

The

Issue #5 - July 1986

IMPERICIAN

STAPLE



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ISSUE #5

JULY 1986

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— J. Andrew Keith
Noted Traveller Author

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INTRODUCTION

By: Herb Petro

Just one or two new things this month, and all of the old things too:

1) Michael R. Mikesch has pointed out another point in favor of Craig Sheeley's article "Ship Grav Landing" in TIS 4 p.9. A reprint of a portion of his letter follows:

In the K'kree Alien Module, at the end of the very first paragraph, "...Their first interplanetary craft were fully developed grav-drive ships basically identical to those used today." Although the Centaurs could have entered interplanetary space at tech-7, I cannot see them waiting much past tech-8 or tech-9 before venturing outward. If K'kree ships had grav-drives at early tech-levels, then it strikes me that TRAVELLER starships would have grav-drives as a standard.

2) I received a response to my invitation for all of you to sound off about what sort of articles you don't like, and what you would like to see.

Reprinted below is that response:

The Technology Explosion in TRAVELLER by Carl A. Buehler

I would like to ask all of you out there who spend hours designing new equipment for TRAVELLER a few questions. First, how many articles have you read on the latest gizmo to disincorporeate NPCs, the LSP jump 7 drive, or the new model spy device from Nixon, AG? Probably too many, so why do you guys keep it up? Second, how many ultimate weapons, ships, etc, does a campaign need anyway? The answer of course is no more than one of each. Besides, is it really fun to play in a campaign where anyone with a wonder widget can level planets, etc? Third, what could you accomplish if you applied your time to other projects such as the development of NPCs and plotlines? I realize that advanced technology is one of the essential building blocks of any TRAVELLER campaign but how often are tech level 13 toothpicks really important to a plotline?

3) Complete index to the Journal of the TRAVELLERS Aid Society. Cost is \$5.00. Write: W.Elmer Hinton; 20 Almont St; Nashua, NH 03060

4) Concerning TRAVELLER A-Z (TA-Z), there is good news and there is bad news. The good news is that contrary to the previously advertised 16 pages of TA-Z there will really be 20 pages. The bad news is that TA-Z will not come out until later in July than I had expected. The price remains at \$2.25 for the plasticized cover version and \$1.75 for the plain paper cover version.

5) About back issues, from now on the price for back issues will be \$1.00 each.

REVIEW:

THE TRAVELLERS' DIGEST #5

By: Herb Petro

The TRAVELLERS' Digest #5 (DGP, 8979 Mandan Ct., Boise, ID 83709; 60 5.5" by 8.5" pages with B+W and red cardstock cover; \$3.95; \$14/4 quarterly issues; 1986)

A slightly boring feature adventure, a map of Vland, information on Vland, x-boat routes of the Vland Sector, information on the First Imperium, map and stats for the Vland Subsector, and Effective Role Playing. Overall, a good issue.

ADVERTISEMENTS

THE IMPERIUM STAPLE (TIS) will trade or sell ads with groups having items or services for sale which would be of interest to the TRAVELLER fan. The details can be worked out with you if you send a note to The Imperium Staple address listed on page 1.

TCGS ERRATA

By: Herb Petro

Agility - Agility as written on page 3 of TIS4 remains unchanged, here are just a few additions. Aging effect rolls are the same as the rolls for dexterity. Agility is rolled on 2d6. For aliens, if the dexterity roll is different than the normal 2d6, then agility will be different by the same amount in the opposite way (usually). For example if an alien has a Dex of 2d +1 then his agility will be 2d -1. If Dex is 2d -4 then agility will be 2d +4.

Regular Academy - Remains the same except that some more skills have been added to the skills attainable. In addition to the skills listed in TIS4, characters in the Army academy may also get FA Gunnery, in the Navy-Communication, in the Marines- Battle Dress.

Special Academy - Remains the same except that some more skills have been added to the skills attainable. In addition to the skills listed in TIS4, characters in the Army Special Academy may also get FA Gunnery, in the Navy-Communication, in the Marines- Blade Cbt, in the Merchants- Communication. The limit on schooling in the Special Academy should be determined by the referee, but the limit I use in my campaign is 13 years (with 26 years owed to the military).

Specialty School - Remains the same except that through Science School you may also obtain Communication, Cybernetics, and Hyperatomics. The Legal skill listed under Law School is really the Law Skill defined on page 9 of this issue.

Obtaining Skill Points - Under basic term by term character, if there is no ranking system for that character clas, then in addition to the 15 skill points obtained for each term, 10 more points are obtained the first term and 5 more skill points for subsequent terms. (Which means 25 points total first term, and 20 points for subsequent terms.)

Skill Costs - The cost listed for Agricult Eng, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Comp Eng, Cultural Anthropology, Elec Eng, Genetics, Geology, History, Lab Tech, Linguistics, Macro Eng, Mech Eng, Paleontology, Physical Anthropology, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, , Research, Sociology, Sophontology, Starship System Design, and Transportation Eng is for scientists. For all other professions increase the listed cost by 1 point.

The cost listed for Alien Physiology, Anesthesiology, Cosmetic Surgery, Dental Surgery, Neurological Surgery, Optometric Surgery, Osteological Surgery, Pathology, Pharmacy, Practioner, Radiology, and Transplant/Reattachment Surgery are for Doctors. For all other professions increase the listed cost by 1 point.

Before anyone can obtain any skills from Journal 22 he must first have at least level 1 in Admin, Biology, Computer, and Physics.

The cost to raise your social standing is 8 skill points. The cost for Instruction skill is 6 points.

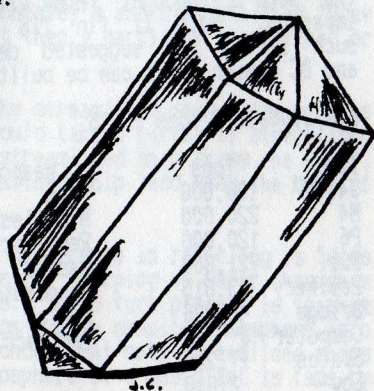
In obtaining Martial Arts, you may not buy more than level 1, you may buy Martial Arts-1 for 10 points and then practice to a level of ten (only once you get out of the service, as it takes long periods of practice time). Alternatly, if you do make the rolls to find an instructor (as presented in TIS2) then you may buy Brawling 10 times to get to level 10).

SIBILIAN CRYSTALS

By: Herb Petro

Many readers commented that they liked the small cargoes in TIS4, but that there was not enough data on Sibilian Crystals. Therefore I have decided to release the rest of the data on these crystals.

A Sibilian crystal is yellow-green in color and is only found on size code 9 or larger planets that have a chlorine atmosphere. There is a good chance that when a character is trained at a psionic institute, the institute has some of these crystals to sell. The price per crystal is cr1300 (though often crystals will only be found at prices ranging up to cr13,000 apiece). Each crystal is very dense and weighs one-half of a kilogram. The drawing to the right is life sized. There are generally 5 lateral faces on the crystal with two 5 sided ends.



A psi user can only be "tuned" into only one crystal at a time ("tuning" is done at a Psi Institute for cr15,000). Only one psi user can be tuned into a certain crystal at once. The psi user can draw 1-6 psi strength points from the crystal. The points will disappear at a rate of one per hour unless they are used. The Sibilian crystal "recharges" itself for at time equal to the number of points drawn from it in hours, after this period of time, the Psi user can draw another 1-6 psi strength points.

A roll to determine the number of psi strength points received must be made each time the crystal is used. In other words, when the crystal is acquired, one roll is not made and then that number of points is drawn every time.

If a psi user is "tuned" into a flawed crystal some strange and unpredictable things may happen. Roll off of the chart below to determine the result. After delivering its strange effect, the Sibilian crystal goes dead, and will be completely useless. This means that no psi user can ever tune into this crystal again. The affected psi user can tune into another crystal (flawed or unflawed) in the future without difficulty (except for a roll off the below chart if the crystal is flawed).

- 1 The psi user's Psionic level is permanently increased by 1D6-2 (change range of 0-4) (Psi level can not exceed 15)
- 2 The psi user's Psionic level is permanently reduced by 1D6-2 (change range of 0-4) (Psi level can not be reduced below 1)
- 3 The psi user temporarily gains 1D6 x 1D6 psi strength points.
- 4 The psi user temporarily loses all his psi strength points (the points are recovered as normal, one per hour)
- 5 Nothing happens, the crystal just goes dead
- 6 Result left to referee

A dead Sibilian crystal is quite noticeable if someone takes the time to look. The referee should roll secretly to see if a Sibilian crystal is flawed. On a 10+ it is flawed. For a character to determine if a Sibilian crystal is flawed or not, roll 11+ with a +2 per level of Prospecting and/or Geology and +4 if the character has access to a laboratory (and knows how to use the equipment therein).

THE BEST COMBAT SHIPS

Part III

By: Craig Sheeley
and Ed Edwards

Part I in this series (in TIS #3, page 7-8) argued for the superiority of the Mega-dreadnought (MDN) with V-gun plus BC fleets for the defense of the Imperium. Part II (in TIS #4, page 11-12) shows the Imperium can afford such fleets and suggested deployment patterns. This part discussed a MDN and BC design which can be built.

MDN 2,000,000 tons TL 15

| | | WEAPONS | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|--------------|------|--------|----------------|
| Item | Tons | Weapon | tons | Crew | EP | # |
| J4 | 100,000 | Vgun | 200,000 | 200 | 3000 | 1 |
| M4 | 220,000 | Missiles | 25,000 | 1000 | - | 500 |
| P6 | 120,000 | Repulsers | 5,000 | 200 | 500 | 100 |
| Fuel | 921,000 | Lasers | 250 | 25 | 750 | 25 |
| Refinery | 13,815 | Sandcasters | 1,000 | 100 | - | 1 |
| Bridge | 40,000 | Fusion | 50 | 2 | 20 | 1 |
| Computer | J 26 | Part.acc. | 50 | 2 | 30 | 1 |
| States | 17,200 | | 231,350 tons | | | |
| Low | 2,010 | | | | | |
| Hold | 40,233 | | | | | |
| Secondary | | Defenses | tons | Crew | EP | # |
| Bridge | 40,000 | Armor 9 | 200,000 | - | - | - |
| Secondary | | Meson 8 | 60 | 8 | 32,000 | 2 (one backup) |
| Power | 20,000 | Nuc Damp 9 | 20 | 4 | 90 | 1 |
| Secondary | | Black G 4 | 50 | 8 | - | 2 (one backup) |
| Comp J | 26 | | 200,130 tons | | | |
| | 1,534,310 tons | | | | | |

| | Flight | Crew | # | Crew: Command: | 1000 |
|------------------|--------|-----------------------------|---|----------------|------|
| 650t Cutters | 30 | 10 | | Engineers: | 4400 |
| 1,300t Assault | | | | Gunnery: | 1529 |
| Boats | 60 | 20 | | Flight: | 700 |
| 1,250t Launch t. | 10 | 1 (handles 50-ton maximum) | | Service: | 4000 |
| 13,000t Fighter | 600 | 200 (50-ton heavy fighters) | | | 8029 |
| | | | | Marines: | 450 |

KNOWN ANCIENT SITES

By: John C. Meyers

| Sector | Hex location | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Gyurrdon | 0239 | 0426 | 0505 | 0703 | 1709 | 2329 | |
| Spinward Marches | 0236 | 0307 | 0336 | 0429 | 0729 | 1826 | 2038 |
| | 2620 | 2632 | 2834 | 3207 | | | |
| Deneb | 0203 | 0412 | 0509 | 0727 | 1235 | 1717 | |
| Corridor | 0102 | 0816 | 0910 | 0916 | 2535 | 2631 | 2940 |
| Vland | 1112 | 1730 | 2007 | 2133 | 2839 | 3129 | 3224 |
| Solomani Rim | 0111 | 1717 | 2135 | 2731 | | | |

STARSHIP MANEUVERABILITY

By: Ed Edwards

Streamlined or partially streamlined ships may get hydrogen fuel from gas giants, but according to the rules only a streamlined ship can refuel from a planet's oceans. If we presume that Craig Sheeley's articles entitled "Grav Ship Landing" in TIS 4 page 9-10 is correct then a partially streamlined or unstreamlined ship can also refuel this way.

The only difference is that it only takes the streamlined ship a few minutes to refuel in a planet's ocean, while it would take a partially streamlined or unstreamlined ship a lot longer. The streamlined ship skims the water, while the partially streamlined and unstreamlined ship land near the body of water and slurp up the water through a pipe.

In Trillion Credit Squadron the significant difference in refueling is "does it take 0 turns (weeks) or 1 week to refuel?" Slurping up water through a straw does not seem like a 0 turn process. The 0 turn process is to skim the water - we are talking maneuvering from a high density atmosphere into even higher density water. There is no wonder that only streamlined ships can do so. Skimming the tenuous outer atmosphere of a gas giant is tame by comparison.

In Trillion Credit Squadron terms, a streamlined ship refueling from a planet's ocean is a 0 turn (week) process, while refueling a partially- or un-streamlined ship in an ocean takes 1 turn (week).

The key to these ship movements is use of the full maneuver capabilities of the space ship. A fully streamlined space ship can fly with full maneuver capability in any atmosphere as dense as Earth's oceans a mile deep. A partially streamlined space ship can fly with full maneuver capability only in atmosphere (or lack thereof) such as Earth's atmosphere above 30 miles.

All these categories of streamlining can operate in more dense atmospheres BUT with a loss of maneuver capabilities. When landing on grav units (as suggested by Craig Sheeley's article "Starship Grav Landing", TIS 4 p.9-10) a ship does not maneuver, it just floats.

Having successfully repelled the pirate boarding party; the TULIP, a 200-ton free merchantman, maneuvered away from the 300-ton pirate corsair. Needing fuel the TULIP headed for the nearby class D down port. Nearing the starport the close structure (code 4) TULIP lost maneuverability while the cone shaped (code 2) corsair did not. The corsair thus out maneuvered the TULIP and left it a wreck on the surface of Trandor.

In game terms, the TULIP had an agility of 3 and the Corsair an agility of 2. A few miles above the surface of Trandor the partially streamlined TULIP lost its ability for full use of its' capability; the fully streamlined Corsair retained its' agility of 2. Thus the intercept became possible.

Using the Craig Sheeley concept that each maneuver drive includes the inherent possibility of anti-grav control of the ship and the ideas expressed here lend toward a more realistic view of space ship capabilities near planets. A fully streamlined ship can land on any stable surface. A partially streamlined ship can land on any prepared flat surface. A non-streamlined ship can land only on highly prepared starport (i.e. class A or better), this is due to the possible pylon structure failures when the ship is subjected to full gravity, while class C and better starports have Zero-G docking bays. Loss of agility near a planetary surface can also influence the outcome of some adventures.

PSIONIC ADDITIONS

By: Herb Petro

You may teleport objects other than yourself. The weight of the object is equal to the skill level for use in kilograms squared (teleport skill starts at level 1), which means at level 5 the character can teleport 25 kilograms, at level 7 he can teleport 49 kilograms. The cost is 0 plus range.

Special Abilities:

Journal #5 had several very useful Special Abilities, they are: Psiopyretics, Jaunting, Precognition, Patina Reading, Howl, Detect, Empathic Healing.

I use the Journal #5 Special Abilities and some of my own creation. The ones that I made are listed below.

Hypnosis - A character expends eight Psionic Strength Points plus any range costs from telepathy. Hypnosis allows someone to influence a victim's actions. The victim gets to make a saving roll, his Endurance or less on 3d6, DM of minus psi level. Once under Hypnosis, the victim may try to make this saving roll again, once per hour, with a DM of +3. The victim can be made to do things by subliminal suggestion. Sometimes the resulting actions are different from the intended actions. If the victim is killed while under Hypnosis, the mind controller is rendered unconscious for twelve hours. The ability of Hypnosis lasts as long as the person using it desires, or until, the person using it goes to sleep, the person using it dies, the victim dies, or the victim is moved out of range. It takes five seconds for hypnosis to take effect. If someone puts an artificial psi shield on the victim then the victim gets to make all future saving rolls with a DM of -8.

Youth - Someone with this ability may counteract the effects of aging, similar to that of the Droyne psi skill Rejuvenation. The character can avoid aging rolls for a 4-year period of time, but with a permanent reduction in psi ability by 1 each time this is done. This skill can only be performed on oneself, unless empathic healing is also possessed.

Illusion Creation - Someone with this ability can cause someone to see whatever they want them to see, hear, feel, taste, etc. All senses will be affected and the victim may think years have passed when only seconds have. This is not possible against a psi user unless it is allowed. If it is allowed, then the psi user being affected cannot stop it. The cost is 5 strength points plus range costs of telepathy per 60 seconds of use. Note, this 60 seconds may be made to seem as an entire year to the victim if the user so desires.

Energy Manipulation - The character may absorb damage from kinetic or energy weapons instead of them doing damage to him. For every point of damage to be absorbed, 1 Psionic Strength point is expended. In melee combat (only with hands and feet) the character may absorb the damage then punch or kick his opponent. His opponent takes damage as usual plus whatever damage the character had absorbed psionically.

Psicryogenics - Opposite of Psiopyretics. The ability to spontaneously absorb heat. A user can produce a patch of cold, reasonably well targeted, on a surface. The level 1 ability can patch of cold (a patch is a circle) 1cm radius and an area of 3.1416 square cm. The cost is 1 psi strength point per level of ability used. Each level beyond the first can either

increase the area of the cold or the intensity of the cold. Therefore, level 2 can create a patch with an area of 6.2832 square cm and radius 1.41cm. If the targeting of the patch of cold is made very hastily then the character must roll his dexterity or less (DM of psi ability) to target correctly. The ability lasts 10 minutes per use.

Reflec - Allows someone to focus psionic activity back on the person who originated the activity. For example, if a character A psionically assaults character B, and character B has and uses his reflec ability, then character A ends up assaulting himself. If character A tries to read character B's mind, and character B has and uses his reflec ability, the character A ends up reading his own thoughts. Someone assaulting themselves or reading their own thoughts can be very confused about what happened. This ability works somewhat like the shield ability in that once activated it stays in effect for a certain period of time. It costs 5 psionic strength points to activate Reflec and it stays in effect for as long as the character remains awake (not to exceed 24 hours), needing to be renewed after every time the character has slept (if he wants Reflec to be in effect for that day).

Energy Control - Similar to energy manipulation, but works only with energy damage (not kinetic) and is somewhat more powerful. For every die worth of damage to be absorbed, 1 Psionic strength point is expended. You can double the energy back at double the strength cost.

Mind Link - Someone using this Special Ability can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell what someone else sees, hears, feels, tastes, and smells. A psi user can not be Mind Linked except by voluntary consent. Once a psi user allows someone to Mind Link with him he can not stop the Link. The cost is 7 plus range costs from telepathy. This skill lasts 1 hour, at which time it can be continued with the same person for 4 points extra per hour the link is to be continued.

ERRATA FOR MARTIAL ARTS

By: Bob Carter

This is an errata for the Martial Arts article that appeared in TIS2, p. 9-11. As I had more time to use Martial Arts in game play I've realized there were some things I did not include and some things I wanted to change.

For DMs to damage for punching and kicking. DMs start at the level listed only; e.g., at 3rd level punching and kicking damage gets a +1, at 10th level it would get +10 to hit and +8 damage (not +10 damage).

At level 7 practitioners were getting the equivalent of an Asian burst of speed. Forget that (I really messed up bad) and substitute an additional attack every other round at this level i.e., round 1 - 1 attack, round 2 - 2 attacks, round 3 - 1 attack, etc.

At level 9 - 2 attacks per round and at level 10 these extra attacks are done at full strength without taking Endurance hits.



NEW SKILLS

By: Herb Petro

The number listed under "cost" is the cost in skill points as in the article "TIS Character Generation System." The number listed under "exceptions" is as in the above mentioned article.

| Cost | Exceptions | Skill |
|------|--------------|---|
| 4 | none | Cooking - Skill in preparing of food. Steward skill allows someone to prepare food, and anyone can open a can, but this skill refers to the fine points of cooking, someone with a high enough level of skill would make even the best French chefs envious. |
| 6 | scientist(5) | Cybernetics - Deals with robot design and construction. |
| 6 | scientist(5) | Hyperatomics - Deals with the field of jump principles. |
| 5 | none | Law - Legal is the skill defined in Merchant Prince, Law is a skill which actually deals with law and eventually allows you to become a lawyer. Skill level 1 is sufficient to conduct title searches, etc. Skill level 2 is sufficient to draw up wills and certain contracts. Skill level 3 allows you to select a legal specialty. Another specialty can be selected per each higher level. Skill level 4 is required to be a lawyer and then bar exams must be taken. To take a bar exam and be a registered lawyer on a particular planet, subsector, or sector you must first study for at least 4 months. Then roll 17+ DM of +1 if Int 9+, +1 per extra month of study (to a total of +4), +2 if home planet, subsector, or sector, +1 per level of law skill. If you fail, you may try again in 4 more months (with a DM of +1 per time before you took and failed them, to a max DM of +3). |
| 8 | psi user (5) | Psionics - Character will know how to give the test for psionics if he has skill level 2 or higher and will know how to give training in the areas that he has skill in with a level 4 or higher skill. |
| 5 | none | Writing - Skill dealing with the writing of material. This is a cascade skill, any you must specify whether the writing skill is for Poetry, Prose, or Song. |

continued from page 8

At level 10 somebody has such mastery of there ki that they only make aging rolls every other term and will normally live 10-30 years longer. If a person has Psionic Awareness at level 11 or 12 he will actually be able to double their life span.

When fighting another person with Martial Arts skill certain DMs come into effect. If you are 5 levels higher than you opponent he can not hit you unless you allow it. i.e. a 1st level person can not hit a 6th level persons and a 4th level can not hit a 10th level. At 4 levels higher -5 DM to hit, at 3 levels -3, at 2 levels -2, at 1 level -1 to hit.

A person with brawling skill can attack a person with Martial Arts if the difference between the level of MA and Brawling is 4 or less, but in these cases the person with Brawling gets double the negative DMs listed above.

THREE DOG NIGHT IN ROAD SHOW

By: Steve Kohler and Craig Sheeley

We have rolled up the band in Three Dog night (back cover of TIS4) for use in a version of "Road Show" by John M. Ford in Journal #23. The singers are Michael (Naeghel), Cindy (Zindi), and George (Gorgze); the back-ups are Wolf on percussion and Takeil on keyboards. Their manager is a newt named Kermit. Stats are:

| | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---|-------|
| Naeghel | 6D5979 | Singing-2 | Commo-1 | Elec-1 | Grav veh-1 | JOT-1 |
| | | Instrument (guitar)-1 | | | | |
| Zindi | 656348 | Streetwise-2 | Commo-1 | Gambling-1 | Singing-1 | |
| Gorgze | 79A6B8 | Streetwise-2 | Wheeled veh-2 | Autopistol-1 | Carousing-1 | |
| | | Gambling-1 | Singing-1 | | | |
| Wolf | AC8A74 | Instrument (drums)-3 | Brawling-1 | Mech-1 | motorcycles-1 (a special branch of Wheeled Vehicle skill) | |
| Takeil | B99AB1 | Elec-2 | Instrument (keyboards)-2 | Carousing-1 | Commo-1 | |
| | | Comp-1 | Mech-1 | Streetwise-1 | Tolerance-1 | |
| Kermit | 4559B5 | Admin-3 | Grav veh-2 | Brawling-1 (!) | Interrog-1 | JOT-1 |
| | | Instruct-1 | Recruiting-1 | | | |

The group travels in a yellow fat trader with severe range and accomadation modifications. Very strange.

The five musicians were generated from a character class/profession table that Steven Kohler cooked up: The Entertainer. Thus:

| Admission | 8+ | Personal | Service | Musician | Entertainer | Material | Cash |
|-----------|--------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|----------|--------|
| +1 | Int 8+ | Development | Skills | Skills | Skills | benefits | |
| +2 | Dex 8+ | 1 +1 Str | Gun Cbt | Elec | Gambling | Low Psg | 10000 |
| | | 2 +1 Dex | Gambling | Mech | Carousing | +1 Dex | 20000 |
| Surv | 4+ | 3 +1 End | Vehicle | Music | Liaison | TAS | 35000 |
| +2 | End 7+ | 4 +1 Edu | Streetw | Music | Liaison | Gun | 50000 |
| | | 5 Streetw | Carousing | Commo | Streetw | High Psg | 75000 |
| Reenlist | 4+ | 6 Brawl | JOT | Comp | Bribery | +2 Soc | 100000 |
| | | 7 - | - | - | - | Yacht | 150000 |

Automatic Skills: Musician = Music-1 +1 material benefit if 5+ terms
 Entertainer = Liaison-1 +1 to Cash if Gambling 1+

Special Rules: An entertainer/musician may serve as many terms as wished, provided that reenlistment rolls are made. A reenlistment roll of 12 will never retain the character in service against his will. When initially enlisting, either Entertainer or Musician must be chosen for the specialty and the automatic skill. In following terms, the character may switch specialties between terms.

The Musician skill table is only for use by Musicians; the Entertainer skill table applies only to Entertainers.

Skill definition: Music (cascade skill). Upon receipt of Music skill, the player must choose either Singing or Instrument. If Intrument, further choice must be made as to type of Instrument skill this applies to (Strings, Percussion, Electric Keyboards, Wind, Brass, or Exotic - nose flutes, and the like). Level of skill indicates prowess with chosen instrument family or singing ability.

Entertainer/Musicians get 3 skills on the first term, and two skills per term thereafter.

(Editor's notes: I personally like to use my point system (in TIS 4). Using my point system, and the errata for it on page 7 of this issue, the Musician would get 20 skill points per term (15 per term plus 5 skill points for the lack of a ranking system). Both Singing and Instrument skill cost 5 skill points apiece. The members of the band don't have agility listed, not wanting to stick it in there without permission, I am making note of it here, if you want agility to be given to the band members, then add it in yourself.)

Editor's Introduction: The article below works fine for particle accelerators, but mesons would decay much too rapidly, unless there was a device similar to the nuclear damper but for mesons. Mr. Carter assumes that there is such a device built into all meson guns (though GDW has never mentioned such a development).

CIRCULAR MESON AND PARTICLE ACCELERATORS IN TRAVELLER

By: Bob Carter

Picture this; you are in your 1000-ton bulk carrier, running a risky but profitable route in the Spinward Marches. Suddenly your computer operator detects three 400-ton ships closing in, as they approach they identify themselves as Vargr Corsairs and they're warning you to allow your ship to be boarded and your cargo taken peacefully or they will destroy you.

You refuse and open fire with your missiles, laser turrets, and factor A meson gun. Suddenly one corsair is rocked with interior explosions and completely disabled and a second is decommissioned by missiles, now your the one doing the ordering. Back up a minute, a Factor A Meson gun? But that's a spinal mount, isn't it?

Circular meson guns or particle accelerators are a viable alternative to standard bay weapons or spinal mounts. They have certain distinct advantages to standard straight line versions, and disadvantages.

First, let's get one thing clear. I'm not an expert on physics and I'm not affiliated with any military weapon projects and by my own admission I'm not an expert. But I am a reader. I read a lot, and what I have read about particle accelerators and what I've read about TRAVELLER has led me to make certain conclusions which may or may not be accurate but when you sit down and look at it all there's no real reason it couldn't work.

About 2 years I was reading about particle accelerators in a science magazine. They were talking about the differences between straight line ones and circular ones. One of the things they said was that circular particle accelerators were up to 5 times more efficient and powerful. This is due to the circular accelerator's ability to continually accelerate the particles until they reach the desired speed, where as a straight one goes from one end to the other and that's that. Here's where it applies to TRAVELLER. I'm assuming here that meson accelerators work the same way as particle accelerators and therefore the same theory applies to them as well.

Using the premise that a circular one is 5 times more efficient and powerful you can reduce the size and energy requirements of a spinal mount or bay weapon by 5 and get the same weapon factor or get a higher weapon factor by leaving it the same size but making it circular and only firing once every 5 rounds.

An example of this is a spinal mount particle accelerator factor H. By making it circular you can reduce the tonnage from 2500 to 500, and the energy requirements from 700 to 140, and still be a factor H.

This one-fifth the size and one-fifth energy requirements while firing once every five rounds is alright for large (over 5000-tons) ships that can put in spinal mounts, but for 10000-ton ships this has to be translated into bay weapon terms. There are two factors that come into play here; size and energy requirements.

A quick look at page 24 of High Guard will tell you that if you base it on size alone, it doesn't always work so you also look at the Energy Point requirements. Judging by the spinal mount Chart it is actually EPs that

make the difference and not so much the size.

Another example is a Tech 15 100-ton meson bay, keep it the same size but make it circular and keep the EPs the same and it would be equal to a factor E meson gun.

Here is how it works. With circular bays and spinal mounts you can only fire once every 5 turns if you want to fire at full power. Each turn you add in the same amount of EPs and it accelerates the particles continuously thereby adding up the energy until you fire until you fire.

In the example of the 100-ton bay you put 200 EPs into it every turn for 5 turns. At the end of the fifth turn you have 1000 energy points stored and you can fire as a Factor E meson gun. If you look closely at the chart at Tech 15, the first spinal mount that takes 1000 EPs is a 2000-ton factor N gun.

If you based this solely on EP consumption you bay would fire as a factor N, but as I stated earlier it is both size and EPs that count, with EPs getting the nod.

Since 100-ton times 5 is only 500, it's not even close to a 2000-ton gun. So go up to the next Tech 15 gun. That's a factor J, 1000-ton and 900 EPs, it is also the smallest weapon available which is why it is used, because it comes the closest to 500-ton, and the Bay will be putting out 100 EP more than the Factor J gun. Now EP requirements are satisfied but size is not. So divide 9 (the number of spaces between A and J on the spinal mount chart) by 2 (the difference between 500 and 1000-ton).

The same principle works if you put less power, e.g a Tech 15 100-ton circular Meson Bay being fed 120 EPs each round will fire as a Factor C after 5 rounds of build up.

It is better to do meson bays this way because if you follow these examples as guidelines you'll find that a particle accelerator bay will not put out enough energy or be big enough to equal even a factor A gun. On the other hand a bay being factor 9, the circular gun only needs to be 20-ton and be fed 12 EP each round for 5 rounds.

If you decide to fire before the 5 round buildup period you'll have to do the math to figure what factor it would be. Use the Tech 15 meson bay, 100-ton, as a guide. You may fire the 1st round as a factor 9, 2nd round as still a factor 9, 3rd round as a factor B, 4th round as a factor D, and the 5th round as a factor E.

DISADVANTAGES: Remember, even during the build up period fuel is spent each round. With the 100-ton bay and 200 EPs per round, at the end of 5 rounds you've still used 1000 EPs. Therefore circular weapons take just as much energy and fuel, and can only fire every 5 rounds, yet they take less energy at once and they are smaller, and also require smaller power plants. You can only fire once every 5 round at full power.

The primary reason that circular weapons are not used by the Imperium on battle ships is that if the weapon takes any damage at all it is put out of commission. Where as a straight line accelerator can take lots of damage and still fire (at a lower factor).

The ship shown below belongs to one of my characters and I use a Tech 15 100-ton meson bay and feed it 120 EP a round. After 5 rounds it fires as a Factor C gun. In order to have more interior space all my fuel (except 200-ton) is mounted on Drop tanks that don't drop and the Ships vehicles ride piggy back as well.

My ship is not designed to be a bulk carrier but those tricks with circular bays would work even better with a slow merchant. The ship outlined below has successfully destroyed a 10,000 Tech 12 ship that had spinal mount, a 2000-ton Zhodani Warship, and in one fight two 500-ton ships and a 1250-ton ship. [Editor note: the 10,000-ton ship was only destroyed due to a lucky roll off the interior explosion damage table, a 2 which was critical, and then another 2 off the critical table, resulting in vaporization.]

PZ-1 Vegan Star PZ-A956EE2-650000-560*4-0 Mcr1,275.68 1350 Tons
 batteries 1 11 11
 batteries bearing 1 11 11
 passengers=11 Low=0 Cargo=139.71 Fuel=340 EP=140 Agility=varies

Made to be jump 5 with the drop tanks and vehicles attached. The jump engines are from High Guard, the maneuver engines are from the basic book. Agility is 0 if the meson gun is being charged or used, otherwise the agility is a 6. Equipped with a fuel purification plant.

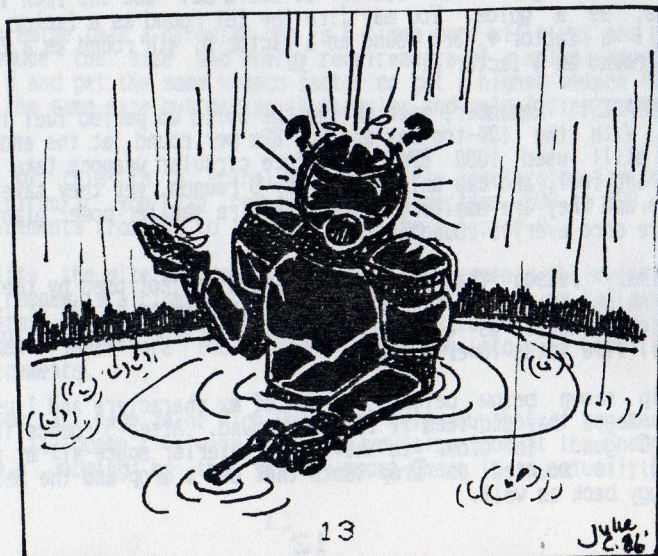
The meson gun fires at factor C when fired at full power (after 5 rounds of charging). The ship has a four drop tanks each holding 133.5-tons of fuel. Ship's vehicles include 2 modular cutters (both with a weapons pod and fuel module) 2 pinnaces with Bladder tanks taking up cargo space, two 10-ton fighters.

This ship goes into battle with drop tanks attached if there is more than one ship to fight. If this ship knows it is going into battle ahead of time, the meson gun will be charged as fully as possible before the ship engages any other ships. In trillion credit squadron it is said that if a damage roll, unmodified by the ship armor, produces a fuel hit then the drop tanks are destroyed (please note that only one of the four drop tanks will be destroyed each time a roll unmodified by armor produces a fuel hit).

FINAL NOTE: Circular bays are 2.5 times the price of standard bays. Circular spinal mounts are 150% of the cost of standard spinal mounts.

REVIEWS

THE IMPERIUM STAPLE (TIS) will review any games, magazines, figures, supplements, adventures, books, computer programs, fanzines, etc. which are of interest to the TRAVELLER fan. Send the material to: Herb Petro, Editor; THE IMPERIUM STAPLE; P.O. Box 1515, Belmont, NC 28012



THE SOLOMANI HOME GUARD (REVISED)

By: Bob Carter

I don't know how you feel, but I like the Solomani. One of the aspects I like is the Home Guard. I think the Home Guard is based on the National Guard and as a former member of said organization, I think I can talk about it halfway intelligently.

First, in the Solomani module they said you get one skill when you join if you don't already have that skill. This would not be entirely true.

They said you roll for promotions like normal in the Home Guard. Well you do, but what the person writing the module doesn't know is that even though you only get trained in one area, as you promoted you expected to know more and more about your MOS.

Each year you're tested on your knowledge of your job field. For each rank there are certain skills you have to know. So if you don't pass your test you're not promoted.

At ranks E1-E4 you are expected to be skill level 1 in your field, at E5-E7 skill level 2, at E8+E9 skill level 3. At O1-O4 skill level 2, O5-O8 skill level 3, and O9+O10 skill level 4.

Now they don't just expect you to be the required skill level on your own, they train you. You have to go to training drills one weekend a month and summer or winter camp 2 weeks a year. Makes adventuring difficult and merchant careers almost impossible. Your first term of enlistment must be 6 years, after that you can serve 2 or 4 year terms.

The monthly training drills are not always the same time each month either and that would make adventuring or merchant careers even harder. There are ways to get permission to miss monthly drills. Such as volunteering to be in a veterans parade or some other such military sanctioned public service. You can't get out of the 2 week camps, but sometimes you can arrange to take them at other places than where you joined. This would make it easier for merchants, but that sort of move has to be sponsored by the Home Guard unit you belong to. E.g. Your Home Guard unit will receive 100 members of a Home Guard from another planet and in return will send 100 of its' members to the other planet for 2 week camp. You can then volunteer to be one of the 100.

For each year you are in, roll a score equal to that to be promoted. This will determine if you pass your MOS test. If you fail you can not be promoted unless the next rank is the same skill level. There are certain other skill you get as you move up in rank, these are: E5-E7 Admin-0, E8+E9 Admin-1, E5-E7 Leader-1, E8+E9 Leader 2. E5-E7 Tactics-1, E8+E9 Tactics-2, O1-O4 Admin-1, O5-O7 Admin-2, O8-O10 Admin-3. O5-O7 Leader-1, O8-O10 Leader-2, O5-O7 Tactics-1, O8-O10 Tactics-2.

There is also voluntary courses you can sign up for that would get you skill level 0 in a variety of skill (med, mech, commo, etc.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Write a letter to me (Herb), the editor. Tell me what you think of THE IMPERIUM STAPLE (TIS). Tell me what you think TIS should be or should not be. Tell what kind of articles you would like to see in TIS. Letters should be sent to: Herb Petro, Editor; THE IMPERIUM STAPLE; P.O. Box 1515, Belmont, NC 28012

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