To Absent Friends

Loren K. Wiseman

February 15, 2017

"We Keep the Flame"

See page 63

Featured Article:

Low-Prep Traveller Campaigns for Beginners

by Daniel Stevens

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.

Contents

From the Editor

I apologise for being late again this issue; there's really nobody to blame but myself. I lost about a week's work due to being in a blue funk over two pieces of news that came to me while working on the issue. The first was the news of Loren Wiseman's death; I've written a short obituary that appears on page 63 of this issue, and… well, you see the cover.

The other… I'm starting on a never-ending, life-changing journey, and not for happy reasons. At my physical this year, the usual lab work was done, but the results weren't usual. I have joined the ranks of those who live with Type II diabetes. That doesn't mean I'm planning on closing down *Freelance Traveller*; I'm not letting diabetes take away my contribution to the *Traveller* community.

I can't grumble at the fact that I'm not seeing a flood of submissions to match the flood of commercial releases I've been seeing on DTRPG; I've said all along that if you think you can make money off your work, by all means do so. But I'd still like to see more stuff come my way…   ⌖

A Selection of GKG Traveller

reviewed by "kafka"

Quick Worlds 8: Slaren. John Watts, Kevin Smith, Greg Seaborn.
22pp, PDF   US$3.99/UK£3.19
Quick Worlds 9: Tlix. John Watts, Kevin Smith, Greg Seaborn.
19pp, PDF   US$3.99/UK£3.19
21 Plots. John Watts, Wendy Watts, Larry Guffey, Tony Hicks.
26pp, PDF   US$4.99/UK£3.99
Career Track 1: Medic. John Watts, Wendy Watts.
9pp, PDF   US$0.99/UK£0.79
Gypsy Knights Games http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com

Note: This review is of the first editions of the respective products, and was originally published on RPG.net in June 2011. Prices are as originally given by the reviewer, in USD, and converted to UKP at the (current) rate of US$1.25 = UK£1.00

Allow me, first and foremost, to thank the owner/publisher (John Watts of Gypsy Knight Games) for gifting a copy of these PDFs for the purposes of this review. Thank you very much.

All these products are very short Referee's aids for the *Traveller* RPG currently in its Mongoose incarnation. They are light on the wallet but heavy in content. They undoubtedly will form parts of a larger work to be hopefully printed in hard copy format or at the very least form appendixes for an adventure. This is not to say that these are incomplete but there is a feeling of wanting more. As a start-up company, they reflect a certain embryonic freshness that has not been seen in *Traveller* in a while. It is a rather a sense of whimsy combined with a deadly seriousness in their approach thus I would equate them with British Isles *Traveller* Support (BITS) but on a much smaller scale. As one can see that their page count is on the low side especially when you consider that two pages of the pagination includes the OGL and the Quick Worlds series has full page art illustrating the different worlds.

However, what you are all interested in is content. I must say that I approach this with trepidation as the content is very well done and sometimes feels more *Traveller* (or OTU) than even some of the releases of Mongoose. However, which is a big disclaimer, these are not OTU they are groundless…not
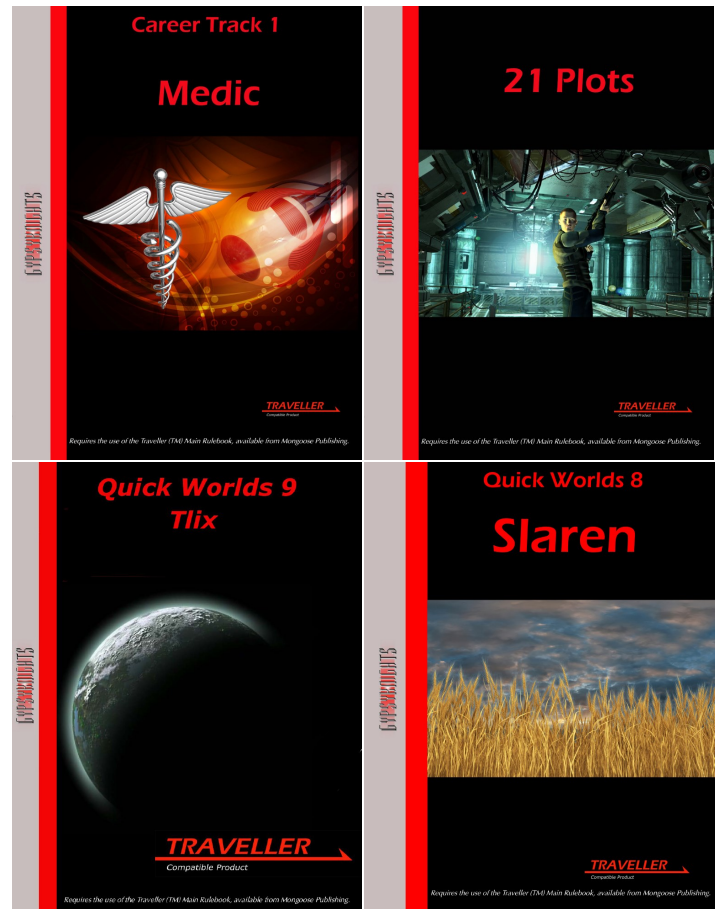
even taking refuge in the Foreven Sector. Therefore, any Referee in need of One-Shot *Traveller* experiences need go no further than looking at these products but again is the feeling of underdevelopment and wanting more.

Take for instance the Quick Worlds series (Slaren and Tlix) that have beautifully rendered CGI worlds that all look relatively the same. Still it is vast improvement over just using images from our own Solar System and tinting the planet a different shade. I don't know what software exists out there on the market but surely we must be able to still create different worlds from UWP data. The author I know has predilection for Gas Giants with rings which is fine but nowhere in the stats box do you figure out that it is ringed. Missing are the UWPs and stellar types for the system beyond the mainworld. Having a system summary side-by-side a representation of the whole system highlighting the different orbits along with the distance from the main star along with any companion stars noted would be an invaluable addition. The worlds themselves are varied –

what the publisher gifted me clearly were the worlds of play and work. One of these worlds is a world dominated by a brewing conglomerate and the other a once corporate world that has internalized work norms into their culture. These worlds are nicely fleshed out and do create nice segues for adventure. However, the absence of seeds requires the Referee read the whole description in order to generate an adventure. Which I think is the right approach as it discourages a cookie cutter approach to world design. A little bit more troubling are the usage of miles and kilometres rather than the preferred use of Astronomical Units (AU). I wonder if the writer has seen the DGP *World Builders Handbook* or *Grand Survey* and *Grand Census* – for these offer much in the way of being able to flesh out these worlds. So even if you do not use the forms contained within there is lots of good ideas that would be the basis of the skeleton, in which your excellent histories could form the meat.

The cookie cutter was somewhat brought out in the next item – *21 Plots* which is what it sounds like – 21 Plot hooks for adventure along with 1D6 possible solutions allowing the Referee 126 possible adventures. It is like the original 76 Patrons format, in which, a situation is posited and then it is the Referee is then instructed to its possible resolution. Now, many products including some from Mongoose offer adventure plots for *Traveller* but outside the BITS products, I find them to be generic and bland. When I read through this, I immediately thought of *Traveller* that I know and love. True, these suffer from the fault of being groundless (no home sector indicated or even if this is the OTU) but the author managed to capture the *Traveller* vibe. The hooks are credible and blend nicely with the game. The lack of detail beyond the couple of sentences setup and one sentence solution might be unnerving to some. Notwithstanding, I have seen entire GenCon *Traveller* adventures run from a single index card. *Traveller* is just that kind of sandbox game. So, if you like the fly

-by-the-seat-of-your-pants approach or just need filler between campaign segments then you will find this product to your liking. The artwork reproduces the CGI but this time using Poser figures. While Poser art is getting better and better there is just something wrong about them. Sort of like GURPS art, it just feels wrong. Luckily or unluckily, there is not a lot of art to comment upon. What there is…is good and almost realistic. But, here is a guy that believes that *Traveller* ought to strive to using photo manipulation or photo realism to capture that gritty realism that earlier versions of *Traveller* caught in its illustration style. All told these adventure hooks are better than what is currently on offer for *Traveller* outside of BITS but then you are left with the problem that there are only 21 possibilities before your players start throwing dice at you. Speaking of throwing of dice…

Career Track 1: Medic is perhaps the weakest offering but in some ways the most useful. I speculate it comes from the D&D tradition of yelling: "*Cleric!! @$#$!!*" which has its counterpart in *Traveller* with yelling: "*Medic!! @$#$!!*" Having a Medic in the party or at hand does save a lot of damage. But, *Traveller* is not D&D in Space; it can be played that way, but then it loses some of its grit and shades of grey. For *Traveller* is much like the original Alien movie (with/without the Alien), a bunch of ordinary joes/sallys forced together by circumstance and comradeship fighting to make ends meet in uncaring universe. Now, Mongoose *Traveller* has come around and changed some of that by providing more background for the player-character, so that they are more than a bunch of stats and speciality can occur much more effortlessly than it had in previous incarnations. It is against this background that I review *Medic*. So, *Medic* is a welcome addition to the Mongoose *Traveller* corpus but it still feels incomplete without a full fledged Search-and-Rescue (SAR) adventure/campaign to accompany it. So, while it will form the basis of a Careers book, Spica Publishing has two excellent ones. So finding a way to incorpo-

rate more careers seems to be part of the careers inflation that Mongoose has engendered – forgetting that basic premise that most players are playing retirees from the careers and are striking it out on their own and DIY/DIFY whilst getting enough credit to move on. So, while not a bad product it shows the way for a SAR adventure or gives the basis for adding a Cleric, I mean, Medic to the party but why not just someone with high enough Medical skill, as was always done in the past?

In conclusion, I do look forward to future offerings by Gypsy Knight Games but more when they do go hardcopy as these individual PDFs feel incomplete. The artwork is on the whole good but not cutting edge or excellent, it is computer art. There are flaws as noted in each synopsis but the effort is really first class. One thing that I do notice about this company is a commitment to continuous product improvement. So, hopefully, my reviews will encourage people to buy the things that tickle them but a finalized product will require general revision. If possible the authors should look beyond Mongoose *Traveller* and find inspiration there. Spica Publishing has done some work; perhaps, collaboration might be in order. One of the many problems with an OGL is that many things get churned out that are fantastic ideas but don't get beyond that – notwithstanding, I am happy to report that Gypsy Knight Games is not one of those companies. Gypsy Knight Games seems to be producing in a tiny niche and while they do need improvement – namely in the area of tying loose threads together, it is more of the art of creating a tapestry being done here and to focus upon just one product/thread misses the masterpiece that is being slowly unveiled – I am waiting to see the masterpiece. ✸

The Mire Run

by Ian Whitchurch

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

Glisten is one of the Jewels of the Marches—a hundred worldlets, circling around their sun, connected by the silver threads of gigs, shuttles and mass-driven cargos, a system alive in a dance of commerce.

Two subsectors away lies Mire, capital of the Imperial Ally State of the Darrians—a proud, ancient civilisation who are carefully hauling themselves back from the fiery abyss of the Maghiz.

Seven jumps. Twenty-one parsecs. The gateway to the experience of a lifetime.

Egypt : Glisten 1737 BAC6567-7 Fl Ni 521

After leaving the busy system of Glisten, the first port of call is Egypt. Please be aware of local atmospheric conditions, and contact the Purser or a Steward regarding an escort and suitable protective clothing if you wish to make a tour of the surface. Suitably experienced persons with TAS insurance packages may wish to engage in hang-gliding, although an exposure of thirty minutes or less is strongly recommended.

Mertactor : District 268 1537 B262732-B Cp 610

Our second destination is Mertactor, the Provisional Subsector Capital of District 268. Blessed with a sweet-smelling atmosphere, bareback or saddled poni rides and a Rebor hunt are scheduled for our two-day planetfall. Fly fishing trips can also be arranged upon request—as always, feel free to contact our Purser or a Steward. A further high point of the visit is dinner with a local art expert, Mr Ganidiirsi Meszaros, whose work in organising the purchase of a number of pieces from Lakou for the Members Room of the Glisten Polo Grounds was recognised by a Candidate Membership in that association.

Passengers are reminded that we are leaving Imperial space on lifting from Mertactor, so contact our

Purser regarding Declarations of Attorney and appropriate financial arrangements at least 24 hours before liftoff, if these services will be required.

(Author's Note: A profile of Mr Meszaros (a.k.a. "The Fat Man") can be found in the sidebar on p.90 of GURPS Traveller: Far Trader*)*

Tarkine : District 268 1434 C466662-7 Ag Ni Ri O:1435 (Dallia) Amber Zone

Tarkine is truly one of the most beautiful worlds of the District, with its magnificent mountain valleys and marked level of biodiversity. Passengers are advised to take care with decontamination procedures, as the local administration engages in ongoing dialogue with its citizens about the most appropriate way to achieve balance between development and environmental objectives.

Local political issues aside, we have arranged for a number of sightseeing, diving and tours in the quaint propellor aircraft of local construction.

Squallia : District 268 1133 C438679-9 320

From Tarkine we go to Squallia, an extra-Imperial world of noted charm. A world renowned for its sunsets, a walking tour of the Tarkine Uplands and Mount Edanos will be conducted by a team of researchers from the Tarkin Teknic-Schule.

For the less active passenger, a day stay with a Squallian family in their underground residence can be arranged by a Steward or the Purser.

Finally, the purser can arrange for suitably qualified personel to have airtime as a pilot or navigator on a genuine Squallia Self Defense Force *Wasp*-class light atmospheric fighter. Passengers should be aware that this will be a private arrangement between themselves and the Squallia Social Navigation Collective, and persons interested in such should contact the Purser make arrangements.

Asteline : District 268 0931 B7A7402-A 210

From Squallia we head to Asteltine, site of several ground engagements during the recent Frontier War. A veteran of the Asteltine Landings will be available to guide a tour in sealed ATVs of a site of fighting between elements of the Sword World Confederation Marines and the Asteline Volunteers. Passengers should note that Asteltine is a world with a low level of social control, even by frontier standards.

While Asteline's belt does not compare with Glisten or even the nearby Bowman system for mineral richness, it does have a number of working claims, and subject to local security conditions at the time of visit, the Company may be able to arrange a visit to a genuine working belter colony.

Ator : Darrian 0729 D326258-6 821 (N.B. ship only visits Gas Giant)

From Asteline we will go to Ator V, where we will be met by a courtesy escort from the Darrian Navy. As a standing invitation exists for Captains of Darrian Navy ships to dinner on board Company ships, passengers will be able to experience first hand the courtesy and artistic flair of this ancient civilisation.

Mire : Darrian 0527 A665A95-B 110

After refuelling from a Darrian Navy oiler, we will again go into jumpspace for our final jump of the tour, at which point we will help you clear customs, and then give you a fond farewell at the carefully-tended garden world of Mire, the political capital of the Darrian Confederation.

That's the advertising brochure. This is a short list of what could go wrong, to help the crew earn their pay.

Egypt: Hang gliding in an Insidious atmosphere. Did the guys at HQ read the UWPs ?

Mertactor: Huntin', shootin', and skinnin'—the first 2 should be pretty safe, but count your fingers and toes after sitting down to talk art with "the Fat Man". It is almost inevitable he has something just precisely right to sell you.

Tarkine: A 2 day tour in Cessnas on a planet that is infinitesimally short of a shooting war.

Sqallia: Touring a live volcano with a bunch of guys paid for by the Sword Worlds. Are you sure they don't think you are INS? Plus homestays. Can you spell "Drug the Impie Spy to the eyeballs and interrogate them?". Or maybe we will play "Let's kill the Impie Spy by the Old Exploding Engine in the Rented Fighter" trick.

Asteline: Gov zip. Law 2. Pop 4. TL A. 4 parsecs from Narsil. And we're heading to the Asteroid Belt to visit miners. This is prime pirate country. And let's see how much of the old ordnance on the old battlefield is still active—you know, like drone missiles with californium warheads.

Ator: So we're jumping to the fringes of a barely-controlled system, in the expectation of meeting up with the Darrian Navy. Uhuh. I'm sure. ✪

The Wayward: A Terraforming Company

by Peter Brenton

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2008.

The Wayward are a human group of families who go from place to place in a fleet of vessels. They are specialists in orbital construction, terraforming, and trade. All the Wayward are members of one of about fifty families (with a few "adoptees" on occasion), and are ruled by a group of family elders, selected from among the descendants of the original families. The Elders select the executive committee from among them, and one person is selected to be the committee chair. The Chair appoints the executives of the various governing administrative branches, who hire the senior staff of those branches.

The Wayward population is approximately 350,000 people, traveling in three separate major fleets, which generally operate as independent entities. They stick mostly to Imperial or Solomani worlds. The fleet currently in the Domain of Deneb has a population of about 100,000 sophonts and around 1.5 Million tons of shipping, including their largest single ship, *The Dolomé*, at 900,000 tons. Most other vessels weigh in at 10,000 tons or under.

The Wayward's recent business model centers around large, multi-year (or multi-decade) projects that requires a great deal of their specialized skilled labor. They bring in their sizable fleet and set up shop, proceeding on a combination of jobs typically including terraforming while simultaneously building an orbital starport and other in-space facilities. *The Dolomé* itself acts as fabrication facility and home to the workers and their families, while the other vessels in the fleet act as either belters (providing water and raw materials from planetoids and asteroids), traders (bringing the materials in-system), or brokers (ensuring a steady supply of material purchased in nearby systems). Special missions are sent out to anticipate and secure future projects.

The process of terraforming a planet usually consists of bringing in several different types of asteroids from the system's belt and dropping them on the planet; icy asteroids or comets to add water and atmosphere, rocky asteroids to alter the rotational period and correct any problematic axial tilt (or lack thereof) so that proper rotational speed is reached and appropriate seasonal effects occur on the planet surface. Later, the planet might be seeded with genetically engineered carbon-producing lichen, or heat-absorbing black molds that warm the surface ice, altering the atmosphere through a combination of convection, heat trapping, and internal heating over a period of months and years. Even later a balanced combination of imported or genetically engineered flora and fauna is designed and seeded. This is dangerous, violent, oddly subtle long-term work, and the Wayward have built up the expertise and skilled labor force to be good at it.

The simultaneous construction of orbital facilities also usually involves bringing asteroids to orbit, either to hollow out for raw materials or to become the orbital station itself, if sufficiently large. Either way, careful shepherding of a multi-kiloton "sheep" is required, as well as careful engineering and experience working in the vacuum of space.

History

The original wayfarers were a Vilani sleep-ship sublight speed colony, sent out so long ago their origins are lost in the depths of time. Tradition has it that the world selected for the original 50 families proved to be uninhabitable when they reached it. A long term terraforming project was undertaken (one which lacked the skills and resources needed), leaving the vast majority of the colonists still in cold sleep. Over the hundreds of year required then to terraform the planet, orbital asteroids were brought in, facilities constructed, and slowly colonists were woken up to inhabit those facilities. Many of the original colonists never made it out of cold sleep, however, the equipment never having been designed for such a long period of operation.

The families were still working on their terraforming project, understaffed and without proper equipment for the job, when a Vilani colonist ship arrived via the newly invented jump drive. The original colonists found they had lost the rights to the world they had labored over for so long, but the new arrivals were prepared to share—as senior partners. Although many of the Wayward decided to colonize as originally planned, most decided to venture onward and negotiated a deal to purchase the colony ship the new colonists had arrived in.

Since then, legend has it, the Wayward have crisscrossed known space, leaving terraformed planets in their wake for colonists to settle. Their fees are not as high as one might expect; typical conditions include a share of the planet's output (GWP) for a given number of years after viability is reached. The

Wayward have a long view of such things and are (now) wealthy enough as a group to "front" the work of many projects where there will be an obvious revenue stream down the road.

Roles

Traders and ship crews: There are many opportunities for driving a ship, buying supplies and returning to the site of construction. Enormous quantities of raw and finished materials are needed for a project, and between projects there is a need to continue to make profitable runs to minimize "down time". Sometimes outgoing ships will also be used to carry agents and brokers to other systems, or to take 'sales' people on longer range missions.

Of course, there are also the many ship crews of all the support vessels, construction and tug vessels, and *The Dolomé* herself. In all, the vast majority of Wayward people have the skills to fill some valuable role in an active starship, even children.

Brokers and Agents: When a Wayward project comes into a region it tends to make certain resources scarcer. Brokers and agents are sent ahead to establish relationships with suppliers in systems near the location of the project and acquire contracts for supplies. This benefits both parties; the Wayward builders do not pay premium prices and the suppliers are able to ramp up their production in anticipation of demand. Often the agents of the Wayward are also able to make good deals with the advance knowledge they have, and they will always be looking for speculative cargos that can be shipped in Wayward vessels making outbound (otherwise empty) cargo runs.

Belters (Asteroid Belt Miners): mining and mineral exploration are a key part of any terraforming or construction operation. Belters are often sent with advance parties to assess the ease of mining raw materials at the location of a potential building site (rare is the system where such materials are too scarce, although some specific minerals required may be missing). Mining experts are part of the hollowing process for asteroid type-stations, they are

the engineers with the knowledge of moving asteroids into orbit (or into the planet), and, of course, the miners actually extracting useful minerals or water from the rocky and icy bodies of the system. Oftentimes belter teams are sent ahead into a system prior to the bulk of the fleet to build up stockpiles of raw materials and start the long process of moving rocks to orbit of the target system.

Orbital Construction Crew: Architects, engineers and fabricators are needed to specify, assemble and finish the stations and facilities. Often the skills of the fabricators overlap with belter skills, and as the belters' job is generally complete prior to the completion of construction, belters will often move to fabricator teams.

Refinery Operators: Some workers operate vacuum refineries that convert raw ore from the asteroids and other bodies into useful metals, pure water, and the other stuff required for the job at hand.

Marketing: Agents are sent out all over the Imperium in reasonable range of the construction fleets, sometimes via commercial carrier, and sometimes in a Wayward owned vessel, exploring and assessing systems where it might be possible to develop a planet or build orbital facilities. These teams are made up of talented negotiators, expert mining engineers, economists, financiers, and planetologists (often more than one of these skills will be held by individuals). It is usually necessary to approach multiple interested parties to acquire financing, rights and permission for a project. For example, a planet may be eminently suitable for catastrophic terraforming (determined by a careful planetological survey, assessment of the mineralogical content of nearby belt(s), and economic factors of the local stellar neighborhood) on a grand scale, but might have a very few people on it that need to be relocated, and probably belongs to a noble of the Imperium, who must buy in. Local asteroids might be 'claimed' for their mineral rights and those claims would need to be purchased. If there is a government in the sys-

tem, it might claim jurisdiction over the uninhabited worlds of the system. The Imperial government is biased towards developing otherwise useless worlds, however, so local governments can often be influenced to be in favor of such projects, especially if the ultimate benefits are properly presented. Marketing gets the players together and negotiates a fee (and profit shares) from all the constituents who can be approached for such a venture, hopefully balancing the costs and profit with the eventual tax levy on the inhabitants of the world that will be needed to pay for the operation.

Rarely, a patron will approach the Wayward with a proposed project. In these cases, financing has already been arranged, but the assessment of available resources and suitability of the location still needs to be done and can be a critical factor in negotiations.

Security/Intelligence: The Wayward are essentially a megacorporation, and as such are subjected to occasional corporate espionage attempts. In addition, the delicate nature of negotiations with the various parties in putting together a project will often benefit if the situation, state of mind, and background of the individuals being negotiated with can be known with confidence. The activities of competitors are another obviously important bit of knowledge. Intelligence operatives travel over the areas of likely future operations, in subsector and sector capitals, and the headquarters of competing organizations. The Wayward are not above clandestine intelligence gathering, and will use legal (but perhaps unethical) means of manipulating people and situations on rare occasions. Sabotage and similar militant activity is almost never used.

The security division is also responsible for internal policing of the Wayward vessels. Problems are relatively rare, especially considering the somewhat cramped conditions compared to most human habitats, but problems do arise, and the investigators and enforcers of the Security arm are tasked with resolving them.

Many vessels have a security officer, but they are typically cross-trained for other duties as well, such as gunnery or electronics when posted on ships or at remote locations.

There are a very few small jump capable vessels that are specifically military-grade (Patrol Cruisers, generally, and a few SDBs with jump shuttles), that are under the Security branch's control. The Wayward avoid travel in areas of conflict, and if they do, will hire mercenary ships for defense purposes, or call on the Imperial Navy or nearby navies for assistance. *The Dolomé* would never knowingly jump into anything resembling a combat zone.

Other Roles: Of course, there are other roles, teachers and caretakers, food preparers, janitors, administrators, artisans and craftspeople, etc.

Specialized Facilities

The Dolomé: The Wayward acquired a decommissioned dreadnought with a spherical configuration of 900,000 dtons. All the usable equipment (especially weapons) were removed by the IN, and the engines and power plants were useless after so much wear and tear. The hull itself and internal structure were in good shape, however, and the Wayward's skills lend themselves to shipbuilding.

The refurbished ship is Jump-1; the 0.4g Maneuver Drive is not getting her anywhere in a hurry. Refueling takes weeks, depending on available shipping. More often, icy asteroids or comet bodies are brought to *The Dolomé* (which takes longer, but requires fewer people and hulls to accomplish). The vessel is mainly family quarters. Most of the population of this branch of the Wayward is housed in this one vessel. There are living quarters (apartments), schools, training facilities, child care, recreational areas, hydroponics (for food and atmospheric cleaning), and other facilities that make this more of a station or habitat than a starship. Of course, all the usual facilities are present too; power plants, life support facilities, sick bays, etc. There are several large

(up to 2000 dton) fabrication bays, which allow the construction of station components in a pressurized (but gravity free) environment. Supporting machine shops, tool bays, and specialized manufacturing plants are placed near the assembly bays.

Decentralization is common; all power and environmental facilities are heavily decentralized to prevent the failure of one plant from causing a serious problem. Internal compartmentalization is light, favoring more usable space. Most internal walls are not bulkheads. This vessel should never see combat, although there are just a few defensive laser and sandcaster turrets.

The refit was done at a GTL10 level, but some important components have been replaced over the years, so power plants, life support, computers, and some other components are at GTL11 or GTL12. Life support, in particular, is an unusual installation. Hydroponics allow the production of foodstuffs and conversion of CO_2 to O_2. Neither the food production nor CO_2 conversion is ample for full life support or feeding the population, but every effort is made to decrease the need for importing food or using energy to clean the air. Similarly, solar panels cover the otherwise unused space on the exterior, hanging plants are a feature of every apartment, water is used very carefully and conservatively, and air is always scavenged from airlocks and pressurized bays.

When jumping, the large fabrication bays on *The Dolomé* are occupied by non-jump capable vessels that make up the refining, mining and refueling fleet. Some of these are simple mining/skimming vessels, but there are several spaceships with refineries built-in that can convert the raw ores to usable materials. All materials mined that can reasonably and efficiently be utilized are put to use. Subcraft that can enter atmosphere are fairly rare; the Wayward are not planet dwellers, and proximity to worlds with liquid water is unusual, most of the resources needed are extracted from airless worlds.

Portable Foundries/refineries: The Wayward have developed vacuum refining to a high level of

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technology. They possess machinery capable of breaking down a rocky asteroid into its useful raw materials quickly and efficiently, with high specialized boring, smelting, and cracking equipment. They consider these trade secrets.

Culture

Members of the Wayward are from a relatively unified culture. They tend to be insular and suspicious of outsiders, but are also good negotiators who tend to arrive at a reasonably fair deal with their suppliers and customers. They are dramatically intolerant if they believe they are being gouged or cheated.

Since the vast majority of this population lives and works in space, the culture of vacuum safety is ingrained in all Wayward at an early age. In an emergency, every member of the Wayward generally knows instinctively what to do to maximize the chance of the most people surviving, even a the cost of individual lives. Within the group there is a degree of trust and reliance that is almost binding, which makes the contrast with outsiders even more noticeable.

There is little crime on any scale, and that is usually interpersonal in nature (i.e., crimes of passion) and not the kind of crimes against society that are more common elsewhere, such as embezzling, negligence, and theft. There is a great deal of somewhat hostile protesting, but the level of hostility only rarely involves physical violence. Wayward are not of a homogenous opinion about issues, but they are of a unified opinion about safety and trust among one another.

When dealing with those not of the Wayward, deals may not be as scrupulous. Although the majority of dealings are definitely fair, there may be clauses or interpretations that would leave non-Wayward with less of a deal than they might have been led to expect. The deal will almost always be technically to the letter of the law or the letter of the agreement, but may in some sneaky way twist the words of the agreement to bring about a result less desirable for the customer or vendor and more desirable for the Wayward.

Within the Wayward there is a significant class system based on the family one belongs to. Those who have "married up" may see an increase in status, but not to that of the family married into. Families also tend to take and keep the same class of job, so families of belters and ore processors (the lowest class) only rarely send children to the ship crew class (the upper tier). The distinction between these classes is not nearly as much as historical class distinctions in most of human history. The discrimination an administrative family might feel when among miners would be just as strong as the feeling a miner would have among ship crews, but they are still all of single group and will work together well. There is a movement to reduce barriers between the worker groups as well, and this movement is gaining momentum over successive generations.

Note also that there is not one class that is the "ruling class". Since the families each send a representative, and families tend towards specific vocations, all the vocations are represented in the ruling council and have a say in the governance of the Wayward.

Individuals take pride in their family, their vocation, and their vessel in that order. Families generally have two to four children, and children are raised with their cousins in extended family groups. Education happens in ship-wide schools on larger vessels, or in small group sessions at "home" in smaller ships and groups. Education is standardized in both cases. Since nuclear family units tend to be assigned to different vessels or places in three or four year increments, a child raised in the context of a mining community might be transferred to one of the larger habitats before reaching maturity. In this way all Wayward children are exposed to both he centralized part of the Wayward culture and the distributed smaller groups. This has the effect of a strong cultural identity in all Wayward adults.

Kurishdam

The Wayward are obviously a high technology culture for the Imperium, and the children's education takes advantage of this. Primary education is undertaken from age 3 to age 16 (standard) at which point many children are apprenticed to a vocation for hands on training. Other children are given from four to ten more years of academic education, either in specialized "boarding schools" (that are generally all aboard one of the "mother" ships) or in an Imperial university. Historically there are very few children who enter 'unproductive' vocations like artists or philosophers. There is an emphasis on being a productive member of society, with a tremendous pressure on filling a "required" role such as ship's engineer, miner, or merchant of some sort. Those few who manage to hold onto their "softer" vocational desires are steered into roles such as teachers or craftspeople whose product might be salable.

The result of all this is a strongly bonded, somewhat homogenous culture of technologically adept individuals. Skills are specialized and carefully honed, and anti-authority behavior is rooted out mercilessly. It makes for a successful, if somewhat plain, population base. This is somewhat necessary for the survival of the lifestyle. A certain percentage of the population must be influenced to pursue these more functional careers in the society in order for the society to continue. ✵

The Shipyard

Naklaad-class Interface Merchant

by Timothy Collinson

Introduction and commentary by Jeff Zeitlin

In the last issue of *Freelance Traveller*, Mr Collinson provided us with the *Naklaad*-class Interface Merchant, for both editions of Mongoose *Traveller*, and for *Cepheus Engine*. As we were going to press, after layout was complete, Mr Collinson sent us the Classic *Traveller* (Books 1-3) and *High Guard* (Classic *Traveller* Book 5) versions of the *Naklaad*.

Classic Traveller

Using an 800-ton hull, the *Naklaad*-class Interface Merchant is a flexible merchant ship for sparse or border regions of space. There are two variants: a passenger/cargo option given in the text below and a cargo only variant with figures in [ ] below where different.

The *Naklaad* mounts jump drive-M, manoeuvre drive-H, and power plant-M, giving performance of jump-3 and 2-G acceleration.

Fuel tankage for 300 tons supports the power plant, one jump-3 and 8 weeks of operation.

Adjacent to the bridge is a computer Model/3.

There are 14 [9] staterooms and 20 [0] low berths.

The ship has 1 [2] hardpoint[s] and 1 [2] ton[s] allocated for fire control. Installed on each hardpoint is a triple turret carrying 1 beam laser, 1 missile rack, and 1 sandcaster.

There are two ship's vehicles: a 50-ton Cutter and 4-ton Air/Raft.

Cargo capacity is 228 [257] tons.

The Interface Merchant requires a crew of nine: both variants require Pilot-1, Navigator-1, Medic-1, 4×Engineer-1, and Gunner-1. The passenger/cargo variant additionally requires Steward-1, and may require additional stewards if the crew is housed double-occupancy and more than eight High Passengers are carried. The cargo-only variant substitutes a second Gunner-1 replacing the Steward-1.

The ship can carry 5 [0] passengers and 20 [0] low passengers.

The ship costs MCr 380.467 [MCr380.063] and takes 25 months to build.

(Continued from page 11)

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

	Naklaad-class Interface Merchant TL9 (Classic Traveller/Books 1-3)	Tons	MCr
1	Hull: 800		80
2	J-Drive M	65	120
	M-Drive H	15	32
	Power Plant M (Pn=3)	37	96
3	Fuel (J-3 & 8 weeks)	300	
4	Bridge	16	4
5	Computer Model/3	18	3
6	Staterooms × 14 [*9*]	56 [*36*]	7 [*4.5*]
	Low Berths × 20 [*0*]	10 [*0*]	1[*0*]
7	Hardpoint #1: Triple Turret	1	0.1
	Beam/Missile/Sand		3
	[*Hardpoint #2: Triple Turret*]	[*1*]	[*0.1*]
	[*Beam/Missile/Sand*]		[*3*]
8	Cutter	50	30
	Air/Raft	4	0.6
9	Cargo	228 [*257*]	
13	Architect's Fees		3.767 [*3.763*]
14	**TOTAL**	**800**	**380.467[*380.063*]**

High Guard

1. *Naklaad*-class Interface Merchant TL12 (Classic *Traveller Book 5: High Guard*)		Tons	MCr
3. 800: Code 8, Configuration 4, partial, -40%			80
4. J-Drive	TL12	32	128
M-Drive	TL7	40	28
Power Plant	TL9-12	72	216
5. Jump Fuel	J-3	240	
	PP 8 weeks	24	
Fuel Scoops			0.8
Fuel Processor	1000 tons	30	0.16
6. Energy Points	24		
7. Bridge		16	0.08
Computer	Model/3 (TL9, 1EP)	6	18
8. Armour	None		
9. Major Weaponry	None		
10. Bay Weaponry	None		
11. Turret Weaponry	Hardpoint	1 [*2*]	
	Sandcaster x 1 [*2*]	1 [*2*]	0.25 [*0.5*]
	Beam Laser x 1 [*2*] 1EP [*2EP*]	1 [*2*]	1 [*2*]
	Missile x 1 [*2*]	1 [*2*]	0.75 [*1.5*]
12. Screens	None		
13. Ship's Vehicles	Cutter	50	30
	Air/Raft	4	0.6
14. Crew	9 (see below)		
	Staterooms x 14 [*9*]	56 [*36*]	7 [*4.5*]
	Low Berths x 20 [*0*]	10 [*0*]	1 [*0*]
15. Cargo, passengers	216, 5 [243, 0]	216 [*243*]	
16. Agility Rating	2		
17. Interface Merchant			
18. Dates	Preparation: 170114		
	Laid Down: 1059		
	First Flown:1061		
Architect's Fees			5.1164 [*5.1014*]
19. TOTAL		**800**	**516.7564 [*515.2414*]**

(Continued from page 12)

NAKLAAD-CLASS INTERFACE MERCHANT   TL12

Passenger/Cargo Variant

```
AI-0001 Naklaad 8432331-010000-10001-0      MCr516.7564            800 tons
        batt bear        1                                  Crew=9.  TL=12
        Batt             1
```

Passengers=5. Low=20. Cargo=216. Fuel=294. EP=24. Hardpoints=1. Agility=2. Cutter, Air/Raft.

Crew Requirements: Pilot-1, Navigator-1, Engineer-1 × 4, Steward-0, Medic-1, Gunner-1

N.B.: Additional Stewards may be required if crew use double occupancy and more than 8 High Passengers are carried. More passengers than the rated 5 can be carried with double occupancy or the crew under double occupancy.

Cargo Variant

```
AI-0002 Hinter & Yon 8432331-010000-20001-0  MCr515.2414           800 tons
        batt bear            2                              Crew=9.  TL=12
        Batt                2
```

Passengers=0. Low=0. Cargo=243. Fuel=294. EP=24. Hardpoints=2. Agility=2. Cutter, Air/Raft.

Crew Requirements: Pilot-1, Navigator-1, Engineer-1 × 4, Medic-1, Gunner-1 × 2   ✪

The Huntress

by John Clifford

Chapter 1

April 8, 5710 CE / 099-1192 Imperial
Spin. Mar. 0927 Narsil A574A57-D Hi In Cx

Lady Helga Ostberg sat in the study alcove of her bedroom, the very picture of a beautiful young noblewoman. She was tall, graceful, fit and possessed a beautiful face with bright blue eyes and flaming red hair. Her hair, makeup, clothes all were done perfectly in the latest style. The only thing marring this vision of loveliness was the intense look of concentration on her face. This was understandable, though; she was, after all, engaged in one of her most important duties as a noblewoman: looking for a husband. Even in the fifty-eighth century, who a noblewoman married was vitally important. And since she had no sisters and her mother had died when she was young, she was on her own. Her father meant well, but this was too important to leave

up to a man. Her personal assistant was only of limited value. She was a sweet girl, but her grasp of politics was limited. Helga had tried to teach her, but it never seemed to sink in. So the hunt was hers, and hers alone.

Of course, technology helped immensely. She'd created a search routine that pored over numerous public databases (and a few secure ones that she shouldn't have been able to access) for young, single men that met her very strict requirements. The first of which was, of course, nobility, though in a society defined as a 'feudal technocracy' that was a bit more complicated than just having a title. Ability and ambition were everything. In an oligarchy with a hereditary nobility, blood lines and reputation were what counted most. But on Narsil—and in fact the entire Sword Worlds Confederation—titles were linked to positions of authority, which had to be earned. While there were a large number of wealthy, high status aristocrats, the people that really mattered were the ones that had earned a place in the government, with the attached titles. If a noble lost his posi-

tion, he lost the title and status as well. The children of a titled noble had to either earn their own title, marry well, or face becoming an unimportant but wealthy member of the upper class. But since Helga was herself ambitious and a woman in a decidedly male-dominated society, it meant marrying well.

Her age complicated things as well. She wanted to marry someone close to her own age. Someone she could relate to, possibly even love someday. A foolish hope to be sure, but she was young enough, at eighteen, to still have that hope. So this meant that she had to find an up-and-comer, not an already established noble. And finding a young man with the potential to rise was a lot harder. After two days her search had compiled a list of one hundred names. With five worlds to choose from, that was surprisingly fast. She was concentrating on the first twenty. And a very impressive twenty young men they were! Age twenty to twenty-four, no genetic defects (the medical records were *supposed* to be off limits, but she was clever and highly motivated), perfect grades in school, a match to the custom personality matrix she had created, and of course, appearance. Realistically, she shouldn't care about looks, but if she was going to marry, she wanted someone she could stand to wake up to every morning. And besides, eighteen, duh!

Helga read though all twenty, then sat back and deliberated. Part of the problem was that they were all so close to being perfect. There was one she had a question about though. Number eighteen seemed to be rated rather low. He seem like he belonged higher on the list, perhaps in the top five. She scrolled back down to his entry and looked at the red flag section. The only negative mark was a rumor that he was dating a classmate at the naval academy. *Wait, what?* Homosexuality was an automatic disqualification. *Oh, a* female *classmate.* In a society with such clearly defined male and female roles it was permitted, but very uncommon, for women to enter the military. "Hmm, I wonder how he would rate with-

out this?" She typed in a few commands and watched him shoot up the list "Number one! Oh, my…" Helga's mind went into overdrive. She followed the link for more details on the rumor. It seemed he had been spending all his off duty time with a cadet Myra Brun. They even supposedly spent several weekend leaves together. She followed the link on her and frowned. *Lady* Myra of Orcrist. Crap, her father was a *Greve* (count). Good grades, one year behind him, athletic, pretty. She would be a good match for him. So why nothing official?

"Hmm, maybe he thinks his family won't approve of a woman in a man's job. They probably want him to marry a traditional woman like me."

Helga decided to let that one go for now and turned her attention back to the others. But her mind kept coming back to number eighteen. After a wasted hour she gave up and brought his profile up again.

"Damn, it's his eyes. And I'll bet the picture doesn't even do them justice."

As the holographic image of Eric Dalgaard, second son of a *Jarl* (Earl) of the planet Excalibur, floated before her, she sighed deeply. He was tall, athletic, with piercing grey eyes, gorgeous face. Then she brought up the image of the other girl.

"Sorry, hon; I hope you can forgive me someday." She sat there for a moment, then started to work. Her prey was in sight; now to lay her trap.

Helga was a computer major in college. It was an odd thing for a traditional Sword Worlder woman to study. It also wasn't usual for traditional woman to be hackers, but times were changing. And Helga had a knack for it. She also had a plan for her life. After she married she would help manage her husband's career. She would use her computer skills to this end, working behind the scenes. Now they were helping her to *get* that husband. She started to use her search routine's secondary features to learn all she could about him. And her competition. Their schedules, and plans as well. Several days later, she had her plan. A time was set. Her outfit was carefully chosen and arrangements made. She would catch

her man or at least get her foot in the door. Provided she wasn't arrested for computer crimes first!

Chapter 2

May 6, 5710 CE / 127-1192 Imperial
Spin. Mar. 0927 Narsil A574A57-D Hi In Cx

In orbit, aboard the main civilian Spaceport

Leutnant im Raum (Ensign, literally 'lieutenant in space') Eric Dalgaard was feeling mighty pleased with himself as he walked down the corridor of the massive space station. He had just completed his first deployment in the navy. And it had gone rather well, he thought. Now he was on his way home to Excalibur to spend a week with his family. Of course, the trip there would take a week. But he had four weeks of leave, and planned to take it all at once. When he got home he was planning on telling his father about Myra. It was high time to tell the family about her. She was still on her final training cruise. When she got back to the academy on Narsil in 3 weeks he wanted to surprise her with the news that he had told his family about them. He never doubted their reaction. Granted she wasn't exactly a traditional woman, but she came from a good family and well, how could they not love her? She was amazing! Smart, pretty, fearless, plus they worked so well together. They had even gotten to the point of finishing each other's sentences. They would make a perfect couple. As he walked to the dock where the liner to Excalibur was he checked his comm again. He had only arrived on the station a few hours ago and he wanted to check his mail. Since instantaneous communications across the stars was still science fiction, mail had to be delivered by ship. When you arrived at a starport, you checked if you had any mail waiting for you. Eric knew he had mail here, but it was taking forever to download for some reason. *The system must be on the fritz,* he thought. As he came to the dock for the ship home he walked up to the gate and handed over the

overnight bag he had been carrying, his ID and the ticket to the attendant. The rest of his luggage had already been checked and loaded. The attendant checked his ticket and ID, then waved him through with a smile. Eric returned the smile, then headed down the docking tube to the ship. It was a typical small passenger liner, copied from an old Imperial design. It could take as many as forty people, in relative comfort, the three parsecs to Excalibur in one jump. The ship would be leaving soon, so most of the other passengers should be aboard already.

His first stop was his cabin to drop off his bag and check out the accommodations. After four years in the academy and one year stationed on a light cruiser the cabin seemed immense. *And it has its own shower, such luxury!* From there he decided to head to the forward passenger lounge. Hopefully, he would be able to get a good spot to watch the ship's departure. Plus, he might as well start meeting his fellow passengers. He shouldn't have been worried. The passenger lounge was a large circular room, ringed by windows, with chairs arranged around the outer edge to look out. In the center were tables and more chairs, with built in video screens, so there really were no bad seats. A steward was at the bar taking orders. And it seemed all his fellow passengers were already there. Most were comfortably spread out in singles or pairs. But off to one side was a group of seven, apparently a nobleman, his family and a small staff. One of the group, a beautiful young woman appeared to be arguing with the noble (her father?). Eric took no particular notice of them as he headed to the bar. The steward smiled and tipped his head as Eric approached.

"What would you like, *herre lieutenant*?"

Eric smiled back, "Vodka martini, please."

Over the centuries since man went to the stars, many things had changed. But vodka was still vodka. Vermouth and olives, not so much, but still the martini endured. Once he had his drink he decided to find a seat away from the nobleman and his group so he could watch the ship depart in peace.

After finding a quiet spot he settled in and tried his drink. *Perfect!*

Drink in hand Eric looked out at the station and the stars beyond it. So far everything was working out today. Well, except for his mail. He decided to try it again. At a touch his wrist comm brought up the virtual keyboard and screen. The images were projected directly onto his retina and sensors registered his key strokes and gestures. Finally his mail had downloaded. But as he was about to start going through it he noticed a figure pass before him. He looked up to see the young woman that had been arguing with the nobleman. It registered that the noise from the small group behind him had died down. That made sense if she was the source of the disturbance. Now she was standing just to his right, leaning on the windows frame. She had flaming red hair, worn flowing gracefully down to the middle of her back. He thought it looked pretty, but it was definitely not the usual way upper-class women did their hair, in an elaborate 'up' hairdo. Now that he was looking, he could see that her dress was similar. Instead of the fancy monstrosities that were typical of traditional ladies' fashion, she was wearing a simple, elegant blue dress that hugged her rather luscious figure closely. He would be enjoying the view if she wasn't obviously crying softly.

Eric sighed to himself and closed his wrist comm. The mail could wait. A damsel in distress took precedence any day. He took a handkerchief out of his breast pocket and rose from his chair and walked beside her, holding out the handkerchief as he did. "My lady, can I be of assistance?"

The girl turned around quickly at the sound of his voice and looked up at him. Her crystal blue eyes filled with tears. With the tear streaked cheeks and smudged make up she should have looked a wreck. But instead, all he could see was her beauty and pain. She seemed so vulnerable to him. She took the offered hanky and dabbed her eyes.

"Th…thank you. I…um, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bother anyone."

He smiled softly at her, "It's no bother, really, what seems to be the matter? Maybe I can help?"

If Eric could see inside the girl's head, he would have seem the image of an iron trap closing on him. Instead he saw a sad smile cross the girls face.

"Oh, thank you for the offer, but it's a family matter. I'm afraid there's nothing anyone can do to help me now." As she spoke her smile faded and she started to get choked up. She buried she face in the hanky and started to sob.

Eric didn't know what to do. He wasn't much for dealing with strong emotions. It was one of the things he loved about Myra—she was always so in control. He couldn't imagine her crying in public, whatever was bothering her.

He couldn't just leave the girl like this though, but what to do? He hesitated for a moment, then put his arm around her shoulder. "Ah, um, please, it can't be that bad, can it?"

As he held the crying girl, a scent of orange blossoms drifted up from her hair. It reminded him of the orange trees in the gardens back home. Despite himself he smiled at the memory of home it triggered.

She looked up at him again and returned his smile softly. "You're right. It's not that bad I suppose. I really should be happy. My family is taking me to meet a prospective husband. It's what every noble girl is supposed to want. A marriage to a handsome prince. Well, I don't know what he actually looks like. But I've been told he's very handsome. I just wish I at least knew the man."

Eric's thoughts raced, he knew all the single nobles on Excalibur. He was one of them after all. And there weren't all that many of them. Who was she talking about? "Ah, I'm sure your family knows best. You, uh, wouldn't happen to know the man's name would you?"

Now comes the tricky part, thought Helga. Getting her father to think a political marriage to the Dalgaard family of Excalibur was a good idea had been

easy. Getting him to think it was his idea had been only slightly more difficult. Helga's father was only a baron. But their family was immensely wealthy. It wasn't hard for the *jarl* on Excalibur to see the advantage in the match either. However, Eric's father insisted that the two young people meet first. He wouldn't force his son into a marriage to someone he didn't care for. The rest had been timing. And a computer virus that had prevented Eric's mail from downloading till she was ready to make her move. But now she had to play this next part perfectly…

Chapter 3

June 3, 5710 CE / 155-1192 Imperial
Spin. Mar. 0927 Narsil A574A57-D Hi In Cx

Myra was enjoying her moment of triumph. Well, technically it wasn't just *her* moment of triumph. It belonged to the entire graduating class of the Danisov Naval Academy, class of 5710. The ceremony had been flawless. The weather was perfect. Her entire family had attended. Her three brothers had even behaved themselves, a minor miracle. The only negative was Eric wasn't there. He must have been held up on Excalibur. She had rather hoped to be able to introduce him to her family. Well, show him off might have been a better way to put it. Everything was going perfectly aside from that.

She had even been able to impress her brothers and father with the tale of her first battle out in the wilds. Seeing the four of them, three in their army mess dress uniforms and the other in the dress uniform of the marines, gape when she told the part where she called orbital artillery fire down on her own position had been priceless. Mother looked like she was going to pass out at that, but she held firm for her obviously insane daughter. Now, with the ceremony over, the newly commissioned ensigns were talking to each other, their families, various guests and the faculty. People were only just starting to leave. In fact it was about time she thought about getting her father to stop networking and head out.

They had dinner plans at the best restaurant in the capital in a few hours.

She looked down at her wrist comm, thinking of the message she had received from Eric. A ship from Excalibur had arrived today. She had hoped he would be on it, he wasn't. But he had written her. It had taken a few hours for the mail to be scanned for virus, then distributed. By the time it had reached her, she was too busy to read it. Well she had a few moments now. She was about to open it when she heard the sound of running feet headed her way.

She looked up to see Agata Lager, her academy roommate—ex-roommate—rushing towards her with a horrified expression on her face. The girl ran up to her and threw her arms around her and hugged her fiercely. "Myra! are you alright ?"

Myra pulled back and gave her a confused look. Agata was usually a very even keeled sort; this was not like her. "What's wrong? Did something happen?"

The girl's eyes widened. "Oh, god, you haven't heard! Here, see for yourself." Agata brought up her own wrist comm and displayed for Myra a news article from the society column from Excalibur. It was an announcement of an engagement between the Dalgaard family's youngest son and the only child of Baron Ostberg of Narsil.

Myra felt as if an ice cold hand had gripped her heart and was squeezing the life out of her. She looked down at her own wrist and the message from Eric waiting there. "Wait, he couldn't. He…" Myra's head snapped up and she gave Agata's arm a light squeeze "Thank you for telling me, Agata. I…" She felt her eyes sting as tears began to form. "I have to check something. Excuse me." Then she stood back and wiped her hand over her eyes. She looked over to her family, all of whom were looking at her with concerned expressions now. "Excuse me for a moment," then she turned and walked away from the crowd. They could see her bring her comm up. Then after several minutes her shoulders slumped.

Slowly she straightened up, then reached to the back of her neck and appeared to unlatch a necklace,

pull it from around her neck, then stuff it into a pocket. She wiped at her eyes again, turned and walked back. A smile on her face. A smile that didn't reach her eyes. On what should have been one of the greatest days of her life, something inside of ensign Myra Stevdatter Brun died. Those that knew her said she was never the same after that day. Some said that she replaced a broken heart with one made from steel. But she never spoke of the events of this day again, so no one knew for sure. ✪

Critics' Corner

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

reviewed by Megan Robertson

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

Three worlds… yet of strategic importance to both the Aslan Hierate and the old Sindalian Empire, a nodal point in trade routes through the Tlaiowaha subsector linking the Wildeman Cluster and the Sindalian Main. This small cluster of worlds Jump-1 apart receives many visitors, from the Imperium and other places.

The Introduction provides background information on the cluster and its history. There's a note that these three worlds may be located somewhere else in your universe, but it seems better to leave them as intended, as they are well-embedded into their surroundings. There is a partial map of the Sindal and Tlaiowaha subsectors showing the cluster's location within the Trojan Reach sector and in relation to other nearby worlds, followed by detailed notes on each of the three worlds: Torpol, Clarke, and Blue.

Torpol is possibly the pivotal world, as Marduk (and thence the Sindalian Main), Asim, and Drinax (linking to the Aslan Hierate) are but Jump-2 away from the Torpol system. A map shows the main trade routes linking through the cluster. Torpol is
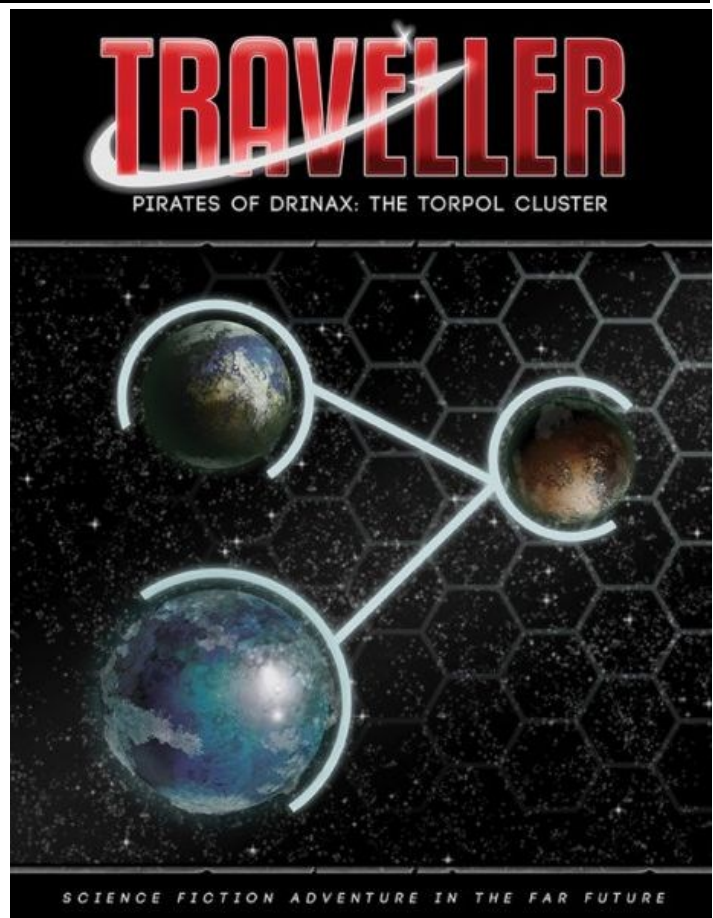
the only habitable world, with free water, in the system, but there are nine other rocky planets, a couple of asteroid belts and four gas giants in orbit around the sun. Both asteroid belts are home to miners and one of the rocky worlds—although cold and airless—is also inhabited. This planet, Traefar, has a fairly basic starport but an extensive settlement popular with spacers and it's reckoned to be a good place to find crew—or indeed, to find a berth if you are a spacer looking for work… although it is the sort of place that the Imperium raids every so often looking for criminals. Torpol itself is a waterworld but with a sophisticated (and expensive) highport,

when no nonsense is tolerated. Down on the planetary surface there are plenty of places where a tourist and his money can be parted in reasonable safety.

The next system to be discussed is Clarke. It's a rather gloomy place, home to a strange religion. The system has two asteroid belts, seven rocky planets and a remote companion star that generally gets ignored. The Clarke Highport is as well-equipped as Torpol's, but has a more functional air. The religion is concerned with death and the guidance of dead souls, their bodies being encased in carbon blocks which are used as building materials.

Finally, the Blue system has twelve rocky planets and two gas giants—and a bunch of Imperial ships hanging around, nobody's quite sure why… it may have something to do with Aslan settlements on a few of the planets or the Bulhai Freeport, in orbit around one of the gas giants (also called Bulhai). This Freeport is run as a legitimate place of business, not a pirate haven, but it's certainly possible to get things you cannot get elsewhere. The people of Blue itself are interested in art and religion, topics they will debate endlessly.

This work presents three interesting systems to visit in your travels, with atmospheric descriptions that help to paint the picture of what the party will find there.   ✹

Confessions of a Newbie Referee   *A Column by Timothy Collinson*

#27: Still a Newbie

Mr Zeitlin has kindly encouraged me to drop the 'newbie' title of these confessions. He cites various pieces of evidence that suggest my skills are developing. It's generous of him, but occasionally I'm reminded that really I'm very new to this. You can still reasonably count my refereeing experience in hours and the number of *different* adventures I've actually refereed only makes double figures if you count *Ashfall* as three parts not one larger story in three sections.

There are still moments when I can't find vital notes very quickly, or I fail to play an NPC adequately, or I'm flummoxed by a player's question, or I have no clue what the rules say. I'm sure there are long established referees, however, who face similar moments but have learned to sail past them.

On the other hand, there are whole sections of rules I've not yet really mastered and so they've not, yet, featured in any of my adventures. Trade rules I'm just getting to grips with, we'll kind of need them in *The Traveller Adventure* very soon, and ship combat I must have a go at at some point (but should I skip Mongoose 1st edition and go straight to learning the 2nd edition rules?).

But my worst moment recently was in the third session of *The Traveller Adventure*. We'd spent a couple of game evenings in Leedor and successfully fled Aramis *with* Gvoudzon and the brooch and without getting caught. The Captain was nursing a troubled heart having not found the love he was hoping for in the sister of one of the PCs.

I'd worked out that in three hours or so we could cover the next two chapters which are short. 'In Search of Longer Legs' deals with getting hold of demountable fuel tanks so the *March Harrier* can leave the Aramis Trace. It's really just a pair of interactions with two brokers and I worked at making them different. I added possible sightseeing trips to flesh out the visit to the planet. That part went well enough but as I predicted only took half the time. 'Patinir Belt' involves rescuing a prospector who is on the verge of death.

I really really should have seen that this chapter had tons of potential for excitement, character actions and derring-do. Perhaps it was tiredness, or feeling a bit under the weather, or being a tad pressed for time as we'd started tardily and I didn't want to overstay my welcome keeping people late, but sadly I more narrated this than played it out. I

Confessions of a Newbie Referee

know it left us finishing rather flat and feeling a bit unsatisfactory. I kicked and berated myself for days afterwards I was so cross with myself. It was obvious. With hindsight.

I'm not sure there's any solution but it did leave me with an overwhelming desire to do better next time. Try and think it through more. Find the engagement for the PCs and players. My cardinal rule is that it should be fun! ✪

The Editor replies: I don't generally feel the need to reply to an article that I print here in Freelance Traveller, and when I do, I normally restrain myself—in fact, I think this is the first time I haven't *refrained from commenting.*

I'm perfectly willing to continue with Mr Collinson's column under the same title essentially indefinitely, and if I've given him any other impression, I apologise. However, in my view, it's not wholly hours-of-experience that determines the "newbie"; in fact, hours-of-experience may be the least *important factor. Rather more important, to me, is the answer to the question "Can you run multiple sessions—whether full short adventures or segments of larger ones—and* consistently *end up having a fun session?" If you've run enough sessions that you can answer that question in the affirmative, I would hold that not only aren't you a "newbie" any more, you're showing the signs of being a* good *referee. Mr Collinson, in his after-action reports from TravCon/UK and his musings in this column, has certainly provided some good evidence that he's a good referee.*

The next questions I would ask are "Can you plan *an adventure—short or long form—and successfully run it later? Can you keep it from going completely off the rails, or recover and get it back on if it does? And can you do it while keeping it fun for everyone involved?" Again, Mr Collinson has provided evidence in his after-action reports and his musings in this column that he can, and has. This marks him not merely as a* good *referee, but as a likely master of the art.*

Anyone can make mistakes during a gaming session, and realize that maybe it would have been better—in the

sense of it being more fun in the end—to not have made the mistake. Anyone can have an "off" day from lack of sufficient sleep, or being mildly ill, or having made less-than-wise choices in earlier meals. Anyone can be slightly disorganized. Those don't count against you, in the long run. If your players had fun, they may not even count against you in the short run.

Any time I've played, whether in a gaming group or at a con, there's been "post-mortem" discussion of the session. I'd love to "be a fly on the wall" at a post-mortem of one of Mr Collinson's games; I suspect I would hear a lot of euphoric enthusiasm about it. And, if UK players are anything like the US players I've encountered, probably quite a few "thank yous" or offers of a beer or semantic equivalent directed to Mr Collinson.

Mr Collinson, hindsight is always 20/20. All you can do is what you've resolved to do: try not to make the same mistake next time. Making the mistake is not a sign of "newbie-hood"; it's a sign that you're human. You clearly have a "knack" or a "talent" for refereeing Traveller. *I'm envious, because I know that I* don't *have that knack.*

You've been asked *to referee. Not only by the gaming group made up of your work colleagues, but by the organizers of TravCon/UK. Several times. Including at least once "at the last minute" to fill in an unexpected hole in the schedule. And you did it, and everyone had fun. That says, to me and to them, that you're doing* something *right. And coming back to do it right again. To me, that is the single most telling sign that calling you a "newbie" is perhaps … less than entirely appropriate.*

No, Mr Collinson, I can't agree that you're still a "newbie". I can't even agree with the proposition that you're still occasionally making "newbie" mistakes. You are a skilled and experienced referee, and recognized as such. You have been sharing your experience and your skill in your games, and in your musings in this column. You have, single-handedly, brought more people into our mutual hobby than I have—admittedly not hard to do, given the low number of people I can claim to have brought in. You are not a "newbie", but a respected and valued member of the Traveller *community, one who is worth listening to, for the wisdom that your experience can impart when shared. Thank you for that.* ✪

Low Prep Traveller Campaigns for Beginners

by Daniel Stevens

Traveller has a system of mapping that involves locating star systems on a hexagonal sub-sector map, 1 parsec per hex, and rolling up planetary characteristics. This is a nice nuts and bolts system but it does not help the game master do the one thing that they most want to do, which is create meaningful adventure in an interesting context.

This quick nuts and bolts guide will lead you through marking out some galactic-scale nations, developing just enough astrographic detail to provide adventure context, and some interstellar factions that will provide many meaningful adventure seeds. The process is part of the Low Prep RPG Philosophy which I detail at my blog.[1]

Before we start lets quickly talk about the map scales we will deal with:

Sub-sector: the traditional *Traveller* map. 8×10 parsecs. Time to cross at J6 is just over 2 weeks.

Sector: a collection of 4×4 sub-sectors, 32×40 parsecs. Time to cross at J6 is about 7 weeks.

Grand-Sector: 10×10 sectors, 320×400 parsecs. Time to cross at J6 is nearly 1½ years.

The Galaxy: about 80×80 grand sectors. Time to cross at J6 is over 100 years.

I have a quick sketch map of our milky way galaxy with a light grand sector grid. I use it to mark out the territory for my galactic nations. You can pick up a copy at RPGGeek[2]

Galactic Nations

You want to mark out at least two galactic nations close together on a map showing grand sectors as a grid. My galactic schematic map shows such a grid along with the position of the solar system, spiral arms and galactic core for our Milky Way galaxy.

A galactic nation should cover an area of no more than 4×4 grand sectors. Beyond that size it be-

comes impossible to administer with the jump technology available. Nations may be collected into alliances or loose confederations but they will not share administrative control or overarching culture.

If you want to use dice then roll a d6 for each axis of a nation, X and Y. On a 1,2 or 3 it is 2 grand sectors across on that axis, on a 4 or 5 it is 3 grand sectors across, and on a 6 it is 4 grand sectors across.

Each nation should either have a common border with another nation or be no more than one grand sector away from another nation. Only create a group of nations that are all reasonably close together. Nations further away will probably not come into play during your campaign.

Optionally a nation may be surrounded by a halo of colonised grand sectors that have not joined the nation and are collections of sector sized nations or smaller star system groupings.

On my example on the next page I have marked out a region around Sol with several galactic nations and colonised areas. At this point the names don't convey anything other than I vaguely think the non-blue nations are populated by alien species and the blue ones are human space.

Outside of the areas marked is uncharted and largely uninhabited. There could be small pockets of alien life out there but they are not significant at this scale.

Each galactic nation should be either structured as a hierarchy or a federation.

A Hierarchy has one or two central grand sectors as the core, wealthiest and most powerful region. Then around it are provinces, grand sectors locally governed but subservient to the core. Within each grand sector should be a number of sector sized "estates" governed locally but subservient to the grand sector government that contains them.

A Federation, on the other hand, has an overarching government structure based out of a centralised capitol. Each grand sector is a state which manages its own internal affairs with larger scale infrastructure and laws managed by the federal government.

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1. *https://strangeflight.blog/2016/11/18/low-prep-rpg-philosophy/*

2. *https://www.rpggeek.com/image/3295243/traveller-mongoose?size=original (Note: login required)*
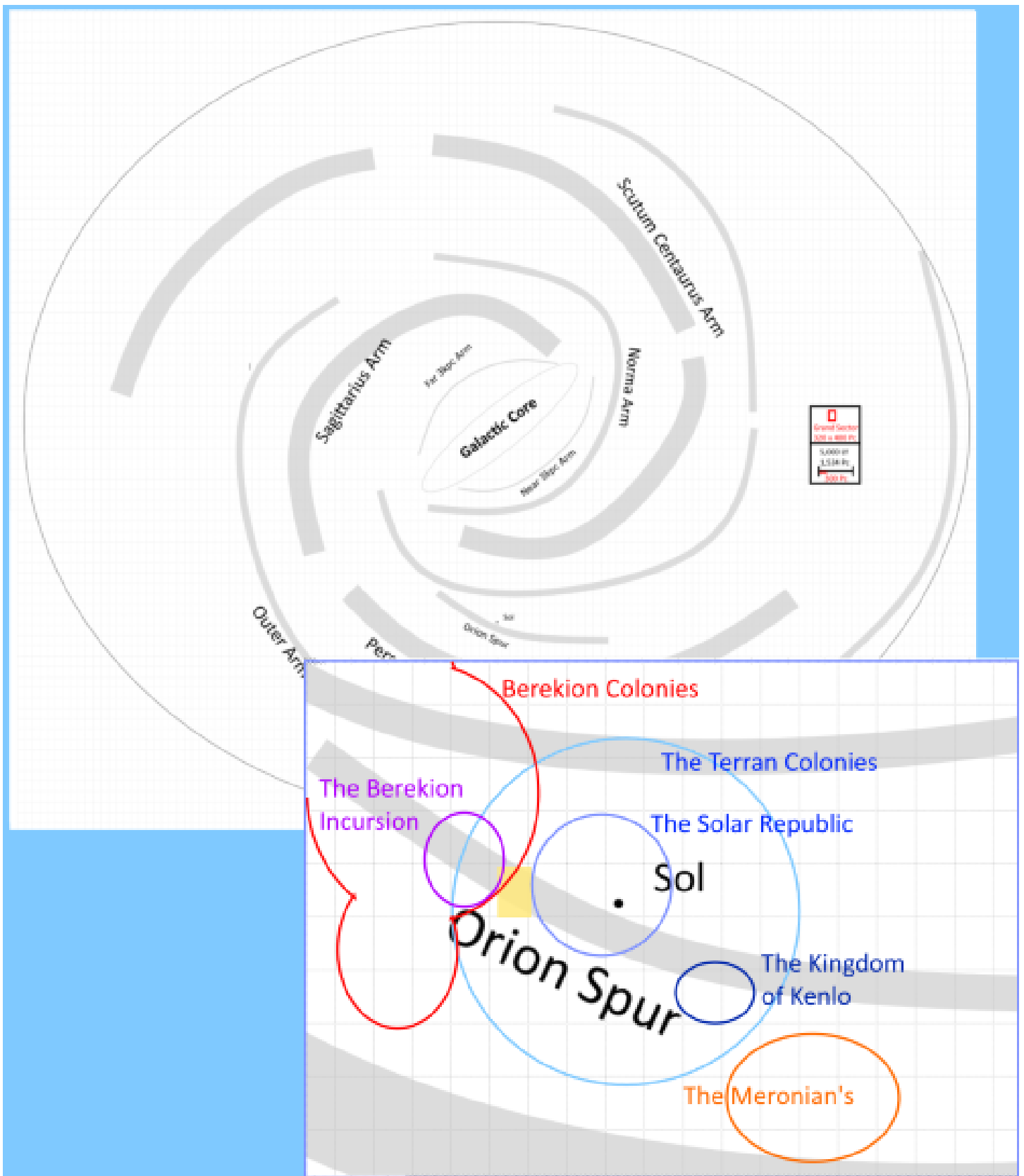
For each nation assign a national focus:

1	Military	4	Commercial
2	Scientific	5	Religious
3	Cultural	6	Conservation

Now create a relationship between each nation pair where they are in contact or within 1 grand sector of each other.

1	Warfare	4	Trading
2	Aggressive Friction	5	Friendly
3	Neutral – possibly some subversion	6	Allied

In my map example, The Berekion Incursion is a hierarchic nation focussed on the military. It has an aggressive friction with the Solar Republic. The Solar Republic has a federal structure and a cultural focus. The Kingdom of Kenlo is hierarchic with a commercial focus. The relationship with the Solar Republic is neutral with some underlying tension. The Meronians are federal with a religious focus and no formal relationship with the other nations, though they view them all as heathens.

You should be able to see from this that some interesting tensions and situations are already suggested for your campaign. These can be fruitful for player adventures.

Grand Sector

Choose a grand sector from a location covered by at least one of the galactic nations you created. My example grand sector is the one shown as a yellow highlight in the galactic map example above.

On the grand sector map (10×10sectors) mark out any borders from the higher scale. If there are sectors not covered by a galactic nation you may want to add a minor nation. Within the nations you should mark out the larger provinces or states. These should each generally be 2 to 4 sectors across. You can use a d6 mechanism to determine the size on each axis. On a 1,2 or 3 it is 2 sectors across on

that axis, on a 4 or 5 it is 3 sectors across, and on a 6 it is 4 sectors across.

Minor nations have a national focus as with galactic nations and relationships with nearby galactic nations and other minor nations.

So, in the grand sector map on the next page, I have marked out the galactic nation borders. I have also created the minor nation of Science Trust States that are, obviously, a science focussed nation striving to create a new scientific golden age for mankind. They are neutral toward the Berekion Incursion and trading with The Solar Republic. Within the Berekion Incursion I have demarcated the Assimilation Province 1 which is a nice threatening name. And over in The Solar Republic I have marked out two states, Kelmet and Rim.

Also mark the location of national and state/province capitol star systems, giving each a name. You don't (and shouldn't at this stage) have to detail the star system or position it precisely, just make it clear which sub-sector its in.

In the map, each space is a sub sector and the heavy, grey borders are sectors.

Grand Factions

At this level we also want to define some "Grand Factions", groups that are doing something in a cohesive manner and that will provide political and action context for player scenarios. The players will start in the sector marked in yellow, so, being low prep I will only create factions covering that region of space and may detail some others later. That means factions for The Solar Republic, The Berekion Colonies and the Terran Colonies.

A faction has three elements: Level (grand, sector, sub sector, stellar), Strength (2d6 initial strength), and a description of what its about.

You can determine the nature of a faction by rolling on the table below to get a "tag" as to its nature or by designing it yourself to fit the context that you have developed so far. Use the tag to give yourself an idea of what the faction does and how it manifests in the game world. If your mind is a blank,
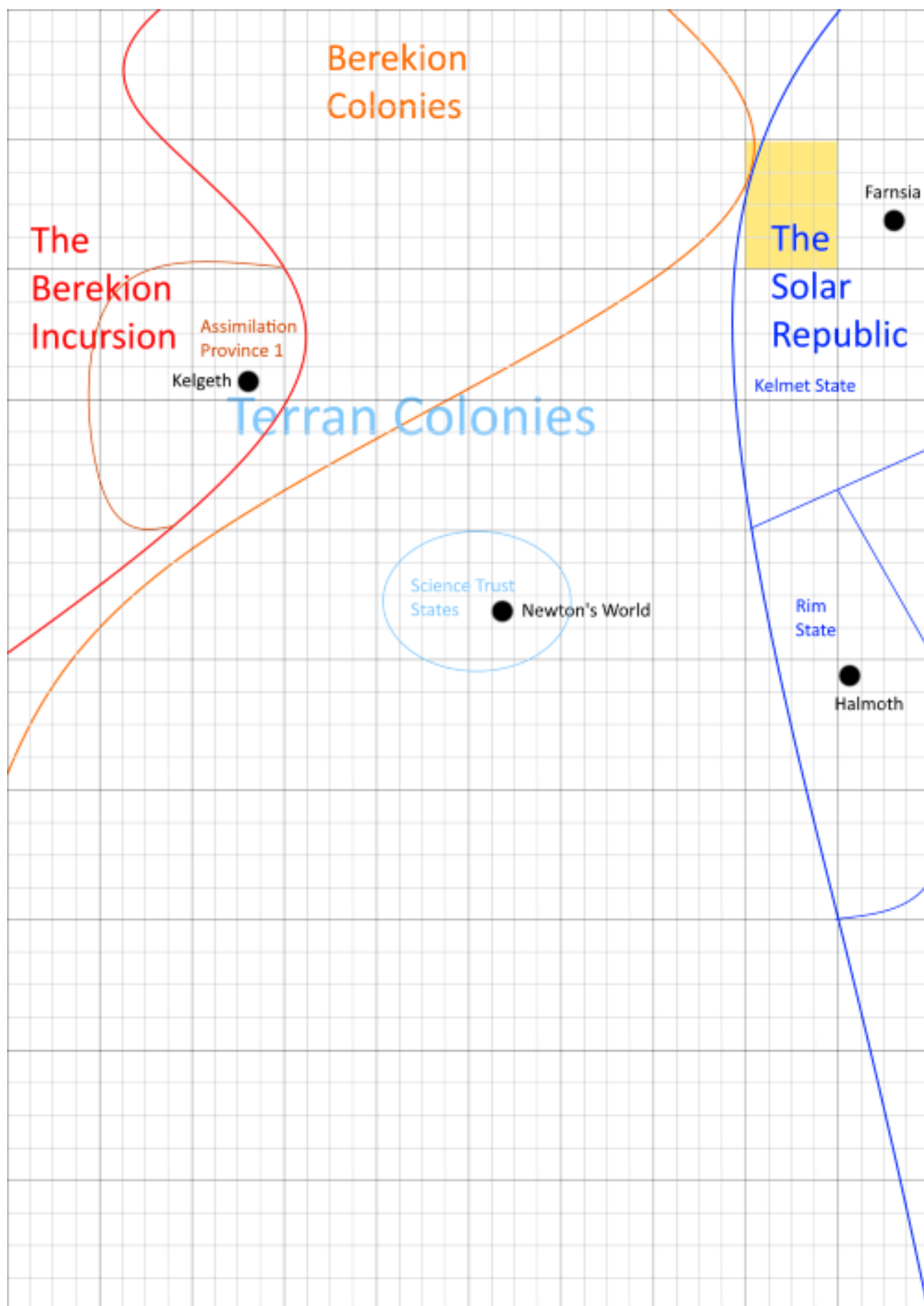
that's OK; let it simmer. When you have an idea note it down. As part of its description it can be useful to create a faction back story in brief, but that may also arise in play as will be discussed later.

The Faction Nature Tag Table

Roll d6 to choose a column

- On 1-3, use Column A
- On 4-6, use Column B

2D6	Column A	Column B
	Faction Tags	
2	Psychotic	Cult/Scam
3	Hedonists/Ascetics	Individualists/Communitarian
4	Anarchists/Authoritarians	Pro Social/Anti Social
5	Fanatic/Reasoned	Emancipationist/Slavers
6	Expansionists/Consolidators	Traditionalists/Progressives
7	Wealth Concentrators/ Wealth Distributors	War and Glory/ Peace and Stability
8	Hierarchic/Networked	Tech + Science/Mysticism/ Psionics
9	Roll 2 tags, re-roll if 9 comes up again.	
10	Elitist/Egalitarian	Bigoted/Inclusive
11	Assassins/Protectors	Criminals/Vigilantes/ Law Enforcers
12	Paranoiacs/Egotists	Conspiracy Theorists/ Puppet Masters

Where there are multiple tags divided by '/' then choose one tag only. A faction cannot have multiple tags from the same cell. If another faction ends up with tags from the same cell as a previous faction, it's often a good idea to choose one of the other tags from that cell, placing the two factions in tension. After setting a tag for a faction you could also choose to assign a tag from the same cell to another faction that has not been set yet to ramp up factional tensions in your campaign.

In the grand sector example let's have factions for the Solar Republic and the Berekion and Terran colonies in the grand sector. First for The Solar Republic I will create 2 factions, one using dice only. 5 on d6 tells me column B. 7 on 2d6 gives me a choice of 'War and Glory' or 'Peace and Stability'. The Bere-

kions are aggressive. Let's have the Solar Republic have an appeasing faction and a war like faction in this grand sector. So that gives me two factions:

GF1: The Isolation Movement. The Solar Republic. Strength 7 (rolled). Tag 'Peace and Stability'. "As long as the Berekions leave our borders alone we will leave theirs alone. Our concerns are to prosper peacefully and to build wealth for all".

GF2: The Anti-Berekion League. The Solar Republic. Strength 3 (chosen). Tag 'War and Glory'. "The Berekions have invaded our worlds and enslaved our people. They must die. Build warships now!".

I chose a strength of 3 so that the faction could start of as a minor voice that has room to grow and so it will struggle against The Isolation Movement. The players can take sides on this or may choose a third alternative.

What about the colonies? Obviously the Berekions have been moving in forcefully and the galactic nation has aggressive plans to assimilate more of the space in this area. In the Berekion colony worlds there is probably a human faction that is a resistance; let's just create them.

GF3: The Terran Resistance. Terran Colonies. Strength 7 (rolled). Tag: 'Freedom Fighters' (not on the table). "We must gather intelligence, equipment and those with a will to fight. Sabotage and insurgency is the name of the game."

Among the Berekions? I'll roll the tag. Column A, 9 → two tags. Column B, 11 and Column B, 8. Assassins and Mysticism chosen.

GF4: The Hunters. Berekion Colonies. Strength 11 (rolled). Tag 'Mystic Assassins'. "The hunt in secret is the great game, the true essence of life. Seek any who would work against Greater Berekion, toy with them and then kill them. Do not be seen, do not be revealed, do not cause collateral damage."

Sector

Now we pull out a sector map which contains 4×4 subsectors. This will be the sector that we picked from our grand sector map above in yellow highlight.

Draw in any borders from the Grand Sector that pass through this sector. Then position and name the following star systems:

- Any Galactic Nation Capitol
- Any Minor Nation Capitol
- Any Province or State Capitol
- A sector capitol if no other capitol is present
- Each subsector that has no capitol marked should have a subsector capitol
- Sectors outside of a nation have no star marked

Position them as you like within the boundaries marked out. At this scale you are able to mark which hex within a sub sector they will be in. You will not place any other stars at this scale and the only information about those star systems is that they are a capitol of some sort.

Next you want to mark major Xboat paths. Xboats are ships equipped with jump drives but no manoeuvre drives. They jump between systems and deliver their cargo while being refueled and moved about by tender ships. There are three kinds of Xboat: communication; cargo; migration. Migration xboat lines occur where there is a concerted shift of population. Usually from the interior of a galactic nation to its edges. Their tenders transfer passengers to and from starports. Cargo xboat lines carry bulk trade goods and their tenders transfer goods to and from orbital goods yards in system. Both cargo and migration xboats carry mail. Where there is neither cargo or migration xboat lines there may be pure communications xboat lines, which only carry electronic mail between systems.

At this scale you just want to mark that there is xboat paths between capitols and just draw them as straight lines between the capitols you have marked. Its up to you what xboat lines you want to mark in. Also consider lines going off map, indicating at least the name of a system they are connecting with even if that area has not been detailed yet. At the subsector scale we will mark in the detailed xboat paths, including the short range lines within the sub sector.

The map on the next page is Enzam Sector (named after the sector capital system). You can see the border of the Solar Republic in blue at top left along with the Berekion Colonies border in orange. Kraatok is a Berekion colonial subsector capitol with no xboat lines, as it is far from the galactic nation. I added it as an interesting "seed nation" capitol just for fun.

The grey lines are cargo/comms xboat lines. The green arrows are migration xboat lines where the bulk of passenger travel is in the direction indicated.

Sector Factions

So now we want to create some more factions, this time sector scale ones. For each nation or cultural region present in the sector roll d6:

- On 1:   no sector factions for that nation
- On 2 or 3:   1 sector faction.
- On 4,5 or 6: 2 sector factions

These factions have the same form of description as grand factions but operate on the lower scale. The factions generally will only be encountered in this sector and may be allowed to bleed over a little into adjacent sectors.

So I roll and determine there will be 1 faction, and roll for a tag: 6 in column A is "Expansionists/Consolidators". Given the current climate that is forming from the grand sector work, let's pick Expansionists, in conflict with GF1: The Isolation Movement. That gives us

SF1: The New Horizons Movement. Solar Republic. Strength: 12 (rolled). Tag 'Expansionists'. "The Isolationists are inward looking but the Republic could easily incorporate the Terran Colonies and vastly increase its wealth, power and knowledge!"

The grand factions noted also exist at this scale for nations and regions that overlap this sector.

Subsector

Now we are getting down to player action level. Choose a subsector from your sector map. Fill in borders and the location and name of any capitol star system from the higher level map. Then mark where star systems will be in the normal fashion.
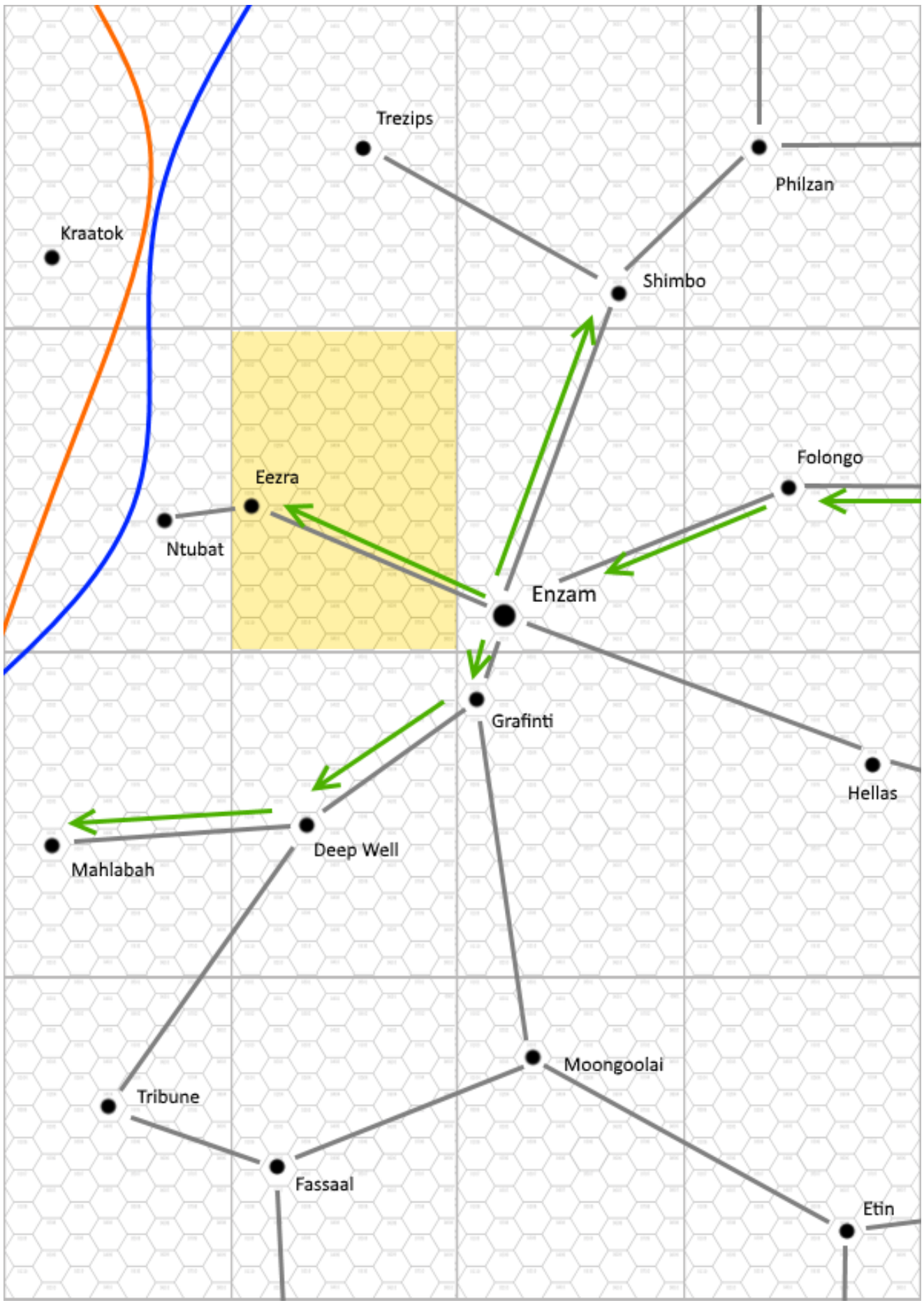
Look at the xboat routes from the high level map and see if the stars allow a path with no more than jump 3 in roughly the direction the xboat path should take. If there are large gaps just add an extra star as needed to make the xboat path work, then draw the xboat connections going from star to star by the shortest jump paths available.

Next, give the star systems names.

Now we want to give each star system other than the capitol a role that it fulfils in the nation or in the surrounding star systems outside of a nation. The role will constrain what planet the main planet is and if there will be gas giants or water planets in the system. As prep for a campaign the role is the only thing given to all the stars in the sub-sector.

Non Nation Space Star System Roles

Outside of a nation roll on the following table for each star not already designated as a capitol.

Each population centre is going to govern near-

General Star System Roles	
2d6	**Role**
2 to 4	Population Center
5 to 6	Mining System
7 to 10	Not Decided Yet
11	Military Outpost
12	Science Outpost

by mining systems and outposts to a range of 4 parsecs where it is the closest population centre. Pencil in connections from each mining system and outpost to stars closest on the way to a population centre in range, tracing through undecided star systems if needed. Mining systems not connected to a population centre then connect together any outposts nearby at a range of 4 that are also not connected to a population centre. Finally outposts not connected to anything yet connect to the nearest star system that is connected to something, or else to the nearest undecided star or another outpost. This defines interstellar trade groupings, or sub-sector nations.

If there are undecided stars between mining systems, outposts and population centres then designate systems a trade hub where they connect a bunch of those other systems. The ones not designated as trade hubs but still on the connection paths are determined by d6 roll:

Undecided Systems	
1d Roll	**Role**
1	Military Outpost
2	Fuel Stop
3 to 5	General colony
6	New colony (will grow to become population centre, trade hub or mining system.)

Look at any remaining undecided stars within 3 parsecs from decided stars and set them by rolling d6. A 1 or 2 is unused otherwise they are general colonies. All other systems are unexplored.

There will be no xboat paths to add in such non-nation space. The connections you marked are the standard trade and shipping paths for the group of systems where ships make regular trips.

Below is an example of a sub-sector from the Terran Colonies area of the Grand Sector. I haven't located this anywhere specifically, it's a free floating example that took 5 minutes to create.

Nation Space Star System Roles

Within a nation there should already be a capitol in most sub-sectors. If there is a main xboat line or

two we want to set roles for those star systems last, so use the General Star System Roles table to assign roles to undecided systems that are not on any drawn xboat path.

Each population centre within 3 parsecs of a capitol, a system on an xboat path or another population centre should pencil in a path to the nearest candidate system, going through an intermediate star system if there is one. The aim is to have a path drawn that leads to the capitol if available. Then do the same for mining systems or outposts not on an xboat path within 3 parsecs of a capitol, population centre, system on an xboat path or other mining centre, preferring stars in that order if they are further away than the closest star by no more than 1.

Next, every path that traces to the capitol, or to a population centre if there is no connection to a capitol, should have a trade hub on it if there are any undecided stars on the path. Select one undecided star on each path to be a trade hub if there is one. Choose star systems that sit on multiple paths to the capitol or target population centre if possible. If there are no undecided stars on a path to the target then either convert a mining system on the path to a trade hub or don't have a trade hub on that path if there is none.

If there is a path from a military outpost to the capitol that passes through an undecided star then choose the one closest to the capitol on the path and designate that as a military hub.

For each mining system now connected to the capitol make sure there is a cargo xboat path for every leg of the journey. All other connections drawn to the capitol so far are now communications only xboat paths.

For each remaining undecided system on an xboat path roll d6. 1 to 5: general colony, 6: fuel stop.

For each undecided system left after that roll d6. 1 to 4: general colony. 5 or 6: still undecided.

Now look at the undecided star systems that remain (if any). If they are on the shortest path to connect any general colony to the capitol, a population centre or a mining system then they are a fuel stop, otherwise they are unused.

At this point choose a player starting world. If it's within 2 parsecs of a sub-sector edge then map the adjacent sub-sector down to this level of detail.

Example
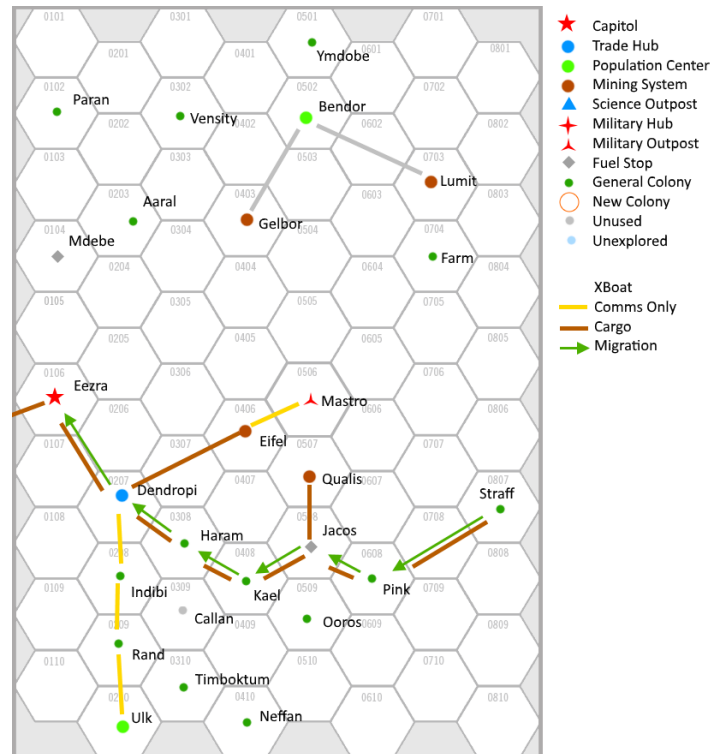
In this example, I chose to have the players start on Kael (0408), a general colony system on the main xboat path for the sub sector.

Sub Sector Factions

Now for some factions at the sub sector level. These factions will primarily have more local concerns but may align with or oppose some of the broader factions present in the sub sector.

For each nation or cultural region present in the sub-sector roll d6:

1   no sub-sector factions for that nation

2 or 3   1 sub-sector faction

4,5 or 6   2 sub-sector factions.

I roll 3, so we have one faction present. Rolling tags I get column B, 10: "Bigoted/Inclusive". I'm not sure which tag I feel like using so I just dice and end up with Inclusive.

SSF1: The Liberal Collective. Eezra Sub-Sector. Strength 7 (rolled). Tag 'Inclusive'. "Humans, intelligent aliens and artificial intelligences need to act as a family for the good of all. All are free to do as they wish where it does not impinge on others."

The Detail Layer

Now we are getting to the level of detail that will be needed when players experience a star system.

This level of detail is only needed where the players actually are although it can be useful to have some of this out to about 4 parsecs from the players' location. At this level we will have the following:

- A faction presence check to see which factions have a presence in each solar system.

- A method to allow factions to be randomly picked, weighted for strength and scale.

- Some information about the operations of factions present in the players area.

- Star Port and population level for the star systems as a whole, constrained by star system role.

- Planet Type for the main planet in a star system, constrained by star system role.

- Other standard *Traveller* details for the system mainworld, constrained to fit the planet type.

- Last, but not least, how this prep can interact with character life stories during character development and how to expand during play.

The Detail Layer Glance Sheet

The aim of the glance sheet is to quickly show minimal information about a subsector, including factions, star systems and main planets, and to permit deferring developing details. Any part of a star system or planet can be left blank, meaning it has not been determined yet. These blanks can be filled in either just in time or between sessions as you see fit, with new details conforming to what's known.

You want each faction that is likely to be present in the sub sector to have a couple of lines, and the same for each planet. Use meaningful key codes to compress data down and include the planetary profile. Use dashes to mean "nothing here", since blank means not yet decided.

So naval base presence can be N or –, or blank for haven't decided yet.

Faction Presence and Picker Cards

Each faction covering the subsector may have members and other assets present in specific star systems. Use the faction presence table to decide whether each faction is actually present in each star system in the subsector. Start with the player starting system and systems within 2 parsecs. If no factions are present place a dash on the glance sheet to show definite faction absence. During play if the players are heading for a system where this has not yet been specified then work it out on the fly. Between adventures add some more around the edges close to where the players are.

In the following table where you have a dice roll to test for faction presence apply a DM for faction strength, just as if it was a player character strength.

Faction Presence				
Faction Scope	Capitol	Trade Hub or Population Centre	Starport type E or X	Other Star System Type
Grand Sector	Yes	7+	No	8+
Sector	Yes	Yes	No	8+
Sub Sector	Yes	6+	10+	6+

Next, we want a way to randomly select a faction. For this I recommend using a deck of ordinary playing cards. You assign specific cards to each faction in the subsector, collect those cards into a deck, shuffle it and draw cards to choose a faction. In a star system if you draw a card for a faction that has no presence there just draw again.

Each faction gets a base number of cards, 3 for a grand sector faction, 4 for a sector faction and 5 for a subsector faction. Adjust the number using the faction's strength DM. Deal the number of cards from

the deck for each faction and record the cards that it is assigned on your subsector glance sheet.

So, our grand-sector faction The Anti-Berekion League, strength 3, gets a base of 3 cards with a strength DM -1, giving a total of 2 cards. I draw Queen of clubs and 4 of diamonds and record them as QC 4D. If I draw either card from the picker deck, I have selected the Anti-Berekion League.

The New Horizons sector faction, on the other hand, gets 4 cards plus two more for its strength of 12, giving a total of 6 in the picker deck. I assign 2S, 6H, 6D, 9C, JC, QS.

Planet Type, Starport and Population Level

We are getting down to the standard *Traveller* level of detail now, but we only apply it to a select few star systems at the start of a campaign and add a few more between sessions or as needed. The details of factions, system roles and xboat paths in the larger context give us information that will be meaningful to the players despite the great distances involved; once players have picked them up, we need to make sure that the finer details remain consistent. What we know will therefore constrain them.

In the following table, System Role selects the property constraints.

Starport is the standard *Traveller* starport type; if the table doesn't show how to select the starport then either roll normally, and roll again if you get an invalid result, or choose by game master fiat.

Planet Type is a general description which will constrain the details of size, hydrographics, temperature and atmosphere. Those details need not be generated until they are likely to impact on play.

Pop Level is assumed to describe the population of the entire system. To generate the population level you can roll normally and keep going until you get a valid value, or choose however you wish.

Major fuel source indicates if there is a source of unrefined fuel in system. If there is no planet with sufficient hydrographics then there will be at least

one appropriate gas giant. "No Gas Giants" means just that. If there is a planet with water then that's fine but the system could be a no fuel system. "As normal" means to use the standard system generation rules to determine the world hydrographics and/orthe presence of Gas Giants.

New Colonies should be designated as heading toward one of the other role types (other than unused). Their starport will be immature, so about two levels below its ultimate quality, and the population will be half that of its eventual level when mature.

Unexplored systems are unconstrained, you can go to town deciding what their make up is behind the scenes when it suits you or if players are heading off to explore them.

Planetary Characteristics				
System Role	**Starport**	**Planet Type**	**Pop Level**	**Major Fuel Source**
Capitol	A	D6: 1: marginal 2-6: garden	(7+)	Yes
Trade Hub	A	D6: 1: rock 2-3: harsh 4-5: marginal 6: garden	(6+)	Yes
Population Center	D6: 1-4: B 5-6: A	garden	(8+)	Yes
Mining System	B, C, D, E	D6: 1: rock 2-3: harsh 4-6: marginal	1 to 5	As normal
Science Outpost	D, E, X	D6: 1-3: rock 4-6: harsh	1 to 5	As normal
Military Hub	A	D6: 1: rock 2-3: harsh 4-6: marginal	4 to 6	Yes
Military Outpost	A, B, C	D6: 1: rock 2-3: harsh 4-6: marginal	3 to 5	Yes
Fuel Stop	E, X	rock	0 to 4	Yes
General Colony	Any	D6: 1: rock 2-3: harsh 4-5: marginal 6: garden	1 to 6	As normal
Unused	X	D6: 1: rock 2-3: harsh 4-6: marginal	0	No gas giants

Government and cultural details, law level, tech level, planetary factions and bases present can be worked out in the standard way when you need to know. Again probably only within a couple of parsecs of the current play position.

Planet Detail

So what about size, atmosphere, climate and hydrographics? These values are constrained by planet type values. Because of that these are the last details you should think about setting, usually just in time, which is when players travel there or need to find out about that information for the planet in question. An important thing to realise is that if players go to a planet that has none of these details you can just wing it off the planet type if you don't want to break the flow of play.

Each of the values in each attribute is valid for a different planet type. Some values are valid for garden, some for marginal and so on. The rule is that a planet type can have attribute values for a better world type but not for a worse world type and at least one attribute has to specifically match the actual world type. So a marginal world can include garden world values, but not harsh world or rock values, and at least one value has to be specifically for marginal worlds. A harsh world could have a size of 5 and a standard atmosphere, which is a garden stat, but then its climate or hydrographics must be one of the designated harsh world values and can't have hydrographics of 0 which is a rock stat.

UWP Constraints by World Class				
World Class	Size	Atmosphere	Hydrosphere	Temperature
Rock	0	0, 1, 2, 3	0	-
Harsh	1, A+	4, 7, 9, A, B, C, D, F	1, 2, 9, A	Freezing, Boiling
Marginal	2, 9	5, 8	3, 4, 8	Hot, Cold
Garden	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	6, E	5, 6, 7	Temperate

Time Estimates

Generating campaign areas using this system can be fairly quick, once you're used to the system.

- It should take a total of about 10 minutes to generate Galaxy, grand sector and sector maps.
- Generating a subsector map with star system types and xboat paths should take about 20 minutes. Naming can take a few minutes longer.
- Defining factions at the grand sector, sector and subsector level should take about 10 minutes.
- Generating planet types and the detail for the campaign starting planet should take about 10 minutes.
- Creating a Faction Encounter Deck should take no more than 10 minutes.

The result is that generating a useful and interesting campaign area, ready for play, will take about 1 hour. No, you don't have encyclopedic detail on every world. You don't need it (yet). You generate what you need, when you need it, using the already generated information to influence and constrain the new information.

The reason this is "low prep" is that it doesn't take long and the prep you have done here is for stuff that is significant to play, rather than stuff that just mechanically fits the world building process. The other detail is deferred for later.

Life Stories and Play

So now you have a campaign in varying states of detail, with the most detail centred around where players will start. The next step is linking players to the things going on in the start space by using the life events they generate as they develop their characters. In the same way characters may connect to one another through life events you can work with players to connect their life events to to the factions and worlds that make up your setting. As you do this allow new detail to enter play as appropriate.

Let's look at some life path events for players starting life in the mining system of Qualis (0507) using Mongoose 2nd Ed.

The Prep Room

One character joins the army and gets the following life event : "Surrounded and outnumbered by the enemy, you hold out until relief arrives. Gain DM+2 to your next Advancement check."

Did this happen on Qualis or another nearby system? Let's let it happen at Qualis. I'll go to my faction picker to see if its related to something factional. I get the New Horizons faction, a sector level group. Qualis has a type C star port so the faction is present on an 8+, DM+2 for strength. They pass the check and I note down what other factions are present at the same time. I discover there is only the Liberal Collective present.

So who were the enemy? Let's say that New Horizons was pushing for more in-system mining to help build a small enforcer fleet they are building near Eezra, the subsector capitol. However they have overstepped the mark in their enthusiasm and a group looking for miners to get better returns on the work done have started an armed insurrection, capturing both planetside infrastructure and space fuel facilities.

The army have been sent in, half a battalion with two AFVs to liberate six of the main mining locations for energy and structural metals. A civilian "observer" from New Horizons was present and insisting on actions that hamper the operation and lead to the player's squad being besieged.

Now the player knows about New Horizons, some local trouble and a little about the bigger picture. They probably have some feelings about each of these things as well.

Another player gets a life event as a drifter, hanging about on Qualis at the time of the troubles. The event is "A patron offers you a chance at a job. If you accept, you gain DM+4 to your next Qualification roll, but you owe that patron a favour." I go to the faction pack and get Terran Resistance. They are not present on Qualis. The drifter gets a job, all expenses paid, taking some info on a memory dot to Eezra, delivering it to a member of the Terran Resistance. It contains info regarding the New Horizons' increase in metals extraction for fleet building and the threat of the miner alliance, and the player learns the Terran Resistance hope to convince New Horizons to work with them in the task of rolling back the Berekion incursion. The Terran Resistance are owed the favour which can be a great adventure seed.

And there you have it, a system that provides large scale, interesting context, connects the players to it, generates scenario seeds and takes very little time to prep. You could take the example sub sector here and run it as a campaign. If you do let me know about it and tell me how things turned out on Qualis over at StrangeFlight.blog. Hope you enjoy it! ✵

Critics' Corner

Ship Files: Polixenes-class Courier

reviewed by Omer G. Joel

Ship Files: Polixenes-class Courier. Michael Johnson.
Moon Toad Publishing
       http://www.facebook.com/moontoadpublishing
25pp, PDF
US$3.99/UK£3.20

This product is a high-quality ship book. While the background material is not as expansive as in some of the Clement Sector books, for example, this book provides a highly detailed and highly useable starship which you could easily insert into any Cepheus or Traveller campaign. The 100-ton Polixenes Class Courier is, essentially, the good ol' Scout/Courier, but in a more elegant "airframe" form. It has two variants. The main difference between them is fuel storage, with the longer-range one capable of

2-Jump-2. I wonder why it doesn't have Jump Drive B to provide it with Jump-4 capabilities if it already has the fuel for this (I guess that this is a TL11 design?). Each variant gets a deck-plan in the book itself, and the regular variant also gets a color deck-plan. You also get the deck-plans and ship record sheets in separate, ultra-high-res JPEG files for your own printing.

Everything gets wonderful renders, including several paint-job variants of the ship and an Air/Raft it may carry (in its regular variant, that is). This also includes full Cepheus Engine ship (and air/raft!) stats and ship record sheets.

All in all, this is an excellent book. I now wonder, will the author publish his Terran Union setting itself in a later book? It sounds interesting...

Highly recommended! ✪

SHIP FILES:

POLIXENES CLASS COURIER

MOON TOAD PUBLISHING MTP402 2D6 OGL SCIFI Cepheus Engine
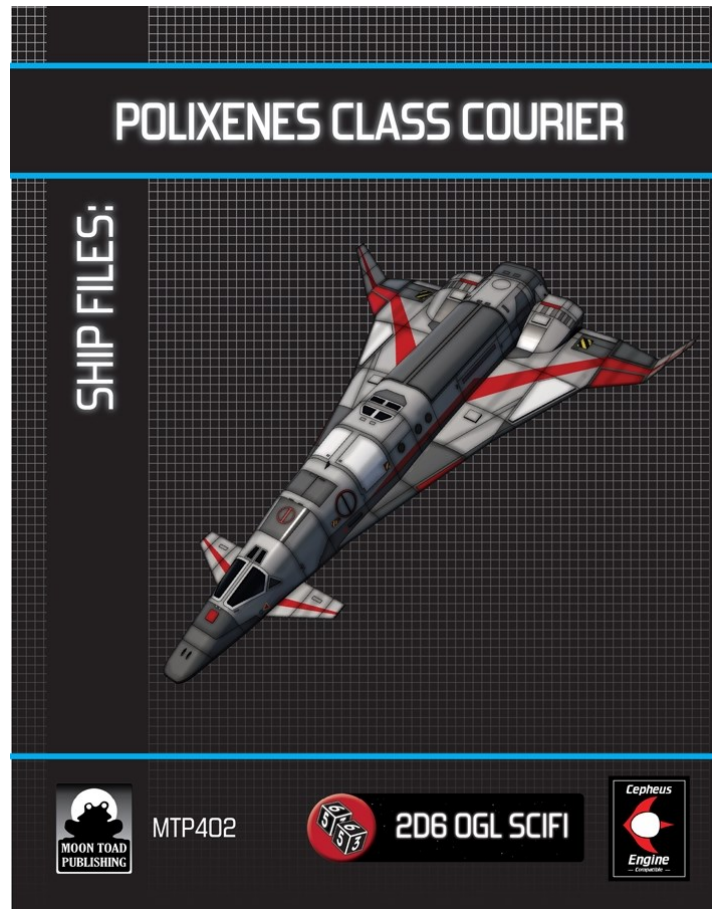
The God-Monster

by Steve Hatherley

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

Player Information

Gaea is an archaeologists paradise. In the Gaean jungles there are one hundred and fifty catalogued temples built by unknown architects for the Jala'lak. An estimated three hundred are yet to be found, the ferocity of the jungles defying all but the most dedicated explorer.

The temples are unusual in that they are all built to exactly the same specification—no two are different. All are constructed from stone which had to be transported from quarries which are well away from the jungles and the size of the blocks alone indicate that the Jala'lak could never have performed this feat. Then who did it?

Whoever it was, they were almost certainly responsible for the transportation of thousands of Jala'lak from Midway to Gaea. While the temples are of a similar design the Jala'lak are different. Physically similar, mentally they are far apart, with the gentility of Midway matched against a frightening savagery on Gaea. The Jala'lak are especially dangerous when a tribe has moved to occupy one of the temples.

This has been baffling archaeologists for as long as the jungles have been explored, and they are not much closer to solving it. One riddle that may point in the right direction is the legend of the God-Monster. In the few years since discovery, the God-Monster has caused more argument than anything else on Gaea. The reason is simple, it is the only markings found on the temples which can be attributed directly to the Jala'lak—all the others were carved during the process of construction.
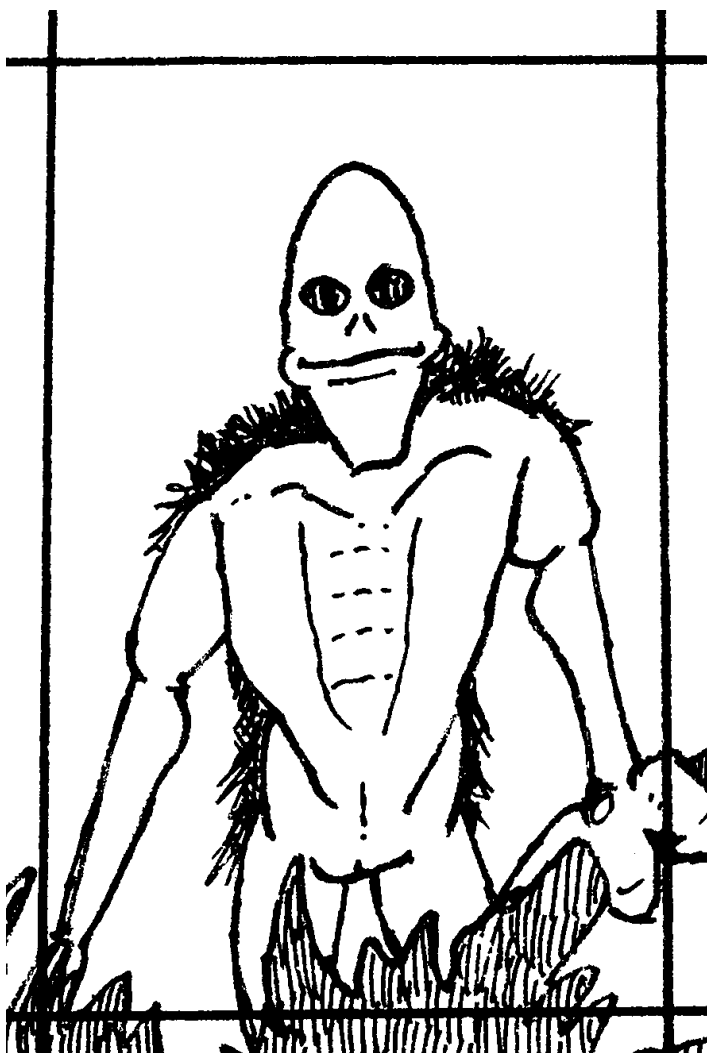
The players can read this in the local guide books, but they probably become more interested the moment that they are contacted by Sabitha Tomksh. She contacts one of the adventurers in particular—her nephew. Sabitha offers a job, the players are offered a place on a expedition to find her son, and the adventurer's cousin.

Referee's Information

Sabitha is rich, powerful, and dying. Nothing in modern medicine can stop the crippling disease which wracks her frail body. She does not have long left. She is also the leading authority on the Jala'lak temples, and has a burning ambition to solve the mystery for once and all. She refuses to die until she finds the God-Monster.

Through her extensive information network she discovers that her nephew (one of the players) is on the planet. As she is forming an expedition to rescue her son, perhaps the players would like to help?

The expedition is due to set out soon, waiting only for a few supplies and a full crew. A convoy of tracked ATVs will head out to the last known location of Joseph Tomksh. His ATV stopped broadcasting some time ago, not an unknown phenomena considering the battering it gets in the jungles. It is unfeasible to airdrop a team in because of the tree cover—the trees reach three or four hundred metres in height and are exceptionally strong. Tracked ATVs are the only vehicles which have proved hardy enough to take the terrain.

The trek through the jungle is beset by all manner of problems—Jala'lak, territorial animals, impassible cliffs, torrential rain, quicksand, rival archaeologists, undiscovered temples…

Eventually the expedition reaches the last known location of Tomksh's ATV. As they approach the general area the Jala'lak encounters grow more and more frequent. Eventually they reach the site of the temple, an ancient building reaching up to the trees like all the others. The ATV sits before it, rusting merrily.

Examining the ATV reveals that it has been rammed several times, possibly by a large territorial herbivore. The insides have been ransacked and destroyed. There is evidence that a Jala'lak tribe was here recently, they are known to be able to encourage jungle animals to help them. There is also an arrow, and the words READ THE INSCRIPTIONS scrawled on the side.

The memorials in question are the ones painted over the carvings provided by the unknown builder. The scrawlings indicate, after some thought and consideration by more experienced archaeologists, that they should proceed onwards. There the expedition would find three temples sitting close together, and between them, the God-Monster.

Also inside the temples are the gnawed remains of some of the archaeologists that accompanied Joseph Tomksh. There is no sign of Joseph, but the players do not have to be geniuses to figure out where he went. His expedition was ruined by Jala'lak—there are many tribes here and this is a sacred place to them. They attack frequently, hurling spears and arrows at the convoy as it passes beneath the tree in which they perch. It is only when they coax one of the larger life-forms that the attacks become dangerous.

Following the directions in the temple, the expedition does indeed come across three temples in a clearing, and between them, a pit. Approaching the pit will be difficult should there be any Jala'lak present, otherwise this will be easy. Before the pit is reached, the arrow studded corpse of Joseph Tomksh is found. He never made it.

The God-Monster is at the bottom of the pit, or at least, the remains of it. Now that its location is known, Sabitha will clear away the jungle to keep away the Jala'lak, and examine it in detail.

Eventually the remains reveal that at the bottom of the pit there once sat some sort of construction machine. Who built it, and why, is still as bigger mystery. At least the question of how the temples were built is answered.

However, all is not lost, for the God-Monster has one vital clue. Etched onto a diamond which was found deep in the wreckage, obviously intended to be preserved over a period of time, are maps. They lead to a place on a planet far away, and it is not long before Sabitha call upon the players again.

Library Data

Gaea: Gaea/Albadawi 0702 A986986-E. This is the subsector capital and is a thriving, prosperous planet. In its jungles is one of the more unusual archaeological riddles—the Jala'lak and their temples. As such then, Gaea has become a mecca for archaeologists across the Solomani Rim.

Gaea can be found on the Traveller Map at `http://travellermap.com/?x=4.763&y=-101.5&scale=64` ⟳

The Ubiquitous Type-S

by James Brian King

NOTE: starship specifications were created using the Traveller 1st Edition rules from Mongoose Publishing.

One of the vessels most commonly encountered by travellers within the vast reaches of the Third Imperium is the IISS 100-ton Type-S Scout/Courier. The IISS employs thousands of these vessels within the Third Imperium and beyond its borders; thousands more may be encountered in civilian hands, either purchased as surplus or on loan through the IISS's detached duty program. It has, through centuries of service, proven to be a most reliable work horse vessel; indeed, it is not uncommon to find hulls that are hundreds of years old with maintenance histories that include dozens of major overhauls.

Vunliir and Kugiraash, Naval Architects

As simple and efficient as the Type-S is, its standard configuration does not meet the needs of all users. Thus, many hulls of this type have been customized for mission-specific needs. Many naval engineering firms across the Imperium, usually small as shipyard firms go, specialize in meeting these needs, and the firm of Vunliir and Kugiraash is a fine example of such a firm. V-K is based on Lunion in the Lunion Subsector, Spinward Marches Sector. V-K acquires an average of two dozen surplus Type-S vessels per year. They sell completed conversions to individuals, commercial firms, and world or subsector governments.

V-K has operated from its small shipyard facility on Lunion for almost forty years; it is an interesting side note that Ling Standard Products expanded its

extensive shipyard facilities on Lunion shortly after V-K began operations, then attempted to arrange a deal with IISS administration in the Marches whereby LSP would acquire all surplus Type-S hulls that the Scout service chose to dispose of. Surprising all involved, IISS sector leadership chose to snub LSP's attempt to put V-K out of the conversion market. Their decision was believed influenced by the fact that Erin Vunliir and Lyesh Kugiraash, V-K's founders, had both served with the IISS and V-K hired heavily from retired scout personnel. V-K continues to maintain a close relationship with IISS administration within the Marches, and have, in fact, completed a number of conversions on Type-S vessels still in service with the IISS.

V-K offers four mission-specific conversions.

Courier Transport

Type S, V-K Courier/Transport Conversion		Tons	KCr
Hull	100 tons		2,200
Armor	Crystaliron, 4pts	5	400
Jump Drive	A, Jump 2	10	10,000
Maneuver Drive	A, Thrust 2	2	4,000
Power Plant	A	4	8,000
Bridge		10	500
Computer	Model 1/bis, Rating 5 (10 for Jump Control)		45
Electronics	Basic Military Sensors, +0 DM	2	1,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1, Double Turret (empty)	1	500
Fuel	1 Jump-2, six weeks operations	26	
Cargo		6	
Accommodations	8 Staterooms	32	4,000
Extras	Fuel Scoops, 2 Fuel Processors Ship's Locker	2	100
Software	Jump Control/2 Maneuver/0 Library/0		200
Total		**100**	**30,945**
Monthly Costs	Maintenance, Cr3,095 Life Support, Cr 16,000		

Easily half of V-K's conversions are configured as courier transports. This type allows minimal car-go but serves as a small passenger vessel with the addition of four more staterooms (and can be used for mail if the purchaser arms the ship). These vessels have been purchased for use as small yachts, private charters, corporate personnel transport, and even as subsidized passenger ships to service worlds with extremely limited interstellar traffic.

Stealth Scout

Type S, V-K Stealth Scout Conversion		Tons	KCr
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined, Stealth-coated (-4 Sensors)		12,200
Armor	Crystaliron, 4pts	5	400
Jump Drive	A, Jump 2	10	10,000
Maneuver Drive	B, Thrust 4	3	8,000
Power Plant	B	7	16,000
Bridge		10	500
Computer	Model 2/fib, Rating 10		240
Electronics	Advanced Military Sensors, +1 DM	3	2,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1, Double Turret (Beam Laser/Sandcaster))	1	1,750
Fuel	1 Jump-2, six weeks operations	32	
Cargo		4	
Ammo Storage		1	
Accommodations	4 Staterooms	16	2,000
Extras	10 Probe Drones	2	1,000
	Fuel Scoops, 2 Fuel Processors	2	100
	Air/Raft	4	100
	Ship's Locker		
Software	Jump Control/2		200
	Evade/1 (Rating 10)		1,000
	Fire Control/1 (Rating 5)		2,000
	Maneuver/0		
	Library/0		
Total		**100**	**57,490**
Monthly Costs	Maintenance, Cr5,749 Life Support, Cr 8,000		

The Stealth Scout conversion is an extensive refit that involves reforming bulkheads and installing larger engineering systems and is initiated only upon the receipt of a special order, which usually originates from a corporate entity or from a subsector fleet procurement office. The Stealth conversion generally includes mounting of turret weapons, one of only two V-K conversions that do.

Freight Courier

Type S, V-K Freight Courier Conversion		Tons	KCr
Hull	100 tons		2,200
Armor	Crystaliron, 4pts	5	400
Jump Drive	A, Jump 2	10	10,000
Maneuver Drive	A, Thrust 2	2	4,000
Power Plant	A	4	8,000
Bridge		10	500
Computer	Model 1/bis, Rating 5 (10 for Jump Control)		45
Electronics	Basic Military Sensors, +0 DM	2	1,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1, Double Turret (empty)	1	500
Fuel	1 Jump-2, four weeks operations	24	
Cargo		24	
Accommodations	4 Staterooms	16	2,000
Extras	Fuel Scoops, 2 Fuel Processors Ship's Locker	2	100
Software	Jump Control/2 Maneuver/0 Library/0		200
Total		**100**	**28,945**
Monthly Costs	Maintenance, Cr2,895 Life Support, Cr 8,000		

Roughly 40-percent of V-K's conversions are configured as freight couriers. This type gives up some fuel capacity and loses its dedicated vehicle bay in order to significantly increase cargo capacity. Like the Courier/Transport conversion, V-K does not mount weapons on the ship, but the purchaser may do so separately.

Scout Gunboat

Type S, V-K Scout Gunboat Conversion		Tons	KCr
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined, Reflec-coated (-3 Laser Damage)		12,200
Armor	Crystaliron, 4pts	5	400
Jump Drive	A, Jump 2	10	10,000
Maneuver Drive	B, Thrust 4	3	8,000
Power Plant	B	7	16,000
Bridge		10	500
Computer	Model 1/bis-fib, Rating 5 (10 for Jump Control)		60
Electronics	Basic Military Sensors, +0 DM	2	1,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1, Triple Turret (2 Beam Lasers/1 Sandcaster))	1	2,750
Fuel	1 Jump-2, four weeks operations	28	
Cargo		3	
Ammo Storage		1	
Accommodations	6 Staterooms	24	3,000
Extras	Fuel Scoops, 2 Fuel Processors Air/Raft Ship's Locker	2 / 4	100 / 100
Software	Jump Control/2 Evade/1 (Rating 10) Fire Control/2 (Rating 10) Maneuver/0 Library/0		200 / 1,000 / 4,000
Total		**100**	**57,310**
Monthly Costs	Maintenance, Cr5,731 Life Support, Cr 12,000		

Like the Stealth Scout, the Gunboat conversion is an extensive refit that is made to order, usually for a corporation or subsector fleet, and includes turret mounted weapons.

The Standard Type-S

Type S, Standard Build		Tons	KCr
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined		2,200
Armor	Crystaliron, 4pts	5	400
Jump Drive	A, Jump 2	10	10,000
Maneuver Drive	A, Thrust 2	2	4,000
Power Plant	A	4	8,000
Bridge		10	500
Computer	Model 1/bis, Rating 5 (10 for Jump Control)		45
Electronics	Basic Military Sensors, +0 DM	2	1,000
Weapons	Hardpoint #1, Double Turret (empty)	1	500
Fuel	1 Jump-2, fourteen weeks operations	34	
Cargo		8	
Accommodations	4 Staterooms	16	2,000
Extras	10 Probe Drones	2	1,000
	Fuel Scoops, 2 Fuel Processors	2	100
	Air/Raft	4	600
	Ship's Locker		
Software	Jump Control/2		200
	Maneuver/0		
	Library/0		
Total		**100**	**30,545**
Monthly Costs	Maintenance, Cr3,055		
	Life Support, Cr 8,000		

For reference and comparison, the data for the standard IISS Scout-Courier is reproduced here; one of several common interior configurations is presented as well.

Purchasing a Converted Type-S

Converted Type-S vessels, while overhauled and renovated, are not new. All ship systems are overhauled or replaced with refurbished drives or systems, though a vessel may still have aging drives with many thousands of hours of operation. Hull repairs are made where necessary (and they most always are), though it is virtually impossible to remove all indication of previous damage to a crystal-iron-sheathed hull; however, six layers of vacuum-epoxy paint can do wonders for the appearance of an aging hull. But, not being new, conversions are also available for significant savings over the purchase of a new hull.

The price listed for each Type-S conversion reflects a new vessel price; roll 2d6 on the chart below to determine the actual selling price of a surplus converted Type-S hull as a percentage of the new price. The resolved price is generally indicative of how extensive renovation of ship systems was, or perhaps indicates the exceptional condition the surplus vessel was in prior to conversion… or may reflect the fact that systems weren't quite worn enough to justify extensive work, which means that the worn drive systems may require extensive work in the not too distant future.

2D6	Cost as percentage of new-build price
2-3	60
4-5	65
6-8	70
9-12	80

Type S Scout
Standard Configuration

Fire Control →

Jump Drive

◀ Upper Deck

◀ Main Deck ▶

Access to Avionics and Sensors

Air Lock

Ship's Locker

↑
Extendable Boarding Ramp

Landing Gear

Commons

Landing Gear

Ship's Locker

Multi-Purpose Bay

Power Plant and Maneuver Drives

Lower Deck ▶

Cargo Bay

Legend

⋈	Iris Valve	⊗ (dashed)	Iris Valve in Ceiling
⊗	Iris Valve in Floor	⊕	Manual Hatch in Floor
⊗	Iris Valve Floor and Ceiling	⊕	Manual Hatch in Ceiling

1.5 Sq. Meters

Type S
Courier-Transport
Conversion

Fire Control →

◄ Upper Deck

Jump Drive

Main Deck ▶

Access to Avionics and Sensors

Air Lock

Ship's Locker

↑ Extendable Boarding Ramp

Commons

Landing Gear

Landing Gear

Power Plant and Maneuver Drives

Lower Deck ▶

Lower Lounge

Cargo Bay

Legend

⋈	Iris Valve	⊗	Iris Valve in Ceiling
⊗	Iris Valve in Floor	⊕	Manual Hatch in Floor
⊗	Iris Valve Floor and Ceiling	⊕	Manual Hatch in Ceiling

1.5 Sq. Meters

Type S
Freight-Courier
Conversion

Fire Control →

Upper Deck ◀

Jump Drive

Main Deck ▶

Legend

	Iris Valve		Iris Valve in Ceiling
	Iris Valve in Floor		Manual Hatch in Floor
	Iris Valve Floor and Ceiling		Manual Hatch in Ceiling

Access to Avionics and Sensors

Lower Deck ▶

Air Lock

Ship's Locker

Main Cargo Bay

Extendable Boarding Ramp

1.5 Sq. Meters

Landing Gear

Commons

Landing Gear

Ancillary Cargo Bay One

Power Plant and Maneuver Drives

Ancillary Cargo Bay Two

Type S
Scout Gunboat
Conversion

Legend

⤛ Iris Valve		⊗ Iris Valve in Ceiling	
⊗ Iris Valve in Floor		⊕ Manual Hatch in Floor	
⊗ Iris Valve Floor and Ceiling		⊕ Manual Hatch in Ceiling	

Access to Avionics and Sensors

Fire Control →

Munitions Storage ↙

◀ Upper Deck

Jump Drive

Lower Deck ▶

Air Lock

Ship's Locker

Cargo Bay

↑ Extendable Boarding Ramp

Main Deck ▶

1.5 Sq. Meters

Landing Gear

Commons

Landing Gear

Ship's Locker

Power Plant and Maneuver Drives
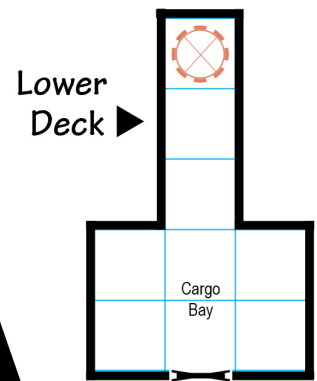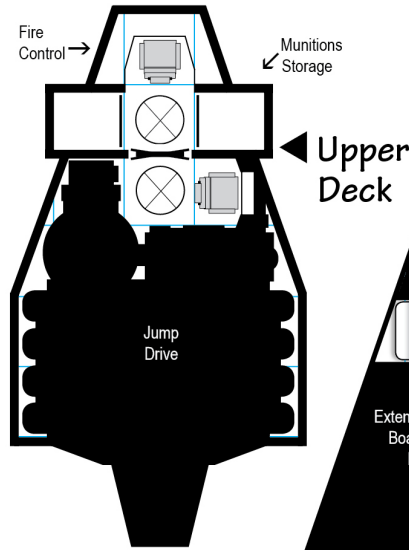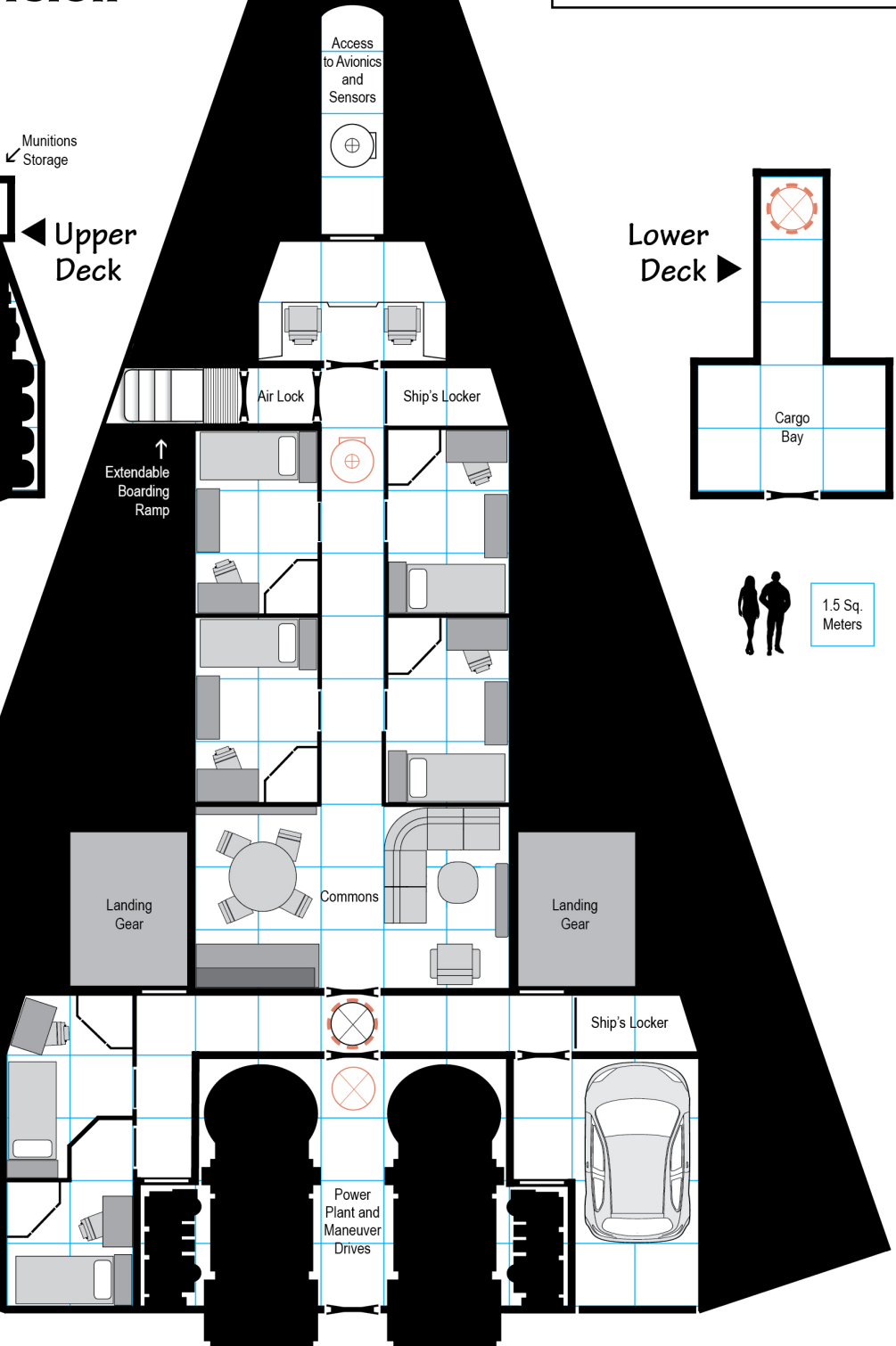
Type S
Stealth Scout Conversion

Legend

Iris Valve		Iris Valve in Ceiling	
Iris Valve in Floor		Manual Hatch in Floor	
Iris Valve Floor and Ceiling		Manual Hatch in Ceiling	

Access to Avionics and Sensors

Fire Control →

Munitions Storage

◀ Upper Deck

Jump Drive

Lower Deck ▶

Cargo Bay

Air Lock

Ship's Locker

↑ Extendable Boarding Ramp

1.5 Sq. Meters

Main Deck ▶

Landing Gear

Commons

Landing Gear

Ship's Locker

Probe Drone Bay

Power Plant and Maneuver Drives
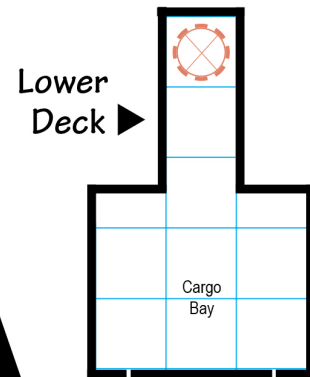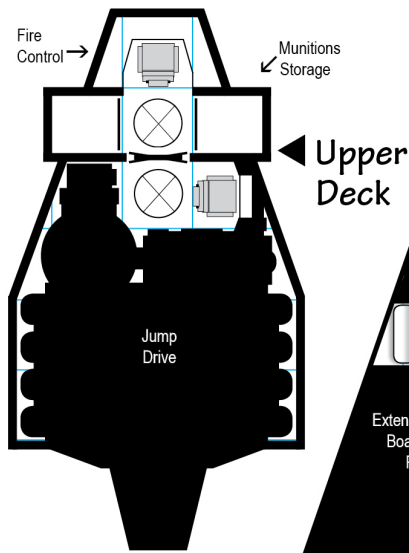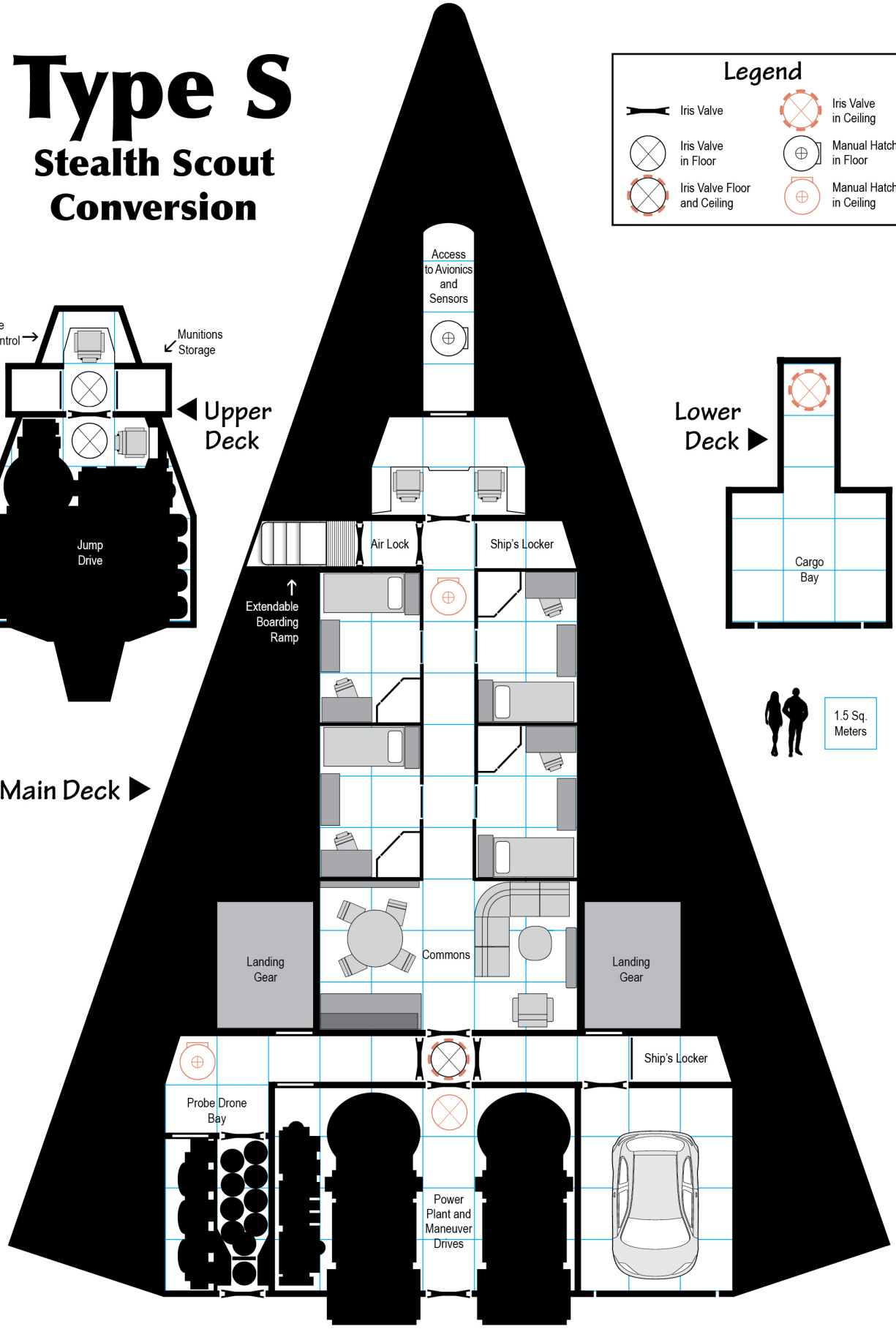
Certification for Player-Characters

by William F. Hostman

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

Introduction

(This section by Jeff Zeitlin)

Often, in campaigns, the referee just looks for a mix of skills that he/she believes will be necessary or useful in the campaign as planned. Often, this skill mix focusses on the 'meat' of the campaign, without worrying about associated logistics and the skills necessary to support the main campaign effort. William's system is an attempt to meet that need.

Defining the Tickets

(This section and the remainder of the article by the credited author)

In my *Traveller* campaign, under *MegaTraveller* rules, I require the following for holding a ticket:

Unrated

Computer-0, Vacc Suit-0, Speak Galanglic. (This rating is a prerequisite for *all* ship crew tickets which follow) There is an exception to the Galanglic requirement made for Droyne. Droyne are required to speak Galanglic to test for Master's licenses.

Rated Tickets

Pilot: Pilot-1, Commo-0, Sensor Ops-1

Navigator: Navigation-1, Computer-1, Sensor Ops-1, Commo-0

Steward, General: Medical-0, Steward 1, Admin-0

Steward, Purser: Admin-1, and General Steward ticket

Steward, Broker: Trader-0, Broker-1, Streetwise-0, Admin-1

Medic: Medical-1, Sensor Ops-0

Steward, Ship's Flight Physician: Medical-3, Admin-1, Sensor Ops-1, Steward-1

Engineer, General: Engineer-0, Mechanical-0, Electronics-0, Gravitics-0

Engineer, Systems: Mechanical-1, Electronics-1, Computer-1

Engineer, Drive: Engineer-1, Gravitics-1

Engineer, Ship's: Admin-1 and both Systems and Drive tickets.

Gunner: Turret Weapons-1, Screens-0

Ship's Master, 5th Class (*Noncommercial ships only, hull rate 400Td or smaller*): Complete the prep course, and/or own a ship. See below.

Advanced ("Master") Ratings

Ship's Master, 4th Class (*Ships of hull rate 400Td or smaller*): Admin-0, Legal-0, Commo-0, SensorOps-0, Interview-0, and any rated ticket, plus 4 years active merchant service or 2 years as a naval officer, Pirate Officer, or Scout.

Ship's Master, 3rd Class (*ships of hull rate 1000Td or smaller*): Admin-1, Legal-1, Pilot-1, Nav-1, SensorOps-1, Commo-0.

Ship's Master, 2nd Class (*any non-combatant*): SM3c Ticket, plus Leader-1, Interview-1

Ship's Master, 1st Class (*Combatants*): SM2c Ticket, plus Ship Tactics-1, Instruction-1, Interrogation-0.

Engineer, Master: Ship's Engineer Cert, plus Naval Architect-1, plus any two skills required by the lower engineering ratings at level 2.

Steward, Counsel: Medical-1, Admin-2, Legal-3, Steward-2, Broker-1 (this is the guy who bails you out in Imperial Admiralty Courts) plus 4 years merchant service or Naval Service.

In my campaign, I have the IISS and the IN both run ticket tests, but the ratings are actually issued through the scouts. You can get rated at any scout base, naval base, or class-A or Class-B Starport within J2 of an X-Boat route, and any class C port *on* an x-boat route. You may only test any given skill once per month. Test attempts are included in the actual card's database.

Resolving the Test for Any Rating

Routine, (once each skill) and Edu. Safe, Fateful, Uncertain. 1 Hour

(Expected time is thus 10 hours, you have 16 to complete the test; exceeding time allowed is a failure).

DM+1 if repeating test taken within past six months.

Roll this task for each skill required. On *Total Truth*, rated at skill level. On *Some truth*, Rating for skill = Skill +1d3-2. On *No Truth*, Skill rated at Level-1d3. Count Level 0 as a step, and no skill at all as one level below level 0. Taking the test costs Cr100 per skill tested, plus Cr100 to apply for the rating.

If your Assessed skill levels possess all the skills, but at insufficient levels for the ticket sought, you obtain a "Mate's" ticket in that rating. If you *lack **any*** skill (according to the assessment, not the character sheet), you will not pass. If your assessed rating lacks some but not all of the skills, it will be noted that you are striking for the rating. If your assessed skills equal or exceed the required levels for the ticket sought, you will be granted the rating proper.

Note: Skill tests are generally available in any language spoken in the local subsector or within J6, plus the following: Vilani, Old High Vilani, Sylean, Galanglic, Aslan, Oynprinth, Newt, Virush, Geonee, Vegan.

Getting the Unrated Spacer's Ticket

Simple, Computer, Vacc Suit, 15 minutes, Fateful, Safe.

(Expected time is 3 hours; limit is 4 hours. Increase difficulty by one step per each skill missing.)

This test is only issued in Galanglic or Oynprinth; if taken in Oynprinth, it will be limited to ships operated by a known Droyne Population Center (Read as a Droyne government). Any character with Merchant, Naval, Pirate, scout, or Marine background ends the character generation sequence possessing this ticket. This ticket is a lifetime rating, but must be renewed every 4 years. It may be renewed without retest if not lapsed 4 or more years.

Also, I grant every PC any non-master's tickets they qualify for before mustering out, if they have a naval, marine, scout, merchant, or pirate background. Anyone else with ship-specific skills may be rated; they have to ask the referee…

In my campaign, a master's license is required to be a ship's captain. The IISS will run a certification prep course for both the unrated spacer's ticket and the 4th class master's ticket, and a Pilot's Mate ticket. The combined course takes 9 weeks, grants 1AT to each of the following skills if they are not possessed: Pilot, Nav, VaccSuit, Legal, Admin, Steward, Interview, Commo, Sensor Ops. You get Computer 0 and VaccSuit-0 automatically. Roll standard AT testing rolls at completetion of course. Cost is KCr5 for the course, it is residential, and intense; no outside communications are allowed during the course. At the end of the course, you get an unrated ticket, a "5th Class Master's Ticket" which is limited to 400 tons Displacement, non-commercial service, and incidental employment as master only. The 5th class will also be issued to anybody with any other rated ticket who is in a first mate slot, or a department head. Basically, this allows yachters. ✪

In the Grey: Starship Activities In Jumpspace

by Timothy Collinson

Travellers can spend a lot of time in Jumpspace or "in the Grey" as many seasoned Travellers refer to it. Just one Jump necessitates roughly a week spent in transit between star systems and there may be anything up to 20 or 30 Jumps in a year for mer-chants; perhaps more for couriers on a mission to get somewhere, or military ships pushing the tolerances of their crews. In short, a lot of time is going to be spent incommunicado with the outside universe and often in very cramped conditions. Just look the deck plans of a typical scout or free trader to see how little 'living' space there is, particularly for passengers. Deck hands and engineers may have a little more freedom to move around areas that might otherwise be forbidden. Many will relish this.

Doing It My Way

Traveller gamers often seem to underestimate just how tedious Jump travel will be in the 57th century and if Referees ask, often resort to the three old standbys – I'm exercising, I'm learning a new skill or I'm cleaning my weapon. This seems to be missing a lot of opportunities for adventure seeds, role playing or just a little 'atmosphere' or variety. Indeed entire adventures might take place in Jumpspace although surprisingly few seem to be set there. This was one reason for my own small contribution in 'Getting There is Half the Fun', *Freelance Traveller*, April 2014, and as suggested elsewhere in this issue, Jumpspace would make the ideal setting for the ultimate locked room mystery.

The following tables which can be used with any edition of *Traveller* are offered to help suggest activities for crew and passengers on board ships in transit although it is not suggested that PCs should be limited by rolling on them directly. However, they may help give inspiration or allow overburdened Referees to select activities for NPCs or to decide what they are doing at any given moment should it be necessary. Despite the D66 rolls being equally likely, it is not suggested that each of the activities is equally likely with regard to time spent on them. Sleep will usually take up a third of a character's time and maintenance or repairs might be much more likely activities than, say, letter writing home. Of course, individual travellers' mileage may vary. (And, for example, those who compose and send comms messages are much more likely to receive them – something many travellers welcome in the further reaches of voyages a long way from home.)

Note that this is fairly humanocentric and Referees may wish to adjust or replace some entries for alien or minor race crew or passengers. Examples might range from Aslan duels or *weahakhil* composition to Zhodani psionic training or re-education under the supervision of the *Tavrchedl'*.

D66	Activity
	Table 1: Basic Activities
11	Physical training – exercise, weight training
12	Mission training – briefings, terrain study, onboard simulations
13	Mission preparation – equipment checking, repair & cleaning
14	Education – formal learning, mental training, skill development
15	Practice – weapons, music, hobbies, Art disciplines
16	Rehearsal – performance related rehearsal
21	Accommodation cleaning & tidying
22	General ship maintenance (see Table 2)
23	Repairs – fault finding & fixing (see Table 2)
24	Cargo hold checks
25	Cargo manifest checking / ship's accounts
26	Specialised cargo care
31	Stewarding duties – including laundry
32	Entertaining passengers
33	Passenger tours, lectures, briefings (e.g. on upcoming system and main world)
34	Political meetings
35	Religious services
36	Personal devotional time
41	Medical care
42	Physiotherapy or psychological therapy
43	Cybernetic or robotic maintenance
44	Computer programming or data analysis
45	Astrogation calculations, Brokerage preparation
46	Profession practise (from wood working to hydroponics)
51	Reading or Holo-viewing
52	Letter writing or Vid/Holo message recording
53	Creative or academic writing
54	Games – physical
55	Games – table
56	Games – electronic
61	Food preparation
62	Eating
63	Fifth Night (see below)
64	Social interaction
65	Intimacy
66	Sleeping – this should be roughly 1/3 of a day for a human or see Traveller5 rules

Fifth Night

An evening set aside on most ships in the Third Imperium, and beyond, whether large or small, for some form of entertainment. Most traditionally it is a 'jump-in' where motivated individuals or groups can demonstrate a talent and an MC or Master of Ceremonies will encourage participation, decide on a running order and introduce the acts. The Fifth Night tradition arose from it not being missed due to an early Jump exit but allowing some time for preparation. Sometimes, e.g., on passenger liners, it may be a more formal party or performance. Sometimes it is just an excuse for a ship with crew only to have a late night drinks or game session.

Ship Maintenance and Repair Activities

Some of the entries on Table 1 may need further definition as to location. Table 2 can be used where appropriate. It is designed with Adventure Class ships in mind but if any particular ship doesn't have the relevant entry re-roll or choose the nearest available location or system. General maintenance or repair might also include less regular jobs that require doing perhaps only annually or less frequently—from cleaning out drainage systems to recoating a water tank's internal surfaces. The Chief Engineer likely has a wall chart tracking such requirements.

Table 2: Repair and Maintenance Activities	
2D6	**Section or System**
2	Cargo Space
3	Carried craft or vehicles
4	Equipment – weapons, armour, gear
5	Accommodation – passenger
6	Bridge/Computers
7	Engineering
8	Accommodation – crew
9	Life Support systems (including plumbing/waste management)
10	Safety equipment
11	Electrical systems/fibre/comms
12	Hull (see note following)

The hull may present difficulties in Jumpspace if it is an external issue. Although some Traveller universes allow egress from the ship in Jumpspace within a very limited Jump bubble. But best keep those visors opaque!

Engineering Activities

Engineering may be further broken down if desired:

Table 3: Engineering Activities	
D6	**Engineering section**
1-2	Jump Drive
3	Manoeuvre Drive
4	Power Plant
5	Life Support
6	Other systems*

*This can include items from Table 2 such as safety equipment or electrical systems for example. *MegaTraveller's Starship Operator's Manual* by Joe D. Fugate *et al* can give further detail on this if required. ⬡

Instant Murder Mystery for the Grey

by Timothy Collinson

The ultimate locked room for a murder mystery story would be in Jumpspace. Whether it's a large liner where dozens of suspects may be possible, or a small ship with just a handful of people reminiscent of an Agatha Christie weekend country house setting, the players may be cast in the role of having to work out at least who the murderer was if not the

means and motivation as well. They may be formal detectives or investigators, or they may just be on the spot and want to know what happened, or they may all be suspects themselves and attempting to clear their own names by finding the real culprit. This last was the approach taken by the classic adventure *Adventure 11: Murder on Arcturus Station* by J. Andrew Keith although that wasn't set in Jumpspace. Referees attempting such a scenario may well want to deconstruct that book for tips and ideas.

The following does not attempt to present an entire mystery in that vein, but offers some tables to kickstart a busy Referee's thinking regarding the murder or murders to be investigated. Whilst these tables are not exhaustive, they do present the more reasonable or likely scenarios but that shouldn't prevent more imaginative ideas such as creatures from Jumpspace or dimensional portals or some other complicated technological possibility – just as long as the players have the opportunity to find clues along these lines and aren't presented with such as a disappointing climax with no warning.

Table 1: Victim's Career/Background			
D66	**Career/Background**	**D66**	**Career/Background**
11	Agent	41	Colonist
12	Army	42	Corporate Citizen
13	Citizen	43	Militant Religious
14	Drifter	44	Space Patrol
15	Entertainer	45	Worker
16	Marines	46	Athlete
21	Merchants	51	Chancer
22	Navy	52	Companion
23	Nobility	53	Enforcer
24	Rogue	54	Media Practitioner
25	Scholar	55	Politician
26	Scout	56	Port Authority
31	Dilettante	61	Assistant
32	Artisan	62	Broker
33	Functionary	63	Inheritor
34	Pillar of the Community	64	Journalist
35	Medical	65	Mariner
36	Teacher	66	Renaissancer

There are around 1000 career specialities across all Mongoose 1st Edition books and no attempt has been made to represent every one of them here. This list includes all the *Core Rulebook* careers, *Book 10: Cosmopolite* (by Alex Greene) careers and a selection from the three *Career Books* from Spica Publishing (various authors).

Select the gender of the victim in any way that seems reasonable, accounting for any variations from the standard Male/Female pattern you choose to acknowledge.

There are two ways to determine the victim's age: by terms served, or by rolling against a standard distribution chart. If choosing to use terms served, look up the total number of terms served in all careers on the first table below, and take the age associated with that number of terms.

Victim's Age (by service terms)					
Terms	**Age**	**Terms**	**Age**	**Terms**	**Age**
0	18	4	34	8	50
1	22	5	38	9	54
2	26	6	42	10	58
3	30	7	46	11	62

This assumes that the victim is either still in active service at the time of death, or has recently mustered out—in either case, you may arbitrarily add up to three years to the age read from the table.

If you choose to roll the age from a standard distribution chart, roll D66 on the table below. While it doesn't actually matter which die you choose to read first, the table is populated as though you will be reading down the left for the first die, then across for the second.

Victim's Age (from standard distribution)					
D66	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1	0-4	0-4	5-9	5-9	10-14	10-14
2	15-19	15-19	20-24	20-24	25-29	25-29
3	30-34	30-34	35-39	35-39	35-39	40-44
4	40-44	40-44	45-49	45-49	45-49	50-54
5	50-54	50-54	55-59	55-59	60-54	60-64
6	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-99	100+

Generally speaking, murders don't happen randomly. Either they are part of a discernable pattern, or the murderer and the victim have some sort of connection. While it's not impossible for a "pattern murder" to happen 'in the grey', most such happen in places where the murderer has a choice of victims

meeting his/her criteria. We will thus assume that a shipboard murder has a reason not related to a 'pattern', and that there is a real connection between the murderer and the victim. Choose or roll on the following table:

Murderer's Relationship to Victim			
1D	Relationship	1D	Relationship
1	Parent	4	Friend
2	Sibling	5	Partner
3	Offspring	6	Colleague

Decide if the relationship is known, and/or can easily be determined by routine questioning during the investigation. If you wish to determine this randomly, roll 1D; on 6, the relationship is secret and cannot be learned of by routine questioning.

Murder can be done in many ways. Sometimes it's done so that it's obvious that it's murder, sometimes it's done in a way that makes it look (at least surperficially) like an accident or 'natural causes'. In any case, the referee should decide the method, or it can be rolled from the table below.

Murder Method			
2D	Method	2D	Method
2	Psionic attack	8	Melee weapon (knife, cutlass etc)
3	Animal attack	9	Poison or Medically induced
4	Starvation	10	Radiation/Burning/ Electrocution
5	Asphyxiation (including gar-rotting)	11	Disease
6	Blunt trauma (including falls)	12	Exotic
7	Ranged weapon (projectile or energy)		

Of course, at typical Traveller tech levels, murders aboard ship should be easy to solve thanks to technology. This means that some reason cameras or other sensors can't help in the matter needs to be established early on. They may be non-existent (for cost or cultural reasons) or they may be non-existent in that part of the ship. Alternatively, they may not be working for some reason (perhaps through neglect or unfortunate chance) but more likely the murderer may have sabotaged them or spoofed them in some way. This in turn may narrow the range of suspects who have the ability to do this.

Knowing how the murder was done isn't always

Reason for Security System Outage			
1D	Reason	1D	Reason
1	Non-existent	4	Sabotaged
2	Failed	5	Spoofed
3	Sabotaged	6	Spoofed

enough. Knowing *why* it was done can be key to solving the mystery. Roll on the table below for motive; as multiple motives may exist, optionally roll up to three times on the table. Note that there may be overlap between some of the listed motives.

Motives			
D66	Motive	D66	Motive
11/12	accident	41/42	sex
13/14	survival	43/44	drugs
15/16	self-defence	45/46	politics
21/22	protecting loved ones	51/52	assassination
23/24	keeping a secret	53/54	tired of spouse or other relative
25/26	revenge	55/56	hate
31/32	jealousy	61/62	inter-gang/family/tribe conflict
33/34	greed (money)	63/64	racism/xenophobia
35/36	greed (item or Ancient artefact etc)	65/66	psychopath

Of course PCs as murderers may well bring their own motivations and a large part of the Referee's job will be to either develop backgrounds for suspect NPCs which can be explored by investigators to establish a motive, or working with players to incorporate their backgrounds into a connected whole.

Referees may also wish to consider whether further murders take place if the killer isn't immediately apprehended and whether there is a denouement, traditional in murder mystery stories, where all those involved are faced with the detective(s) showing his/her/their reasoning. If the murderer is an NPC Referees should also decide on their reaction to being found out. Given that fleeing isn't a possibility—unless the denouement happens after exiting

Active Measures

Jumpspace—the options boil down to demurely submitting to incarceration or producing a weapon to hold everyone hostage.

The 'instant' of the title of this article is a little misleading in that this kind of adventure is anything but simple and quick to put together convincingly. However, the extra trouble can be very worthwhile in terms of a memorable and interesting session for players. There is nothing quite like the moment the doctor aboard reaches for a pulse and announces to those assembled "he/she/it is dead!" It is also possible to purchase 'murder mystery' games for an evening's entertainment and these can be mined for ideas or converted to a *Traveller* setting if the above isn't sufficient to get the creative juices flowing. ✪

Critics' Corner

High Guard: Aslan

reviewed by Megan Robertson

High Guard: Aslan. Matthew Sprange.
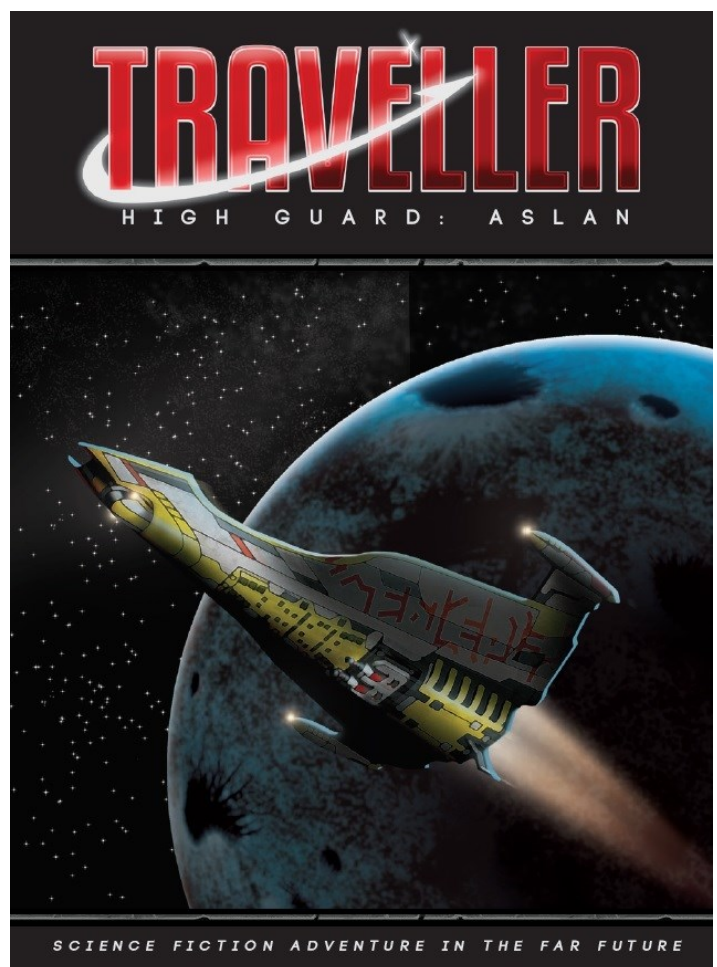Mongoose Publishing http://mongoosepublishing.com
40pp, PDF
US$8.99/UK£7.29

This resource supplies Aslan-specific information to supplement and enhance material in the core *High Guard* book. The Introduction comments that technologically Alsan ships are pretty much like those used by humans (unsurprising given similar size and physiological requirements), but there are of course differences based on culture. In keeping with Aslan traditions, pilots are usually male (and in nominal command) whilst astrogators and engineers are usually female. Control systems also display a gender divide: those used by males are simplistic and show only basic and important information, those for females are complex, often bewilderingly so. Ships are highly decorated, even military ones, and all carry a Shrine to Heroes where crew members can meditate or draw inner strength. A common way of passing the time in space is the telling of stories, a communal event attended by passengers and off-duty crew alike.

After this overview, the remainder of the book contains extensive details of a number of different Aslan vessels. Each comes with full statistics, some background notes, isometric plans and sketches of the exterior (colourful, of course, it's the Aslan way).

Giving some insights into Aslan life in the black, this book presents some fifteen novel vessels, each quite idiosyncratic and definitely Aslan in style to enhance your spaceways. Of particular use if you have Aslan in the party or are venturing into the Hierate, the Aslan get everywhere so one of these colourful vessels may show up wherever the party might happen to be. Hopefully they are in a friendly mood… ✪

Jump Destination: Nutema

by Jeff Zeitlin

This article originally appeared on the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website as a RICE Paper in 1995.

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Nutema (Rhylanor: Spinward Marches/3112)
A864543-A N Ag Ni          822Re M3V   (RISS 1201)
g=1.06 day=23:03:00; yr=51d 00:29:05.37 std/53d 02:50:05.37 lcl
atmo=1.00, natural weather
temp=+6 (7/lat +27 to -43) (season -23 to +14, 16 deg lat)
daily temp range 15
Agri, Crys, Comp; AgriProd, Met, NonMet; Parts, Dur, Cons; Docs
Prog/Adv; Comp/Neut; Har/Xphil
Legal 3-34432, Tech AA-AAAAC-AAAC-BB-D
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Nutema's claim to fame in the Spinward States is as an exporter of meats and meat products that are without equal on any known Spinward planet. Everyone knows of dragon steaks by reputation, and many are lucky enough to have had the opportunity to eat some in a luxury restaurant.

The traveller to Nutema will notice a significant difference between Nutema and the nearby worlds as soon as he debarks from his ship. Starports on planets that have direct commerce with Nutema are all strongly influenced by Vilani and Sylean attitudes. They tend to be orderly places, with a clear demarcation between administration, security, and service personnel. Not so on Nutema. Administrators are likely to be directly interacting with passengers and carrying bags or teamstering cargo, service personnel shout out orders to each other with abandon, and there are no security guards anywhere in sight. That's not to say that your arrival will be chaotic. The efficiency of the Nuteman system is surprising, and you'll be ready to depart the starport for the planet's surface within a standard day—including processing by CHI (Customs—Health—Immigration). The apparent lack of security at Nutema Skyside (the only starport at Nutema—there are no "dirtside" facilities for starships) is also no reason for concern—each and every Nuteman you see will be armed (an effect of Nuteman attitudes toward government, and of the needs of the ranching industry), and they all know how and when to use their weapons.

Nuteman Startown is right there in the Starport. The organized chaos of the port area extends here as well, with commercial, governmental, and residential units intermixed in whatever way the various owners felt was most immediately useful, and people doing whatever needs to be done whenever it needs doing, without regard for whether they are the "proper" person to be doing the job. Note that although the entire starport is considered to be the extraterritoriality zone, Nuteman notions of what is right and proper are the ones that are enforced, not those of the interstellar powers. The result is a much more anarchic atmosphere, where the cardinal rules are to look out for oneself, expect others to do the same, and be careful to avoid giving offense. For this reason, travellers are advised to contact the Imperial Tourism Bureau office before exiting their ship. This office has the *de facto* status of Consulate, but its ability to intervene on behalf of an offworld citizen is limited. The office maintains close contact with personnel based planetside, and the traveller who remembers to file an itinerary with the Bureau will find that almost any unexpected problems can be quickly cleared up. The exception to this is encounters with the legal system, where the most that can be done by the Bureau is to arrange for competent Nuteman legal assistance, and "affairs of honor", where the Bureau's ability to act is limited to ensuring appropriate medical attention and legal assistance, or, in extreme cases, arranging for the traveler's body to be shipped back home, along with timely and appropriate notifications to next-of-kin and other designated persons.

Conducting business on Nutema is a matter of "let the buyer beware", and of contracts where "every piddling detail" is spelled out in full. Regardless of the respective addresses of the parties to a contract on Nutema, disputes over contractual matters are always settled according to Nuteman protocols, which means plenty of negotiation and arbitration, optionally assisted by third parties (for a fee) before it gets to a Nuteman court. The court will

look only at the language of the contract and the facts of the case; "intentions" not spelled out in the contract count for as much as the color of the sky—which is to say, not at all. That's not to say that Nuteman businessmen are out to fleece the unwary; rather, they bend over backwards to ensure that any contract is fair to both parties—doing otherwise is, in general, a sure way to get called out in an affair of honor.

Beyond that caveat, doing business on Nutema is very much a social activity. Count on "working lunches" and "working dinners" in which little work and much "schmooze" gets done. Nuteman are willing to exchange anecdotes about various occasions in their lives at the drop of a hat; be prepared to do the same—Nuteman businessmen want to "know who they're doing business with", and won't be satisfied with the arm's-length relationship common on most worlds. Also, it is considered entirely proper on Nutema to address an acquaintance, either business or social, by his/her first name, or by an unadorned family name, omitting any titles or honorifics. Deadlines are less important than agreement on the essentials; expect an attempt to pressure a Nuteman businessman to be counterproductive.

Most business with Nuteman concerns can be conducted at the Starport, and there are definite advantages to doing so—for example, no taxes or import/export duties are levied on transactions at the Starport, and many businesses receive subsidies from profits from berthing fees, allowing prices on goods and (non-berthing-related) services to be relatively low. The down side is that many courtesies that are provided free of charge at other starports are available only for a fee at Nutema—shuttle service to the surface is one such. Nevertheless, you'll be encouraged by your Nuteman business contacts to "c'mon down and visit", and such a visit is not to be missed.

In spite of the hustle and bustle that you'll find at the starport, and on the planet's surface, the pace of life on Nutema is relaxed. Things get done "when they're done", and firm schedules are viewed almost as an imposition on personal freedom. You'll find that proper care is taken on all matters, however, and that includes quick completion of a task when appropriate.

Nutema uses two calendars and two clocks—one of each is synchronized with the standard Imperial time measurements; the second calendar is synchronized with the local revolutionary periods. The second clock (the "decimal" clock, in Nuteman terms) is a strictly Nuteman invention; the Nuteman day is divided into 100 "centads", each of which is divided into ten "mills". Each "mill" is thus 83 seconds long. The Starport operates according to the Imperial clock and calendar, as does the local government in terms of financial matters and interaction with the Imperium. Most other matters are handled on the basis of the local calendar, measured in local days. Note that a local day, when described using the standard clock, starts at 0000 (midnight) and ends at 2302—2303 is the same as midnight, and starts the next day. The decimal clock starts at 000 (midnight) and runs to 999—one mill later, it is 000 again, and the next day begins. The distinguishing factor between the clocks is that decimal time is always written with three digits, while standard time is always written with four; when speaking, standard time is always suffixed by "standard" or "hours", and times before 1000 are always pronounced with a leading "oh"—"oh-six-hundred standard" refers to six hours after midnight; "six hundred" refers to a time nearly eight standard hours later (13 standard hours and 50 standard minutes after midnight). It is highly recommended that the traveller become familiar with the decimal clock, although many clocks on the planet give times in both the decimal form and the standard form.

There is one shuttle port at each of Nutema's cities, with commercial air-raft (the "bus", in local parlance) or maglev service from the shuttle port (Class F, universally) to the nearby smaller towns and larger ranches, and commercial air-raft ("bus") and

shuttle service between the shuttle ports. Most shuttle ports are also bases for fleets of chauffeured air-rafts ("taxis") that provide reasonably priced door-to-door service between any two points within a certain distance from the center of the city, and generally to other nearby cities as well. Travellers should note that the shuttle ports are not considered extraterritorial.

Nuteman cities are compact conglomerations of buildings interspersed with parks and other recreational open areas. Zoning, *per se*, doesn't exist, any more than it does in the Starport, but unspoken informal agreements have resulted in most heavy industry (meat processing and manufacturing, mostly) being concentrated, usually a short distance away from the city proper, and most of the more raucous forms of commercial enterprise are concentrated in the center of the city, away from residential concentrations. While almost any needs within a city can be met within walking distance, each city is home to at least one, and most likely several, enterprising individuals or organizations that provide the visitor—or resident—with transportation (like "taxis") to more distant parts of the city.

When you visit a Nuteman restaurant, you'll be steered toward some of the more exotic "special of the day" dishes, almost none of which use dragon meat. They're all good, but if this is your first visit to Nutema, ask for "a slab, dressed", regardless of whether or not you see it on the menu—it's available, and they'll be happy to prepare it for you. Even if you've had dragon off-planet, you're in for a treat, and you'll realize that you've never really eaten dragon before. You'll get a slab of dragon, five centimeters thick and easily twenty centimeters across, either grilled or roasted (your choice), the latter in its own juices, served with a collection of native fruits and vegetables. The particular assortment of fruits and vegetables varies, depending on the time of year. Nuteman drink beer with their dragon, and

almost nothing else, but order an off-world brand if one is available (usually)—by almost any standards, a native Nuteman beer is as bad as the dragon is good, and even the Nuteman drink it only to prove that they can.

Dress on Nutema is a matter of practicality, especially given the climate. Most of the time, ranch staff will wear a "body sleeve" (really a space-suit liner) for routine work around the ranch, getting into combat armor when direct action against one or more dragon is needed. In the cities, more attention is paid to "style", but again, practicality rules—the long, flowing garments frequently seen among Vilani traditionalists are nowhere to be seen on Nutema; neither are the ruffs and frills of the various noble courts and former noble courts. In general, Nuteman expect their clothes to be quite comfortable and to stand up to "normal wear and tear" for whatever job they expect to be doing—generally no more than that, but certainly nothing less.

Organized sports are arguably the most popular form of entertainment on Nutema, with free rugby (rugby in a zero-g field) and baseball being the most popular spectator sports, and baseball being the most popular participatory sport. Most Nuteman can throw, hit, and catch competently, and a "pickup" baseball game is almost compulsory at any large social gathering. There are "company leagues" all over the planet, but no professional baseball organizations—the Nuteman feel that it would spoil the sport, and the only reason they tolerate professionals (many of whom are former offworlders with experience) for free rugby is because of the cost of the zero-g facilities. Other sports are not unknown on Nutema; generally favored are football ("soccer" in the local dialect) and an amorphous form of seemingly violent entertainment called "rodeo" which seems to have no fixed form. Most of Nutema's limited habitable land area (basically the tropical zone around the seas—most everything outside it is tundra or worse) is devoted to its primary industry, dragon ranching. No matter which shuttle

port you are headed for, your shuttle's route will be within easy sight of a dragon ranch. One look at a herd of dragon will explain why Nutema allows heavy military equipment to be owned and used by private citizens—it takes a tank and its weapons to make an impression on a 25-tonne beast, and when that beast, or a herd of them, is angry or confused, and stampeding, not even a tank can hope to do much. In order to manage the herds, each of the ranchers maintains enough manpower and equipment to outfit a crack mercenary unit or three, and keeps both in top condition.

The government provides three, and only three, services: It maintains the starport and the shuttle ports, it provides command and coordination for planetary defense (with the ranchers providing the heavy equipment, and the population at large providing the manpower and infantry equipment), and it provides criminal and commercial justice services, including the Nuteman Marshalls, whose sole purpose is to investigate allegations of criminal acts and bring the accused to justice—they are not a patrol force in the traditional sense of a police department. The basic philosophy of all Nuteman with respect to crime and justice is that the individual is responsible for maintaining his honor, and his own safety and that of his property, and may take any action he deems fit to protect them—but if in doing so, he becomes a danger to his neighbors, they have the same right to protect themselves against him. This extends to protecting the planet itself, which is why the government does not maintain a standing army (nor would it be allowed to by the Nuteman—they take the position that a government that maintains a standing army has no checks, other than its own ethics, against oppressing its own people, or aggression against others), and is indirectly why taxes are absolutely minimal on Nutema (a government that is kept poor doesn't have the money to spend on standing armies - only on what the people feel they need from the government).

The maintenance of honor effectively mandates honesty and respect between individuals; dishonesty or disrespect can be (and in the opinion of most Nuteman, should be) construed as an attack on the honor of the person lied to or treated with disrespect, and that person has the right to demand satisfaction, in the form of a duel, either to blood or death, depending on the perceived severity of the attack. A challenge to a duel is not given lightly, and refusal to accept is tantamount to openly acknowledging that one knowingly attacked the honor of the challenger. Duels are always performed in public, with witnesses; this is a courtesy to the Marshalls to ensure that any death is in fact identified as an affair of honor. If the offense was severe enough to warrant a death challenge in the opinion of the challenger, refusing to accept the challenge can, and probably will, cost the refuser his life. One can avoid the necessity of responding to challenges by wearing an orange-and-black armband (available at the starport, or at any weapon shop), but this also marks the wearer as a "second class citizen" who does not feel that his honor is worth defending. Such individuals are generally treated poorly by other Nuteman, but having renounced duelling, or indeed any "civilized" recourse to infringement of their rights, they have no real recourse against such treatment.

Except when their honor is offended, the people of Nutema are open and friendly, and the visitor who interacts with them openly and honestly will have no trouble acquiring a "friendly native guide" who will, almost certainly, invite the visitor to a party, or to dinner with his (the native's) family, or to see a branding or butchering out at a ranch, or to some other form of friendly and informal entertainment. You'll also have no trouble getting your guide's opinions on the best places to eat and the best places to stay—but be warned, if your guide is one of the ranchers, you'll be invited to stay with him "out at the ranch", and "no" in any form is not an acceptable answer—unless you take him to meet the friend or business contact that you've already arranged to stay with.

In order to avoid inadvertent offense, it is advisable for the prudent traveller to be aware of certain basic philosophical decisions that the Nuteman have made with respect to governance, and the effect on the society that those decisions have had. Attention has previously been drawn to the custom of duelling, and the perceptions of personal honor behind it. Defense of property and personal liberty is taken at least as seriously as defense of honor; a Nuteman will not hesitate to take strong, decisive action in the event that he believes that his property is being stolen or damaged; nor will he hesitate to act against anyone who attempts to restrict his "essential liberty" (which is generally taken to mean that a person can not be prevented from doing as he pleases, save that any such actions may not interfere with the similar right of another). It is for this reason, as well as for the defense of honor, that all Nuteman go armed, and there is a general belief that a person who is not armed is one who is not willing to defend his "essential liberty" or honor, and is not therefore worthy of being treated with the normal courtesies. The visitor to Nutema is advised to get some rudimentary training in armed self-defense (if he/she does not already have such knowledge), and to purchase a weapon, before descending to the planet's surface; both may be obtained in startown. In addition, each shuttle port, and most towns, have at least one, and usually several, weapon shops where the citizen or visitor may purchase weapons or have weapons checked, cleaned, and repaired.

An interesting effect of the minimalist philosophy with respect to government, plus the strong respect for individual liberty, has led to a governmental organization that would appear, at first glance, to be so totally unwieldly as to be ineffective at anything. The basic assumption seems to be that any government with sufficient power unchecked will become oppressive relative to those it governs. As a result, the government is divided against itself, with each branch having powers over the other two. In addition, as perhaps the ultimate check on the powers of government, there is a power vested not in any official of the government, but individually in the people of the planet: The people may respond to perceived excesses by most government officials in the same manner as they would respond to any offense against their "essential liberties" or their honor. Also, the only check on this power is that the person so acting may only be convicted of an illegal action if the effect of the action on the government official is "in nature excess of what response such official was deserving of". It is instructive to note that death is not normally considered by the courts to be an excessive response to proposals to impose general and broad taxes or licensing fees.   ✪

Kerala Class House Grav

designed by Ewan Quibell

The Kerala Class House Grav was originally designed as a one off holiday home for the CEO of Christchurch Corporation, Rebecka Kerala, and her family to enable them to take vacations anywhere around Home planet and allowing Rebecka to stay in touch with the corporation. After the Keralas had entertained in it a couple of times, Christchurch Corp realised there was a market for the House Grav catering as holiday homes to the rich relieving them of the necessity of maintaining multiple properties at multiple locations as the house grav could be flown to any location on the planet. Following the initial sales of the House Grav an additional market has materialised and that is of the well off families using it as a primary residence locating it anywhere on the planet. Families with children usually locate their House Grav within a short distance of the children's schools; however those owners without ties can locate their House Grav anywhere.

The Kerala can be customised to the owners requirements, however a "standard" configuration usually combines the two staterooms into a master bedroom with and en-suite bathroom, and fits out the smaller staterooms as 3 bedrooms, 2 offices, a bathroom, a kitchen, a living room, a dining room, and a games room with the seats and additional space worked around the craft to the owners specifications. Furniture, fittings and appliances can be installed at the clients request or can be provided by the Christchurch interior design team. The 8 displacement ton double garage can hold up to 13 tons of vehicles allowing the owners to live in one area of the planet and use high-speed high-altitude grav vehicles to commute to work hundreds if not thousands of kilometers away form their home's current location.

One of the radios is normally programmed to connect to the planetary communications network to allow for the normal audio, visual, and data communication requirements, while another is used for contact to Home Planet COAC (Close Orbit and Airspace Control) to ensure normal airspace requirements are met. The last radio is normally used for positional co-ordination with other grav vehicles in the area, predominantly to allow for easy landing and takeoff from the garage, however an unintended consequence has been that groupings of House Grav communicate with each other in order to allow for each Kerala to have uninterrupted views out of each of their respective windows. One such unusual grouping of Keralas is 1000km north of the Esyie continent over the middle of the ocean.

The Met Office has released a small data gathering program that can be installed easily into the main computer to enable samples form the environmental sensor to feed data back to their main offices in Landing via the normal data feed, and while this data is anonymized as much as possible it does pass the House Grav's GPS co-ordinate position along with the sensor data. This small innovation in data gathering combined with the generally unusual positioning of the Keralas around Home has provided greater insights into Home planet's weather patterns.

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CraftID:  Kerala Class House Grav, TL10, Cr 4,543,679
Hull:     45/113, Disp=50, Config=4USL, Armour=4E,
          Unloaded=58.8126 tons, Loaded=80.20296 tons
Power:    1/2, Fusion=5.2 Mw, Duration=1 year
Loco:     1/2, LowPwrHGrav=93 tons
          Top=180kph Cruise=135kph NOE=40kph MaxAcc=1.16G
Comm:     Radio=Planetary x3
Sensors:  ActEMS=Region, PasEMS=Continental, Mag=V Dist,
          Environ, Headlights x4
          ActObjScan=Diff ActObjPin=Diff PasEngScan=Form
Off:      Hardpoints=1
Def:      DefDM=+2
Control:  Computer=0 x2, Panel=Dynamic link x8,
          Special=HeadsUp disp Env=basic env basic ls
          extend ls,
Accom:    Crew=1 (Operator), Staterm x2 SmStaterm=10
          Seats Roomy=8, Vehicle Bay=8 tons
Other:    Cargo=16.60737kl Fuel=68.328kl ObjSize=Small,
          EmLevel=Faint,
Comment:  Construction Time=24wks sing 20wks mult
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TravellerCON/USA 2017 is planned for the weekend of October 6—8, at the Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center in Lancaster, PA (same place as last year). Come play with us! Fun was had last year; fun is planned for this year! More information will be found here and at http://www.travellercon-usa.com/ (the Con website as it becomes available.

Freelance Traveller is always looking for new ideas for sections of the magazine, as well as new material to include. If you have ideas you want to propose or discuss, please email us at the editorial address, ***editor@freelancetraveller.com***.

Our updated submission guidelines are on the inside back cover of each issue.

Purity

by Allen Shock

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

The referee should be familiar with the adventure The Long Way Home; *this adventure is written with some indications suggesting that the characters have experienced the events in that adventure.*

This adventure is written for GURPS Traveller. *In addition to the* GURPS Basic Set *or* GURPS Lite *and* GURPS Traveller, *having* GURPS Traveller Alien Races 2 *is recommended.*

Synopsis

While investigating a series of disappearing starships, the characters are flung into the Solomani Rim sector, in the Azun system. Damaged by the transport, their ship is damaged further by attack from a large Aslan salvage ship while en route to the planet to refuel. This causes the ship to make an emergency landing. The crew is met by some of the locals, who turn out to be rabid believers in a Solomani genetic purity doctrine preached by the planet's oppressive leadership; some of the characters may be earmarked for execution, while others will be sent away for "reeducation". While interned, they meet a former government scientist now turned dissident who reveals a startling fact to them; the people of this world are no longer genetically pure themselves! He asks the characters to help him escape, recover his stolen data, and find some way to broadcast this information to the people of his world, in hopes they will see the error of their foolish ways and overthrow the racists in the government. Of course, the characters will also need to get their ship back, rescue their friends before execution, and eventually make a return trip to the starship graveyard to scavenge the parts they need to repair their ship. They must then find the control center for this end of the tunnel, and prepare for another journey through, to get home.

Beginning

As the scenario opens, the characters have made planetfall on the Dashgad system (Core 0603 C140244-B). Their reasons for being there may vary; they may be Imperial Scouts on a contact mission; they may also be independents hired by the IISS. They may have come on their own seeking a new trade partner. Whatever their reasons, they find a dry world, but one which has hung onto a semblance of space travel; in-system ships bring large chunks of ice from the asteroid belt to supply the domed cities on the planet below. One of those domed cities, Ishgaar, serves as the world's starport.

After whatever formalities of contact have been made, the characters will be treated as guests and allowed full access to the planet's facilities. The planet has 900 inhabitants, but there are many more people present, as it is something of a waystation for free traders and other transients. At one time, of course, the population was much larger.

Eventually, the characters will have opportunity to overhear a report about an outbound ship that simply vanished from the planet's sensors. They may hear this in the starport lounge, where the assembled spacers are discussing it, or may hear it from government officials, whispered to each other. If they inquire further, they will be told that this is not an infrequent occurrence; it has happened several times over the last six years. No one knows what is causing these events, and of course it is having a bad effect on interstellar trade. The only clue that the planet has to what is going on is a strange energy surge that occurs before each disappearance. (an IQ roll at –5 or a Physics roll at –3 will notice the similarity of the energy readings to that of a starship that is misjumping. A further roll at –5 (no mods if the characters has Eidetic Memory) will connect this field with the jumpspace tunnel that transported the characters to the Gushemege sector in *The Long Way*

Home). If the characters offer to investigate (especially if they do so as a goodwill gesture from the Third Imperium) the planetary officials will be suitably impressed and will accept. If the characters don't think of it, the government will ask for their help (with appropriate recompense, of course). If they decline, they can still be thrown into the adventure when their ship gets caught anyway.

Part Two

The disappearances occur near the asteroid belt in the outer part of the system; this also happens to be right at the 100 diameter limit where ships that are leaving the system must go to jump out. When the characters' ship approaches this area, sensors at first will detect nothing. An Electronics Operation (Sensors) roll at –4 will pick up the very beginnings of an energy surge; a critical success can determine that the power is being drawn directly from the system's star. A further sensor scan at –4 will pinpoint some kind of underground facility on an asteroid not far from the ship's position—just before a huge tunnel suddenly appears directly in front of the ship. According to the sensors (which are having problems due to massive electromagnetic output) the giant metal ring, which is the size of a large gas giant, suddenly phased in from jumpspace!

The ship begins moving toward the ring—something like a giant tractor beam has grabbed the ship! The Pilot can try a roll at –6 to escape the grip of the beam, but such an attempt will do damage to the ship; make one roll on the Major Damage table on page 174 of the *GURPS Traveller* (2nd Edition) rulebook. (Don't allow any event to automatically cripple the ship, however). If the roll succeeds, the ship has managed to resist being pulled through, but must make another attempt the next round, with the same effects. Three successes in a row, or a critical success, allows the ship to escape. Failure means the ship is sucked through and emerges on the other side with whatever damage it has incurred.

If the ship does manage to escape, have each character roll a Vision check; those who succeed got a momentary glimpse through the portal and saw a large number of derelict starships of various sizes floating beyond the tunnel. There is no indication of which ships might be dead and which ones might be functional.

If the characters choose to investigate the underground installation on the asteroid, they will eventually find an entrance on the rocky surface (Vision roll at –5 from space, no modifier if searching from the surface.) If they enter it, reference the gateway control center from *The Long Way Home*; this one is nearly identical except that it is in much better shape and the control crystals are all present, still in their receptacles. There is also a system schematic much like the one in the original; it is different systems, but it shouldn't take much work to correlate it with a map of the sector and determine that these are all systems in the Solomani Rim sector (although none of them are Terra). Anyone who was involved in that adventure can figure out how to operate this console, and can even determine which system the portal opens to: Solomani Rim 0809, in the Ultima Subsector. The system's name during the Rule of Man was Azun.

At this point, the characters have a choice to make: will they go through the gateway to try to rescue the occupants of the recently disappeared ships? They have no way of knowing if any of them are even still alive, of course, but if they are, they likely need help. An appropriate roll on Physics or Engineer (Jump Drive) will also reveal some anomalies in the gateway's field that could indicate that passage through might be a bumpy and perhaps damaging ride. If they choose to depart, they then have to figure a way out of the system without activating the tunnel.

(The tunnel is on automatic, but it only affects ships leaving the system, not entering it. The damage to the tunnel occurred when a ship actually managed to activate its jump drive in an emergency

attempt to escape; it caused the ship to be catastrophically destroyed and damaged the tunnel's jump grid. The tunnel is capable of intercepting any ship leaving the system at the 100 diameter limit; there is no safe vector to avoid it. It also can affect any ship which flies *by* the gateway area out to another 100 diameters. It can be avoided by jumping before the limit, but this carries a risk of a random misjump that most sane people would not take.)

If they choose to go through the tunnel, or were sucked through, proceed with Part Three.

Part Three

If the characters come through the tunnel voluntarily, or are dragged through, the effect is still the same; damage to their ship. A massive energy surge burns through the jump grid, destroying the lanthanum jump coils. The surge also causes the sensors to white out and will damage 1d3 other systems (roll on the Major Damage table again). The sensors clear just in time to see the ship about to impact with a large ship hulk in front of them! A –4 Piloting check is needed to avoid a collision. If the roll succeeds exactly, one turret weapon on the ship will be damaged; if it merely fails, the ship will hit a glancing blow on the large vessel, doing damage as per ramming but only half. Only on a critical failure will the ship actually ram the 1,000 ton hull in front of it.

This of course is not the end of the problems. No sooner has this been avoided then everyone must make a Vision check at –3; one of the ships out there is moving! If everyone fails the roll, the ship will get a free attack with its lasers. If not, the characters can try to defend themselves. The ship is a 600-ton vessel armed with four laser turrets and two sandcaster turrets. After the first attack, the ship will hail the PCs; the leonine face of an Aslan appears. "You are violating Aslan territory; we have claimed these ships for salvage. Prepare to surrender your vessel or be destroyed!" (use the stats for the *Khtukhao-Class Clan Transport* on page 53 of *Alien Races 2*,

with the addition of the above weaponry.) The Aslan are here to salvage high-tech equipment from the various ships.

The first damage the characters take should affect their fuel tanks, making it impossible for them to jump outsystem. After that, run the battle normally. The Aslan ship, while bigger and heavier armed, is not a warship and will attempt to disengage if it appears they will lose. They will not leave the system, however; they will merely try to hide among the derelict ships, and will return to menace the characters again upon their departure if they are not destroyed here.

The Aslan ship will pursue the characters to the planet, but will not follow them into the atmosphere. If the characters don't succeed in shaking or destroying them, they will get a hit on the ship as it enters the atmosphere; this hit should affect either the power plant or the maneuver drive. The result is a crash. A Piloting skill roll at –6 will allow a hard landing in an area not far from a major city, but deserted enough that the characters won't take out anything important. Assess any damage as needed but do *not* kill the characters; assume they managed to get into crash seats and the like before the crash.

The characters should have some time to assess the damage to their ship and perform first aid on injured parties; when they have been given this time, the next part occurs.

Part Four

Have the characters make a Vision or Hearing check; success means they hear the sound of approaching aircraft. Outside their ship, helicopters are approaching, and it is also likely that ground vehicles will be coming as well. The characters have had the unfortunate circumstance to crash close to a military base. Soldiers will deploy, and surround the downed ship. A voice will blare over a louspeaker in accented Galanglic

"Leave your ship and surrender immediately! You are under quarantine by the Azun Military. Any attempt to resist will be dealt with severely!"

The soldiers aren't kidding; there are approximately 20 of them, all well-armed, and they will open fire on any character who tries to resist them. If the characters require assistance, they will be treated by medics. Once the characters are secured, they will be taken in the helicopters to the base.

Once they arrive at the base, the characters will be taken under guard to a holding area. There they will meet General DeGraff, who will begin interrogating them. He is not a man with a sense of humor; any attempt at flippancy will be met by force. His guards will shoot anyone who attacks him. He will ask the characters where they come from, what brought them here, and things like that. He will seem especially interested in any characters with non-Solomani names. He will then explain that he is a member of the Azunian Purity League, the ruling party on this planet. If asked what that means, he will explain that his party exists to defend his world and the Solomani people from invasion and contamination by undesirable alien elements, especially those elements calling themselves "human" that really aren't. He will then state that the characters will be taken for processing, which will also include genetic testing and scanning for psionic abilities.

If any of them are found to be "polluted", they will be scheduled for termination; if not, they will be assigned to a detention center.

The characters will be escorted under guard to an infirmary where a group of doctors and scientists will begin the tests. They will be under heavy guard at all times, but of course can attempt escape if they choose; the GM should not unduly hinder these attempts, but not should not allow them an unrealistic chance of success either. After the tests, the characters will be removed to a holding center until the tests are analyzed, which should take 24 hours. The holding center consists of a building with a long hallway and cells on all sides. The characters will be divided evenly among two cells. In one of the cells, they will find another prisoner, an older male. He will identify himself as Dr. Jolarth. He is a government scientist who was imprisoned here for some "anti-government" research he was conducting. That research, he will confide in the characters, was showing that none of the inhabitants of the planet Azun are pure Solomani any longer; environmental factors have caused significant genetic drift, causing all of them to deviate from the expected norm. The government, of course, doesn't want anyone to know this. Hopefully, the characters will pick up on this, as a potential way to bring down the repressive government. Dr. Jolarth doesn't know if his research notes have been purged or not; they did get the ones he kept at home, but the ones in his secret files at the lab may still exist. He will ask the characters to help him get them back and broadcast them to the populace; he is part of an underground movement, and this is a chance to free his people from the tyranny that has caused so many of them to be put to death.

A plan of escape is largely up to the players. The place is well-guarded and has security. The characters may have some hidden equipment, and some of them may have psionic abilities that might help. If they do manage to escape, they will most likely want to go to the lab, or perhaps return to their ship to pick up equipment. The ship is under guard, although there are only a few.

Part Five

The characters will need to get into Dr. Jolarth's lab, which is located in the nearby city, also the capital of the world government. There are sophisticated high-tech security systems (sophisticated for TL9, at least), and of course armed guards. Once inside, the characters will then have to deal with the computer system. If Dr. Jolarth is still alive, this won't be a problem, otherwise they may have to hack in. The basic modifier is –3, plus any mods for tech level differences. They will then have to get out again, and somehow make it the 75 km. to their ship.

Subsequent Events

…are dependent on the characters' actions. If they do manage to get their ship repaired enough to fly and refueled, they can make orbit; they may have to deal with some interceptors but none of them have space capability. They will need to find some way to reactivate the tunnel; the control center on this end is located on an airless rockball planet at the edge of the system. They will need to check the derelict starships for replacement coils; some of the ships are very old, some are quite recent. There is a good chance the Aslan ship will return if it has not been destroyed; this could result in a space battle or a tense zero-gee combat hand to hand with Aslan soldiers on a derelict ship.   ✪

Doing It My Way   Character Generation Rules

Special Operations (Commandos)

by Ken Murphy

This articles was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 1998.

It all started when I first read Ken Pick's notes on Wayne Shaw's old *Traveller* campaign at *Freelance Traveller*.

There it was in black and white; all services apparently had "elite" branches, requiring a second Enlistment roll, and which were provided bonus skill rolls. I thought the idea was pretty interesting. Then, after a bit more reading, the hook was very firmly wedged into the roof of my mouth…

The Imperial Death's Head Cybercommandos (apparently cyborg-enhanced covert operatives) was just too cool a name not to immediately latch onto.

Well, since they were elite Cybercommandos, I got to wondering just how that condition occurred exactly—if they were originally the "normal", fully-meat type commandos you see in other services, who, through a survival roll failure, is maimed, and given a bionic prosthesis before normally being mustered-out-into-the-game.

Now if becoming a newly-cyborged trauma victim suddenly makes you just what these Cybercommandos are looking for, then the mustering-out-into-the-game mechanism would obviously be overlooked to give the brand-new cyborg a pretty much automatic enlistment into the ranks of the Meat-n-Metal Cybercommandos. Or maybe they're extensively cyborged as part of the Basic Training portion of their 1st term with the Cybercommandos; kind of like being absorbed by *Star Trek*'s Borg Collective before your first day on the job.

I find the option of overlooking-the-muster-out-mechanism for joining the cyborgs the more likely. But, if this same idea of cyber-repair and automatic re-enlistment is used once the character is actually *in* the ranks, the cyborg could effectively be repaired and re-enlisted repeatedly, making for an extremely scary individual.

So anyhow, being still unsure, I decided to drop the idea of the cyborg from the Commando for the moment, and concentrate on the Commando part.

I looked at the enhanced character-gen section in the *MegaTraveller Player's Manual* (which, IIRC, is the same as the stuff in Classic *Traveller Book 4: Mercenary*) to see what the commando gets, canon-wise…

Hmmm, Commando School gives a 5+ on 1D chance of each of the following: Brawling, Gun Combat, Demolition, Intrusion, Stealth, Survival, Recon, Vacc Suit, Blade Combat and Instruction; while the Commando MOS skill table offers Gun Combat, Gun Combat, Heavy Weapons, Demolition, Environ, Recon, and Battledress.

After a little reading on the web, I discovered that aside from different delivery systems/vehicles and a few specialties, most SpecOps groups seemed to me to be pretty similar, skill-wise, so I decided to try to knock out a version of Commando that could be used to cover all the services' SpecOps people.

Doing It My Way

Career Progression: Commando	
Enlistment	10+
DM+1 if	END A(10)+
DM+2 if	attempting to enlist after succeeding at survival roll in other military service.
Survival	7+
DM+2 if	INT 9+
Position	8+
DM+1 if	EDU B(11)+
DM+2 if	Rank 2+ from other military service at time of Special Ops enlistment
Promotion	8+
Special Assignment*	4+
Re-enlistment	3+

* Note that, by definition, each assignment undertaken by these folks is a Special mission; hence the low Special roll. I think the Special roll might even do fine being lowered to 3+, in fact.

Career Skills			
Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education	Advanced Education (EDU 8+ only)
1 Physical+*	Hand Cbt	Hvy Weap	Space
2 +1 END	Gun Cbt	Demolitions	Vice
3 Physical	Tactics	Technical	Spec Cbt+**
4 Vice	Spec Cbt	Environmental	Space Cbt
5 Hand Cbt	Spec Cbt	Inborn	Inborn
6 Gun Cbt	Tactics	Exploration	Interpersonal

* Physical+ represents any physical characteristic (STR, DEX, END), but additionally allows choosing Swim or Climb skills. While anyone can perform either task based solely on their stats, these skills definitely help under especially stressful circumstances.

** Special Combat+ skill allows the usual choices of Battle Dress, Combat Engineering, Combat Rifleman, Demolition, FA Gunnery, Forward Observer, Grav Belt, Heavy Weapons, High-energy Weapons, High-G Environ, Stealth, and Zero-G Environ, but it additionally includes the choices of Archaic Weapons, Hand Cbt, Holster (essentially Fastdraw), Instruction, Interrogation, Heavy Equipment (the same skill as for the Construction Worker and Emergency Tech), and Jump (essentially Parachute, Gravbelt and Dropcapsule skills) to the mix.

Rank and Rank Skills		
Rank	Title*	Skills
0	Operator	Vacc Suit-0, Cbt Rifle-1, Gun Cbt-1, Jump-1, Tactics-1
1	Ops Officer	Handgun-1, SMG-1
2	Operator A	Leader-1
3	Operator B	
4	Operator C	
5	Operator D	
6	Operator E	Admin-1, Leader-1

* I liked how the Delta Force called themselves "Operators", so I wanted to include it in the Rank table. With this being designed with all the services in mind, I didn't feel too comfortable with Rank 2 being Capt, then 3 Maj, etc; hence greek letters. Besides, I think it just sounds cooler, anyway. [Note: Original used Greek letters Alpha (α) through Epsilon (ε). Changed to Galanglic A through E simply because Galanglic is far more widely used in the Traveller milieu. -Ed.]

Mustering Out Benefits		
	Material Benefits	Cash
1	Low Passage	5000
2	Mental	10000
3	Weapon	10000
4	Weapon	20000
5	Mid Passage	30000
6	Travellers'	50000
7	+2 SOC or SOC B(11)*	75000

* If the character has SOC A(10)+, receive +2 SOC; if the character has SOC 9-, raise SOC to B (11). ✹

Absent Friends

While we were working on preparing this issue of *Freelance Traveller* for you, we received some sad news: Loren K. Wiseman, one of the founders of Our Game, passed away on February 15, 2017. Loren had been involved in *Traveller* from its very beginnings, as one of the creators of Classic *Traveller* for GDW. After a stint of unemployment following GDW's closure, he joined Steve Jackson Games, where he was the line editor for *GURPS Traveller*. He was an occasional visitor to several on-line *Traveller* forums, including the *Traveller* Mailing List, until his health started failing him. He was undoubtedly one of *Traveller*'s larger-than-life figures, and he will be missed✹

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

January/February 2017

- **Universe of Action, LLC** has released *Norse Mead Hall* (floor plans).
- **Anthony Teale** has released Prison (floor plans), and *Troll!*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Ships of Clement Sector 17: Atlas-class Freighter*, *21 Starport Places* (2nd Edition), and *Wondrous Menagerie: Uplifts in Clement Sector*.
- **Surreal Estate Games** has released *World Guide: Zaonia*.
- **Michael Brown** has released *Harvest of Wrath*, *A Madness Most Discreet*, *Biome*, *Sword of Zeme*, *Aqua Pura*, *The Hidden Storm*, *Mtihani*, *Executive Function*, *The Mountains of Bekari*, *Kapela*, *The Wildwood*, *Silver Serpent*, *The Alchemist's Blessing*, *The Panacea Imperative*, *The Sands of Zerzuza*, *The Coriolis Peril*, *That Ye Not Be Judged*, and *The Devil's Waltz*.
- **Zozer Games** has released *Far Horizon*.
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released *Foreven Worlds: Rusted Fang Station*, and *Foreven Worlds: Prelude to War: State of Chaos* (both under the TAS imprint), .
- **Modiphius** has released *Mindjammer* (for *Traveller*), and *Dominion Quickstart for Mindjammer Traveller*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Referee's Briefing 5: Incidents and Encounters*, *Referee's Briefing 6: Garden Worlds*, and *Vehicle Handbook*.
- **Thunderegg Productions** has released *Easy Settlements*, and *Easy Barbarians*.
- **Fat Goblin Games** has released *The Gamemaster's Star Log*.
- **Wall Phoenix Productions** has released *Free Trader Variants: The Frontier* (under the TAS imprint).
- **Gregg Wilson** has released *Seed of Doubt*, and *Vulcan Class Logistical Production Unit* (both under the TAS imprint), .
- **Felbrigg Herriot** has released *Solar Fade: A One-Shot Scenario*.
- **GM's Art** has released *Female Sci-Fi Smuggler*, and *Male Sci-Fi Smuggler*.
- **Publisher's Choice** has released *Space-Tech*.

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*, *MegaTraveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller* (T4), *Traveller⁵*, and both editions of Mongoose Traveller as "Classic Compatible" or "2D6". This includes Sceaptune 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*, *Traveller²⁰/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.

Rights

By submitting material, you grant *Freelance Traveller* a non-exclusive perpetual right to use the material in our PDF magazine and website (and mirror sites authorized by us), with minor editing for space and other suitability issues. While we generally will only use an article once, if we feel it appropriate, we'll reprint it.

The right applies to *Freelance Traveller* magazine itself, not to specific individuals associated with it. If the current management of *Freelance Traveller* finds it necessary to withdraw from association with the magazine or the *Traveller* community (not gonna happen as far as we can see), and others take over the operation of the magazine and website, the rights granted above stay with the magazine and permit the then-current operators to exercise those rights.

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.