eyes and brighter smile; often seen with partner Garv.

Languages:

Galanglic (Native) [0].

Social Background:

TL12 [0]; Cultural Familiarities: Third Imperium (Native) [0].

Advantages:

Beautiful +4 [12]; Fashion +1 [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Flexibility +3 [5]; Reduced Consumption [2]; Alcohol Tolerance [1].

Disadvantages:

Gregarious [-10]; Flashbacks [-5]; Guilt Complex [-5]; Xenophilia [-10].

Skills:

Accounting IQ+0 10 [4]; Acting IQ+1 11 [4]; Carousing HT+1 12 [2]; Dancing DX+0 14 [2]; Erotic Art DX+1 15 [4]; Gesture IQ+0 10 [1]; Hiking HT-1 10 [1]; Panhandling IQ+0 10 [1]; Sex Appeal HT+3 14 [12]; Streetwise IQ-1 9 [1]; Survival Per+0 10 [2].

Garvin Theekston [100 points]

Race: Human

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Ht 6' 3" Wt: 170lbs Age 32

Attributes:

ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10]
 HP 11 [0]; Will 11 [5]; Per 11 [5]; FP 13 [6]
 Basic Lift: 24; Damage1d-1/1d+1; Basic Speed 5.75
 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]

Appearance:

Strikingly handsome, muscular; bright eyes and
 brighter smile; often seen with partner Brizelda.

Languages:

Galanglic (Native) [0].

Social Background:

TL12 [0]; Cultural Familiarities: Third Imperium
 (Native) [0].

Advantages:

Charisma +2 [10]; Very Fit [15]; Versatile [5].

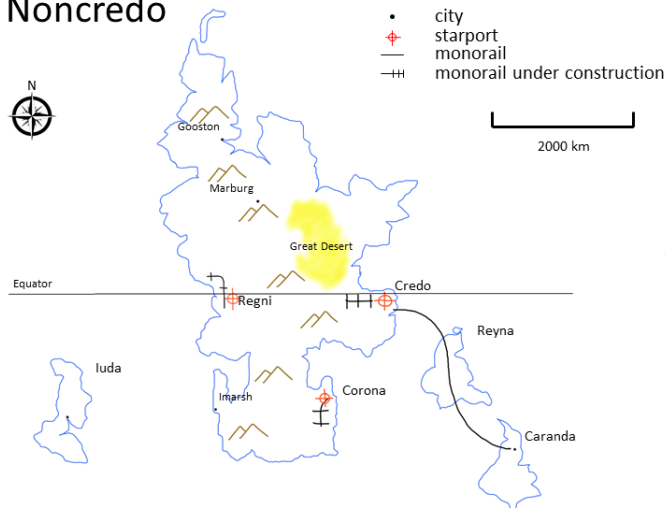
Disadvantages:

Enemy [-5]; Insomniac [-10]; Congenial [-1]; Colour-
 blindness [-10]; Curious [-5]; Expressiveness [-1];
 Nocturnal [-20].

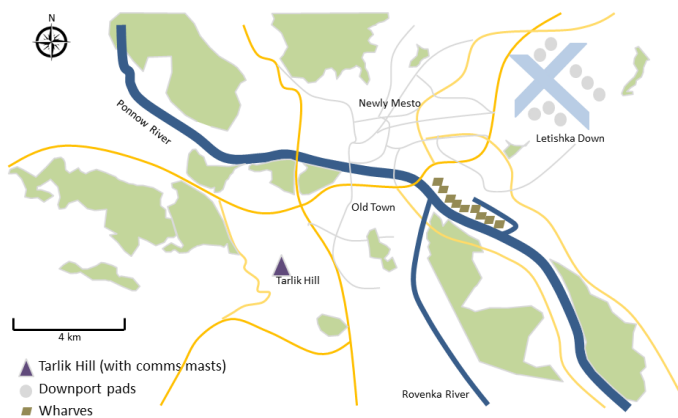
Skills:

Body Language Per+2 13 [8]; Brawling DX+2 14 [4];
 Carousing HT+2 13 [4]; Cooking IQ+1 [4]; Disguise
 IQ+1 11 [4]; Erotic Art DX+2 14 [8]; Gesture IQ+0 10
 [1]; Hiking HT+0 11 [2]; Housekeeping IQ+2 [4];
 Poetry IQ+0 10 [2]; Sex Appeal HT+3 14 [12].

Noncredo



Marburg, Regina



Not shown: grav vehicle separation layers above the city.

Noncredo and Marburg

Noncredo is an equatorial continent on Regina, a rough irregular quadrilateral approximately 3,500km by 7,000km at its greatest extents, not including the outlying islands. Credo, the capital, lies just south of the equator on the east coast.

Marburg is a city of approximately 200,000 roughly 2,000km northwest of Credo, across the Great Desert, in the foothills of the mountains bisecting Noncredo from the northern tip to the horse-head-shaped bay between Credo and Corona. Its connections with the outside world are grav or surface vehicles, and the Rovenka River from the mountains to a bay on the northeastern coast.

Old Town is the original city site, and today is mostly poor and decayed. Wealthy residents have largely moved to Tarlik Hill and similar areas; most commercial activity has moved to Newly Mesto, the more recent development of the city. Letishka Down is a minor spaceport; the wharves are still in operation but using gravitic cargo lifters more than water-borne transport these days. The Duchess has a home out near Tarlik Hill although you'd be fortunate to ever see the place; Sniff and the Theekstons would most often be seen in Old Town although the latter have clients all over the city. 🌀

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 the channel operators (FreeTrav) 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

November/December 2016

- **Gamer Printshop** has released *Bio-Hybrid Starship Deck Plans*.
- **Michael Brown** has released *The Prometheus Index*, *The Ceksius Agenda*, *The Xero Option*, *Emblem*, *The Coursing*, *Breakout!*, *Voices of the Bygone*, *The Guns of ak-Guurien*, *The Azimuth Parallel*, *Praecepta Fidei*, *Flight of Orphans*, *The Polaris Procedure*, *Immersion*, *The Last Kilometer*, *Data in Flight*, *In the Name of the Dead*, *The Instruments of Darkness*, *Theatre of Operations*, *The Overlord Syndrome*, *Shadow of Vengeance*, *The Frozen Fire*, *In Defiance of the Stars*, *The Quality of Mercy*, and *Miasma*.
- **Felbrigg Herriot** has released *Hobson's Colony: A One-Shot Scenario*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Wendy's Guide to the Fleets of Hub Subsector*, and *Ships of Clement Sector 16: Rucker-class Merchant*.
- **Moon Toad Publishing** has released *Ship Files: Polixenes-class Courier*.
- **Daarnulud Design Bureau** has released *Herald-class Starships*.
- **Gareth Lazelle** has released *MgT Traveller Map of the Trojan Reaches Sector* (under the TAS imprint).
- **Anthony Teale** has released *Hide Out*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Pirates of Drinax: The Torpol Cluster*, *Reach Adventure 3: The Calixcuel Incident*, and *High Guard: Aslan*
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released *Prelude to War: State of Chaos* (under the TAS imprint)
- **Rich Neves** has released *MgT Traveller Dossier*, and *MgT2 Traveller Dossier* (both under the TAS imprint) 

Submission Guidelines

Content

Freelance Traveller supports *Traveller* in all of its incarnations, rulesets and settings, both. However, there are some limitations on the combination of ruleset and setting that we will enforce:

We refer to the rules defined in *Classic Traveller*, *Mega-Traveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller* (T4), *Traveller*⁵, and both editions of *Mongoose Traveller* as “Classic Compatible” or “2D6”. This includes Sceptune Games’ *Hyperlite*, and Samardan Press’ *Cepheus Engine*. For these rulesets, any setting, whether official, commercially-published-but-unofficial, or house setting, will be supported. A partial list of published settings supported under 2D6 *Traveller* includes the Third Imperium setting (including polities other than the Third Imperium proper), Reign of Diaspora, Clement Sector, Hyperlite, Twilight Sector, Orbital, 2300AD, Foreven Sector, Mindjammer, and I’m sure I’ve missed others.

Other rulesets, such as *GURPS Traveller*, *Traveller*²⁰/*SF20*, *FATE*, and so on are different enough from 2D6 *Traveller* to make conversion more difficult, and will only be supported for the Third Imperium setting (including polities other than the Third Imperium proper)—we feel that combining these rulesets with a non-Third Imperium setting makes the game something other than *Traveller*. The Third Imperium setting includes *all* eras and polities of the Third Imperium, however, so mixing (for example) the “Milieu Zero” Third Imperium with *FATE* rules would be fair game, as would be playing out some of the Zhodani core expeditions using *SF20*.

Send us any type of article—house rules and rulemixes; animals you’ve created for encounters; adventures (both long form and short); after-action writeups of conventions or your gaming night; equipment; vehicles; starships; other consumer goods; character profiles (NPC or PC); reviews of *Traveller* products, of products for other games that you feel can be “mined” for use in *Traveller*, of fiction (or non-game non-fiction) that “feels” like *Traveller*, or presents ideas that would be of interest to *Traveller* players or referees; new races or organizations or societies; artwork; or pretty much anything else you can think of. Articles on real-world science are of interest, when accompanied by rules for applying that science to *Traveller*. Tools and techniques you use for preparing for a session or a game are also welcome.

Published *Traveller* has generally been kept to a rating approximating the MPAA “PG-13” rating, or the ESRB “T” rating, and *Freelance Traveller* respects that, but does not draw a hard line. Mature themes may be addressed, but explicit or excessively violent/bloody material will not be accepted for publication.

Where To Send It, and What To Send

Except in very rare cases, all submissions must be through email, sent to either editor@freelancetraveller.com or submissions@freelancetraveller.com. All submissions should include the submission itself and a full name and valid contact information for the submitter. If you wish the material published under a “handle”, please give the preferred handle and explain why publication under your real name is not acceptable—we prefer to publish under the real name, but realize that this can be a problem in some cases.

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Formats

Text material can be submitted in any common textual or word-processing format, but we prefer (in no particular order) Microsoft Office, Open Office or one of its forks (we currently use Libre Office), RTF, minimally-formatted HTML, or plain text, all with full Unicode support. Our readership is principally English-speaking, however, so foreign languages and scripts should be used sparingly, and if not intended as purely decorative, an English transcription of pronunciation (and possibly a definition in English as well) should be included.

Graphics should be submitted in an appropriate format for the subject matter—in most cases, that will be GIF, JPEG, or PNG at 100dpi or higher. If it’s principally line-drawing material, it may be more appropriate to submit it in a vector format; most common vector formats can be imported by our tool of choice, CorelDRAW! X4 or X6. Please try to leave some space around the edges for cropping, especially for covers. We publish in PDF in US Letter and ISO A4 sizes, and columns in the magazine are roughly 3.5 inches (actually a little more) wide.

Avoid submitting in XPS or PDF format; these are generally seen as “output-only” formats, and trying to extract material in usable form from these formats is problematical.

