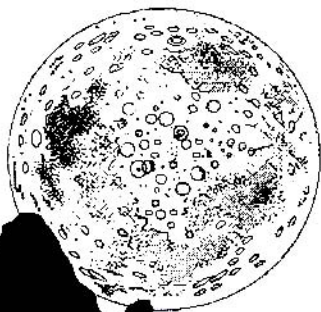


Approved For Use With *TRAVELLER*®

the TRAVELLERS'
Digest

Volume 1 Number 2 \$3.95



**The
Journey
of the
Sojourn
Moon**

Feature Adventure

**Robot
Design
Revisited ...**

Part Two

A magazine devoted to GDW's Science Fiction Adventure Game *Traveller*®

The Travellers' Digest

Number 2

\$3.95

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Editors' Digest

Welcome back to *The Travellers' Digest*. We have a lot of material to cover in this issue's Editors' Digest, so let's get started.

Surprisingly enough, we had no entries to our 'Guess the Formula' contest. Those of you who have a first edition of the charter issue may have noticed that the formulas for older station designs (on page 52) were missing. Had enough suspense? Here they are:

$$G = .00112RN^2$$

$$R = \frac{G}{.00112N^2} \quad N = \sqrt{\frac{G}{.00112R}}$$

We enjoyed a welcome reception at the Origins game convention in Baltimore (Terra/Sol), selling a lot of subscriptions. We also met many game dealers and distributors, so you should be able to find the *Digest* in your favorite store soon. If you don't see it, be sure to ask (they're probably just sold out). If you missed seeing the charter issue, all is not lost: just send your check or money order for \$3.95, and we'll get one out to you immediately. Or ask your dealer: they may be re-ordering soon.

Speaking of orbital complexes, those of you who read the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* may have noticed some minor inconsistencies between the Tech Briefs in our charter issue, and the article, "Space Habitats in Traveller", in *Journal* number 23. Chris Struble did a fine job of fleshing out many of the details of space habitats, but we were concerned because our tech level progression differed markedly from his.

We checked this out with Marc Miller, designer of **Traveller**, when we saw him at the Origins convention, and he said that our tech level progression was more consistent with **Traveller**. In particular, realize that orbital complexes using grav plate technology will be easier to build than rotating stations, because those using advanced gravitics can be stationary and of virtually any size and shape. Starships already use grav plates at tech level 9, so it would not be unreasonable to find them in orbital complexes by tech level 12. Otherwise, the two articles complement each other; we encourage you to use Chris's methods for such things as determining construction time and population density.

In our most recent Editors' Digest, we briefly mentioned our itinerary for the magazine. This time, we'll give you a 'sneak preview' of the next several issues. In the next issue, emotions run high when we encounter a group of Vargr researchers at a historically important Ancients' site. Also featured is an article on Gvegh, the most common

Vargr language, and how it reflects one widespread Vargr culture. And since we're entering a new sector, you'll also get library data for the sector, as usual.

Issue 4 throws our heroes into a quandary: a mysterious murder on board an interstellar liner, and all the evidence points to one of our four characters. Included will be detailed deck plans of the 1000-ton liner where the adventure takes place.

Issue 5 will be our first anniversary, and we'll celebrate in style: at historic Vland, capital of the old First Imperium. You'll get a history of the Vilani race and a map of Vland, along with an exciting adventure requiring all the skills our characters possess.

In the charter issue, we focused on **Traveller's** role-playing with our section, "Playing the Characters". In this issue, we present additional details on Dr. Krenstein's robot companion, AB-101. Future issues will tell you more about each of the other three characters.

When we were at Origins, a lot of people stopped at our booth and asked about writing to *The Travellers' Digest*. If you have an idea for an article you'd like us to do, or comments about what we've already done, we'd love to hear from you. If you yourself write or draw, send us a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll send you a copy of our contributors' guidelines. **Traveller** needs talented individuals with original ideas.

We have a lot of excitement and adventure planned for you. If you haven't subscribed yet, now would be an excellent time. Don't miss a single issue.

Credits for the Feature Adventure

Design.....Nancy Parker, Robert Parker
Additional Design.....Gary L. Thomas, Joe D. Fugate Sr.
Playtesting..Don Couch, Craig and Nona Sweigart, Dennis Fornworth

Journey of the Sojourn Moon

FEATURE ADVENTURE

...when a hi-tech society falls, it can breed a lo-tech culture so different as to be unrecognizable...

-Akidda Laagiiir, 1101, from 'On Wal-ta-ka' in the Travellers' Digest

INTRODUCTION

Journey of the Sojourn Moon deals with a *Travellers' Digest* reporter and his companions as they travel to Wal-ta-ka/Atsah and discover an intriguing culture surprisingly different from its high-tech beginnings.

It is assumed that this adventure will be administered by a referee who has read through it, and who is familiar with both this adventure and the rules for **Traveller**. The basic **Traveller** rules are all that is required. As usual, paper, pencils, six-sided dice, and square-grid graph paper will prove helpful during an adventure session. A calculator may also be useful.



Optional References: Additional helpful information may be found in:

- *The Atlas of the Imperium*
- Supplement 8, *Library Data (A-M)*
- Supplement 11, *Library Data (N-Z)*
- The Gamelords supplement, *The Desert Environment*
- The Gamelords desert world adventure, *Duneraiders*

The only background information required for this adventure is contained in this issue of *The Travellers' Digest*.

Chapters: This adventure is in several chapters, most of which are material to be read only by the referee.

This introduction may be read by both the players and the referee.

The chapter *"In Search of a Story"* introduces the characters and the situation. This section is designed to be read to the players in order to acquaint them with the characters and their personalities.

The data in *Wal-ta-ka/Atsah* can be given to the players directly.

The chapter *"Playing the Characters"* contains useful insights for role-playing. The players should be allowed to read this chapter before they start the game.

The rest of the adventure is for the referee only; players may discover its secrets only by playing the adventure.

STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This adventure takes place in the universe published and described by a multitude of **Traveller** products.

The Imperium is a huge human-dominated stellar empire thirty centuries in the future. It encompasses several hundred light-years of our segment of the Milky Way galaxy.

The Deneb Sector is a 32 by 40 parsec (1 parsec = 3.26 light-years) area of the Imperium on the Imperial frontier. A sector is divided into sixteen administrative areas called subsectors. Each subsector is 8 by 10 parsecs in size.

A world is commonly listed with its name followed by a slash and the name of its subsector location. For example, *Wal-ta-ka/Atsah* refers to the world *Wal-ta-ka* in the *Atsah* subsector.

Dates: All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 339-1100.

Place: This adventure starts on the asteroid world *Sherad/Atsah* in the Deneb Sector, and then moves on to *Wal-ta-ka/Atsah*, where the main adventure occurs.

The Universal Task Profile: In this adventure we use the Universal Task Profile or **UTP**. The UTP provides the referee and players with all the information they need about a task to be performed. Using the UTP they can quickly roll for a task attempt and know which skills or character attributes are useful, they can know if more than one attempt is possible, and they can find out how long the task takes.

We encourage the referee and players to make liberal use of the UTP as a simple, playable framework for defining and attempting tasks.

Here are some hints on defining a task with the UTP format:

- the more specific the task situation, the more effective the UTP definition becomes. Using a single UTP to cover a wide range of related tasks strains believability and makes the UTP ludicrous. For example, to say that one UTP to detect lying would always apply is unrealistic.

- when assigning a task difficulty level, base it on how difficult the task would be for an individual with level-0 in the required skill. Don't use an unskilled individual as your basis or you may make the task strangely difficult for a skilled character. Likewise, don't use a skilled (level-1 or more) character as your basis either, or you might make the task much easier than it should be.

Universal Task Profile (UTP)

The elements are:

(DIFFICULTY, primary skill, primary characteristic, REPEATABILITY, TIME INCREMENT)

Notes: Occasionally a task may require special instructions. These tasks will say REFEREE in place of one or more UTP elements. A brief paragraph of special instructions labeled REFEREE will follow the UTP.

These special functions are sometimes used in the UTP:

sum(item,item...)	sum of two or more items
avg(item,item...)	average of two or more items
max(item,item...)	maximum of two or more items
min(item,item...)	minimum of two or more items
all(item)	characters may combine their values in the item

Difficulty

difficulty levels (roll 2D to succeed; a natural roll of 2 always fails):

SIMPLE	3+	primary skill: add skill level as a DM.
ROUTINE	7+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DM for no skill is -5.
DIFFICULT	11+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">JOT skill and min(int,edu) + 5 reduce a -DM
FORMIDABLE	15+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">skills related to primary skill can, at the referee's option, be treated as level-0 in primary skill.

primary characteristic: divide by 5 (drop fractions) and use as +DM.

Repeatability

A task is either:

NON-REPEATABLE (one try only) or REPEATABLE (additional tries allowed)

- additional tries can generally take place immediately.
- additional tries depend on a successful dedication roll, with the following UTP: (DIFFICULT, no skill, SUM(end,int), REFEREE)
REFEREE: character must roll before each additional task attempt, after failing.
- If the character fails dedication roll, increase task difficulty for next attempt. JOT skill can "save" difficulty increase at a rate of 1 save per JOT skill level.
- If the character waits 1D days, he can retry task (if successful at dedication roll) with no increase in difficulty. If he fails *any* dedication roll now, he has completely given up on task and may not retry (JOT saves still apply, however).

Duration

A task is either:

INSTANT or a specific TIME INCREMENT (task takes 3D time increments, avg. of 10)

- If successful at the task, apply a -DM of the amount over required success roll.

UTP examples...

to repair Aybee when dex damage is less than 8-
(ROUTINE, mechanical, dex, REPEATABLE, 10 min)

to bribe a local customs official on Regina-
(DIFFICULT, bribery, int, NON-REPEATABLE, INSTANT)

to determine that Aybee is a robot-
(DIFFICULT, max(medical, interview), min(int,edu), REFEREE)
REFEREE: roll once in first hour & every four hours thereafter when at close range.

to locate protected information in a Tukera Lines ship computer-
(FORMIDABLE, computer, int, REPEATABLE, 5 min)

CHARACTERS

This adventure is intended for the characters listed below. At the referee's option, other characters can be substituted, although some role-playing enjoyment would be sacrificed.

Even though the characters listed are all male, feel free to change any or all of the genders as desired. Additional background information for these characters can be found in other issues of *The Travellers' Digest*.

Akidda Laagiir, Journalist 858AAB Age 42 6 terms Cr 31,000
Born: 319-1058
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1,
Admin-1, Brawling-1

Possessions: TL 15 Holocrystal Recorder

Position: Current recipient of the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.



Akidda Laagiir started at the age of eighteen as a copy boy with the *Mora World Review*; his friendly face and his ability to get people to trust him contributed to his steady career progress. Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against "the system", preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things. This boldness has also contributed favorably to his career. His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to strange locales and cultures—a skill that has saved his neck more than once.

Akidda Laagiir received the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award for his article on the role of the spinward frontier sectors in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1000 years.

Dur Telemon, ex-scout B7A85B Age 33 3 terms Cr 65,000
Born: 038-1067
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1,
Gambling-1, Brawling-1

Possessions: Auto Pistol



Dur Telemon was *born* into the Scout service. His father was in the Scout service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers had served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure. The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager—his father's service in the war was a source of pride for the entire family and served to deepen Dur's love for the scout service. After three and one-half years of college, his

wanderlust pushed him out of school and into a Scout recruiting office on Mora/Mora, his home world.

Dur's individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a "routine" mapping expedition on Pannet/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Krenstein's life. Neither of them is overly emotional about it, but it was that initial chance encounter that grew into a deeper respect and friendship on both sides over the years, despite the different personalities of the two men.


His second and third terms were spent in District 268 and the Five Sisters subsectors doing various planetary surface and orbital surveys. The harsh conditions Dur often encountered taught him much about staying alive and living off the land in exotic environments. Halfway through Dur's fourth term, he was told that he was being transferred from his field post in the Exploration Branch to a bureaucratic position in Fleet Support in the Scout Operations Office on Aramis/Aramis.

Dur has since resigned from the Scout Service and is travelling with his uncle, Akidda Laagiir.

Dr. Theodor Krenstein, scientist 495FCB Age 58 10 terms
Cr 300,000 Born: 173-1042
Computer-4, Leader-3, JOT-2, Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1,
Electronics-1, Medical-1, Mechanical-1

Possessions: Hand Computer (TL 15), Electronic Tool Kit, Robot AB-101

Position: Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics at Rhylanor Institute of Technology on Rhylanor/Rhylanor (on sabbatical leave).



Dr. Theodor Krenstein is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests ranging from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the 'ologies' in between. Born on the planet Rhylanor, he entered the Rhylanor Institute of Technology at the age of eighteen, eventually receiving advanced degrees in computer science and robotics. He went on to serve three terms as Dean of the School of Robotic Science at RIT, after which he was appointed to the Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position. He is the author of 12 books and over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, in addition to holding more than 250 Imperial patents for his inventions and computer work. Despite his academic success, he has become bored with what he has been doing, and realizing his age, he has taken an extended sabbatical from teaching in order to make forays into other parts of the Imperium.

Among his many pursuits, Dr. Krenstein has aided the Scout service in developing robots for use in conducting detailed planetary surface surveys. During a test in 1090 on Pannet/Rhylanor, members of a disgruntled anti-technist group kidnapped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout service didn't meet their demands.

A young scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer raiding team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the Doctor.

It was this incident that prompted the Doctor to construct his personal servant and bodyguard, AB-101.

Aybee Wan Owen, valet FD9C7B Age 19(?) 0 terms Cr 0
Constructed: 1091

Medic-1, Linguist-1, Vehicle-1, Laser Welder-1



Position: Personal servant and protégé of Dr. Theodor Krenstein.

AB-101, affectionately known as "Aybee", is a pseudo-biological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. His UPP and other personal data are apparent values and are only approximations; calculated by comparing human norms with Aybee's abilities. Aybee's vital statistics (strength, dexterity, and endurance) are based upon his mechanical configuration and his installed components; his intelligence and education are estimated from his computer hardware and software; and his social class results from his recent knighthood. All of Aybee's skill levels are estimated, and must be modified by the referee in certain situations. Although his programming gives him certain basic abilities, because of his lack of true artificial intelligence he can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level.

Aybee's 'weapon' is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. The Shudusham Concords specified certain standards for robot-installed weapons, and Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee in such a way that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use Aybee as a weapon at short range.

Because Dr. Krenstein ordinarily conceals Aybee's true nature, Aybee was mistakenly granted knighthood in the Order of the Emperors' Guard along with the others, after certain events on Jode/Pretoria. Such an occurrence would be most humiliating to the emperor, so it has become imperative that Aybee's "true identity" not become a matter of public knowledge.

For more information about Aybee, see this issue's *Playing the Characters*.

In Search of a Story

Akidda Laagir, Dur Telemon, Dr. Theodor Krenstein, and Aybee Owen were now fast friends. After their adventure on Jode/Pretoria, they had been rewarded with knighthood and Imperial space-required vouchers, giving them free high passage as far as Capital.

All four sought adventure. Akidda had to find it, or his feature articles for the *Digest* would miss their deadlines. Krenstein was interested in anything that moved—or didn't move. Dur, who just mustered out of a new desk job with the Scouts, was eager to see everything that continuing in the service would have kept from him. And Aybee, Dr. Krenstein's robot valet, was programmed to learn as much as he could by himself.

In the Starport

Akidda sat at a wallscreen in the starport library. He had the computer's voder switched off, so the only sounds from his side of the room were tappings of his fingers on the panel, punctuated by Villani curses muttered under his breath. Dur looked up from his hologram, and as he pulled himself out of his chair the images paused automatically, awaiting his return.

"What's the matter, Kidd?" he asked.

"It's this blasted Touring Award. Some days, I wonder if it's worth it. Write articles that 'promote cultural diversity within the Imperium'."

"So?"

"So I've looked at every xboat world in this sector, and I can't find *any* 'cultural diversity'. And they expect my next article to be on its way to Deneb in 9 weeks."

"Why not look at some worlds that are off the xboat routes?"

"I'm trying to save time," Akidda said. "I didn't figure we'd have to go back to Pretoria for the investigation, and that knighting ceremony was a real waste of time for me. You can ship all your nobles to the Hivers, for what I care."



Dur reached across to the panel. "The trouble with you, Kidd, is that you never learned how to read a map properly. What's wrong with this world right here?" he pointed. "It's only a couple of jumps away from our next stop."

"Wal-ta-ka? What's it supposed to mean, I wonder?"

"How should I know?" Dur said. "I don't explain 'em, I just pick 'em." He strolled back over to his seat, and was again engrossed in the holo's battle scenes, recorded during the Fourth Frontier War.

Akidda punched up the planetary data and glanced dejectedly over it. "Another culturally diverse desert world...settled by culturally diverse miners and their culturally diverse families, eking out their everyday life in their culturally diverse...hey, wait a minute. Listen to this, Doc!"

Theodor Krenstein and his robot looked up from what they were doing as Akidda's hand brushed against the voder switch.

The computer read aloud. "Outside the spaceport city, the desert world Wal-ta-ka is settled by a sparse nomadic population. Although descended from the same colonists as the city dwellers, the nomads are vehemently opposed to all technology and the two groups have little contact."

"Opposed to technology?" the doctor asked. "On a desert world? What's the point?"

"The point is, we're going to Wal-ta-ka to write a story on cultural diversity," Akidda said. "Any objections?"

"I suppose not, Akidda. Aybee, do you feel like travelling?"

"I'm at your service, Dr. Krenstein. I suppose that means we'll finish the translation later?"

Akidda looked over to their wallscreen. "Translation? What secret project are you two working on now?"

"Aybee was just porting a Vargr engineering journal into Galanglic for me. He needs the practice in the Vargr languages, and I want him to pick up some engineering knowledge, anyway," Krenstein answered.

"I'll make our travel arrangements right away," Akidda said, rubbing his hands eagerly back and forth.

"What about Dur?" Aybee asked. "He looks oblivious to anything but that holo he's watching. Are you sure he'll want to go?"

Akidda's face broke into a grin, and he looked at the doctor from the corners of his eyes. "Don't worry about Dur, Aybee. Travelling to Wal-ta-ka was his idea in the first place." He winked slightly. "He has lots of friends there, I think."

Aybee hesitated for a split second, then smiled. "I'm sure I'll enjoy meeting anyone that Dur is fond of." The doctor and Akidda stifled their chuckles.

Wal-ta-ka/Atsah

Primary: Ember, spectral class M5 V. Mass: .331 standard. Stellar diameter: .716 standard. Luminosity: .007 standard.

Planetary System: Four major bodies. One inhabited world (Wal-ta-ka, I). No planetoid belts, no empty orbits, one gas giant (orbit #3).

I Wal-ta-ka: Mean orbital radius: 19.5 million kilometers (.13 AU.). Period: 29.76 days standard. 1 satellite, diameter 3196 kilometers. Density: 2.2. Mass .116 standard. Mean surface gravity: 0.82 G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with primary). Axial inclination: 1° 5' 1.0" (average). Albedo: 0.11. Surface atmospheric pressure: 0.93 atm standard; composition - standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage: 2%; composition - liquid water. Mean surface temperature: 24°C.

Wal-ta-ka (0303 C360431-A) was originally settled in the early 100s by Wellington Interstellar Miners, a now-defunct corporation. Its high density clearly indicated a high metal content, in this case a large molten core. Unfortunately surface deposits turned out to be smaller than expected and hazardous to work.

Another factor limiting exploitation of deposits was the fact that Wal-ta-ka is a twilight zone world; it is tidally locked with its dim red primary, Ember. The central bright side temperature always exceeds 40° C; the central dark side temperature is consistently below -25° C. Although the bright side is habitable, most prefer to avoid it because its oases are rare. The bitterly cold dark side is not habitable without enclosed shelter.

Legat-la, Wal-ta-ka's only moon, has a period of 28 standard days. It is 197,265 km from the planet. Its slow orbit and large size causes frequent eclipses of several hours duration in some areas along the twilight zone.

Legat-la also causes a minor libration effect on the planet; the sun, Ember, appears to slowly oscillate in a small figure eight pattern. If not for this libration, the sun would hang perfectly motionless in the sky.

A seismic quake in 234 destroyed the Wellington mining colony. The colony was reestablished 130 years later; its only city is the starport Estin Down.

Outside the spaceport city, the desert world Wal-ta-ka is settled by a sparse nomadic population. Although descended from the same colonists as the city dwellers, the nomads are vehemently opposed to all technology and the two groups have little contact.

Wal-ta-ka is a desert planet, but evolutionary adaptation supports a small number of native plant and animal species outside the dark side of the planet.

In Estin Down Starport

Estin Down, Wal-to-ka's only starport, lies on the planet's dark side near a rich underground mineral deposit on the edge of an extensive alkali plain. After finding accommodations in Estin Down, the players can pursue their interests individually or as a group. Arctic-style clothing is needed to walk outside; most buildings are connected by heated walkways. Akidda is seeking a history of the planet and the cultural split. Dur is interested in survival information and equipment. Krenstein and Aybee are interested in everything.

Make use of NPC's in the following locations to convey information requested by the players.

At the library: The disaster of 234 all but wiped out the young mining colony. The fusion power plant was destroyed by a seismic quake, leaving the colony without light and heat, and water, which had been pumped from underground aquifers. Many miners died of exposure trying to reach the warmer bright side from their dark side mines. No ships were available at the time to send for help. When a free trader finally called at the class D starport, the crew found the colony "abandoned" with all colonists either dead or gone to the bright side.

A cursory search by the crew of the free trader found that those miners who had reached the bright side had subsequently died of thirst. All missing colonists were reported dead, but a few were still alive, eking out a meager existence in caves in the twilight zone. Their descendants were discovered when the mining colony was re-established 130 years later. Attempts to bring them back to civilization were to no avail—the survivors had lost all former ties with their past and had evolved into a new nomadic sub-culture.

The language of the nomads has diverged considerably from Galanglic, but most Galanglic speakers will be comfortable with the dialect after 1D days of contact. Translator memclips, prepared during the Scout survey, are available for 15 credits, but of course the characters can not take along a high-tech translator.

Referee: The UTP for Dr. Krenstein to load this new linguistic information into Aybee's memory is (DIFFICULT, computer, int, REPEATABLE, 25 minutes). The characters may use a translator at Estin Down Starport for practice, to lessen the time needed to learn the dialect after contact with the nomads is made.

At any public place, interviewing at random: City people avoid the nomads. The nomads will not permit hi-tech vehicles or equipment to approach their camps. People consider the nomads to be primitive, ignorant, stubborn, and sometimes dangerous.

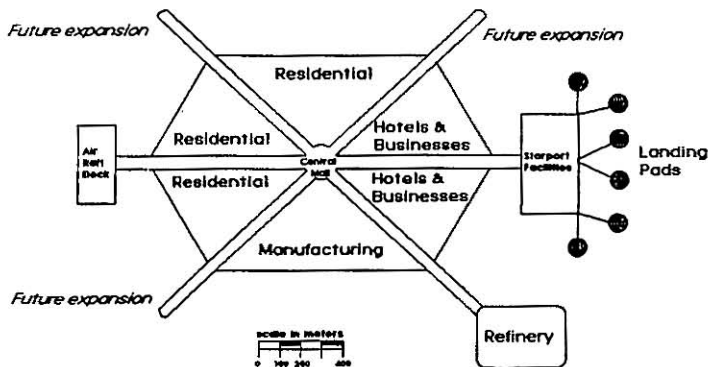
At a transport company office: Infrequent trade of spices for semi-precious stones is conducted with the nomads, so certain transport points are arranged. An air/ratt pilot (see Suvi, below) will take them to a prominent landmark in the twilight zone, within walking distance of one of the nomad oases.

Suvi (Tu Suvityatlaaka) 498989 Age 30 3 terms
Air/Raft-3, Gravitics-1, Vacc-1

A transmitter installed at the rendezvous point can be used to summon return transport when the characters are ready to return. The air/raft service costs Cr200 each, one way. The characters will be warned not to take anything with them above tech level 2, since the sight of such equipment arouses the hostility of the nomads.

Referee: This may give the players second thoughts about taking Aybee along. In this case, the players should be encouraged to believe that the likelihood of uneducated nomads being able to identify Aybee as a robot would be quite low, and the only alternative would be to leave him on his own in the starport city. Given his naiveté and high cost, this is impractical. In addition, Aybee's programming as a bodyguard would make him reluctant to let Dr. Krenstein go unaccompanied. To abandon Aybee is out of character for both Krenstein and Aybee, and the referee should not allow this.

Looking for survival techniques: Dur will have little success with the city people when asking about survival techniques on the bright side. Most of them consider the question of living in the desert to be a meaningless exercise; they scarcely know rudimentary techniques for coping with the harsh environment outside their conditioned complex.



The Nomads of the Light Side

From the landing beacon, it is a 2 km walk west to an oasis where a group of nomads is packing up to move on.

AT THE OASIS

The majority of Wal-ta-ka's plant and animal life is found in the cultivated oases of the twilight zone. Near the center of most oases are several large pools of fresh surface water.

Certain bushes yield a fruit with an edible pit, which is dried by the nomads for storage. Other plants yield a fruit which is stored in brine and can be pressed for oil. Grass for animals is more abundant. Grain is cultivated along with edible gourds, and edible greens grow wild.

Domestic birds are raised for eggs, meat, and insect control. Nomads at each oasis keep certain birds from other oases in cages; the birds' homing instincts allow the nomads to send messages to each other.

THE NOMADS

The tribe of nomads at the oasis consists of 30 individuals:

- 6 couples (12 total)
- 10 children
- 3 unmarried men
- 4 unmarried women
- 1 elderly man

An explanation to the Nomads from Akidda of his purpose in learning about them will be seen as flattering and they will agree to take the players along as their guests. Some of the more important Nomad NPCs include:

**Tribal chief (married) 37688A Age 62 12 terms
Leader-3, Bow Cbt-2, Survival-2, Brawling-1, Tactics-1,
Blade Cbt-1**

Torbal Ta-Ged (Torbal the Good) has been chief of this tribe for over 30 years. He will tell the characters about the nomad's lifestyle when asked, and he will arrange for their comfort, but he will be aloof and dignified, and will not seek them out.



**Hunter (unmarried) 76C437 Age 22 2 terms
Hunting-2, Survival-1**

Navet Ta-Lood (Navet the Loud) is a bully, easily threatened by the unfamiliar, and relentlessly hostile to strangers. He will seek opportunities to convince the chief to throw the characters out.



Unmarried girl 473646 Age 18 1 term
Survival-1, Blade Cbt-1

Triva Sanel-Katla (Triva daughter of Katla) is an attractive young woman; she will be friendly to the entire group, but especially to Dur Telemon. She and the herdsman (below) are the most likely to volunteer information, advice, and help to the players without prompting.



Married woman 682758 Age 48 8 terms
Carousing-2, Survival-2, Blade Cbt-1

Rila Maras-Laku (Rila wife of Laku) will be asked by the chief to provide for the characters' meals and beds, because her youngest children have recently vacated her tent. She is a pleasant hostess.



Herdsman 888836 Age 26 3 terms
Herding-3, Bow Cbt-1, Survival-1

Iroya San-Fesol (Iroya son of Fesol) talks freely about the nomad's lifestyle, and is a good source for desert survival information. He loves to spin nomadic tales while tending his animals.



Wise woman 4A8B89 Age 52 9 terms
Survival-2, Medic-2, Leader-1, JOT-1, Blade Cbt-1

Itsnan Te-Shamel (Itsnan the wise woman) is a capable tech level 2 medic and midwife. She is also a talented healer with herbal medicines. If questioned politely by Dr. Krenstein, she will demonstrate or explain her techniques, and give many health tips for desert life.



Young boy 547934 Age 10 0 terms
Bow Cbt-0, Survival-0

Tabor San-Segidd (Tabor son of Segidd), the son of the tribal shaman, is inquisitive, and may ask about the forbidden topic of the players' lives beyond the sky when elders are not listening. He may attempt to teach players to hunt (at least as well as he does) in order to have them alone.



Shaman

84AA9A Age 66 13 terms

Survival-3, Leader-3, Recon-2, Tactics-2, Bow Cbt-1, Blade Cbt-1

Segidd Ta-Shaman (Segidd the wise man), is full of legends, particularly about the testing time, which includes some distorted history of technology on the planet. When asked how the nomads came to live this way, he will hold up his hands for attention and all the youth will crowd around to listen to the story. He is renowned for his story telling ability. He is a useful source of desert information, especially the nomadic taboos.



LIFE IN THE DESERT

The nomads move from oasis to oasis every few weeks and harvest whatever is available at the time, tending the plants at each stop.

The nomads are preparing for a ten-day trip to an oasis 200 kilometers deeper into the desert. The pack animals they travel with have the survival characteristics of a Terran camel. The nomads plan to return after one week at the other oasis.

From this point, begin plant and animal encounter rolls twice per day. It is up to the players to elicit information from the nomads about the native life.

The Culture of the "San-de Wal-ta-ka"

The San-de Wal-ta-ka (Children of Wal-ta-ka) live at tech level 2, and everything is done by hand or by animal power. They have no permanent buildings or machinery. They believe technology makes men weak and dependent, and in large doses causes insanity.

The Children of Wal-ta-ka live on what nature provides through their hunting, gathering, and primitive horticulture. The individual tribes, numbering twenty to fifty persons, are independent of each other, meeting only occasionally for recreation, competitions, and the arranging of marriages. Women are encouraged to bear many children; fertility is valued by the tribe.

Men and women are roughly equal in status, but an expectant mother is highly revered. Women have considerable say in the arrangement of their marriages. At 14, a girl moves from her parent's tent into one of her own and begins collecting and making her dower property. Her father (or mother, if father is dead) must agree to any proposed match and be paid a bride-price.

The work of men and women is differentiated, and if the male adventurers express interest in helping a woman with her work they will be laughed at.

Water, of course, is a very precious substance on Wal-ta-ka. It is to be shared with any who need it and preserved carefully. The occasional rainstorm is a mystical event. The Children will stand in the rain with their faces to the sky, singing.

The Children do not have a concept of real estate. The oases and

their fruits belong to all Wal-ta-ka's Children and are cared for and harvested as necessary by any present.

Hospitality is important to the desert dwellers. By his presence, a guest honors his host's tent, and gifts made to a guest raise the status of the giver according to their value.

The Sojourn

Both boys and girls must make a sojourn when they reach 14 years of age, in order to become full adults in the tribe. One must go into the desert alone at the rise of the sojourn moon, and live off the land until the moon sets 14 days later, when one is allowed to return to the tribe. Youths have been known to disappear in this rite of passage, but most are so well educated in the ways of their environment by that age that the trial is not too severe.

There are many reasons why the Children of Wal-ta-ka might force the four adventurers to undertake the Journey of the Sojourn Moon. If a character is caught with impure technological ideas, or in some other way breaks one of the taboos of Wal-ta-ka, the characters would be required to travel the sojourn as atonement. Aybee's true nature would be a primary cause for such an eventuality, and this fact could be accidentally discovered by the Children in many ways.

The referee should plan carefully for the characters' sojourn, the actual situation being dependent upon the maturity and interests of the players in his group. If the players are careful, the Children of Wal-ta-ka could invite them to become members of the tribe by passing the test of the Sojourn. If the players enjoy ethical dilemmas, force a duel to the death between Aybee and Navet Ta-Lood, brought about by the latter's ritual challenge. Krenstein must not allow Aybee to kill the nomad; in this situation, the unmasking of Aybee is inevitable and would force the Sojourn.

Plan to start the Sojourn 5 to 7 days after the adventurers first meet the nomads. Adjust the actual time to take into account the things the four must learn to survive the ordeal.

The mechanics of the Sojourn are simple: a colored square of cloth with a particular design sewn into it is taken by two men to a Sojourn tower, a prominent landmark. The cloth is put into a chamber in the tower and the men leave. The person on the Sojourn travels to the tower (about 7 days distant), retrieves the cloth, and returns to the tribe, where he is greeted with a jubilant celebration. The patch of cloth is sewn into the tribal banner, which the tribe keeps on display.

Since the characters are 'ready' to take the Sojourn at the same time, four (or three if Aybee has been discovered) cloths will be placed at the same time, and the four may take the Sojourn together.

Aybee's Duel

If you decide to use the duel between Aybee and Navet Ta-Lood, several things must be borne in mind. Aybee is not trained specifically as a fighter, but his natural abilities make him a formidable opponent. Aybee's strength is F; although his UPP shows his apparent endurance

to be 9, this is only an apparent characteristic, judging from his external appearance and emotion simulation software. His true endurance depends only upon his internal power plant, which can run for several weeks. Aybee's blows to Navet will do 2D damage; Navet's blows should be treated as normal. Remember in rolling that Aybee has no brawling skill.

The ritual battles of the nomads use no weapons, so Navet's task would be to kill Aybee with his bare hands. If Navet manages to land a blow to Aybee, Navet himself could be injured. If Aybee lands a blow, Navet could be killed. One possibility is that Aybee, by shutting down his mechanical processes, could 'throw the fight' to appease the nomads. This will not work, because Aybee's 'lifeless' body weighs over 300 kg, revealing his artificial nature.

Preparing for The Sojourn

For whatever reason you choose, the characters will be told to make a sojourn, "to earn the blessings of Father Wal-ta-ka", beginning when the Sojourn Moon rises in twenty-four hours. In the intervening twenty-four hours they may ask questions of any member of the tribe to get advice on how to survive.

They may take nothing along but what the nomads provide for the journey. They must reach the tower and return before the moon sets.

If Aybee is the cause of the trouble, they will be told that he can never re-enter a nomad camp; he must be left in the desert forever. He will also be isolated from the group until the journey begins. This means that his perfect memory cannot be used for things the others learn during this time. If his identity has remained a secret, no distinction will be made in his preparations or the others' preparations.

Messages will be sent by the homing birds to other nomad groups so that the adventurers will not be taken in if they go to another oasis before the time is up.

Each adventurer will be provided with appropriate clothing, knife, digging tool, 2-meter walking stick (for poling sand on dunes), 2-liter waterskin (full), a pack, a blanket, and 50 meters of rope. This equipment weighs 4 kg total. If Aybee's true nature has been discovered, he will receive no equipment, since he is not human.

Available advice (gotten from cooperative NPC's) may include information on animals and plants in the lists; suggestions to rest in shade or in caves (some caves may contain water); to drink available water, not carry it; to hide from sandstorms; to avoid the slipfaces of dunes; and to hunt for water before hunting for food. This information should be divided among NPC's questioned, with the most friendly characters providing the most information.

Once in the desert, the characters' options depend on how they got into this. They may decide to abandon their opportunity to pacify Wal-ta-ka, and instead to try to return to the beacon and signal their ride from the spaceport transport company. This is a journey of about 300 kilometers, in a direction away from the Sojourn tower.

How To Use the Sojourn Map

The referee should mark the players' position on the Sojourn map as they travel, but the referee should not show the players the map.

The travel rates on foot are:

Open Desert.....	2 hours per hex
Loose Sand	3 hours per hex
Dune Sea	3 hours per hex
Boulder Field	3 hours per hex
Badlands	3 hours per hex
Alkali Salt Flats	1 hour per hex

Because of Wal-ta-ka's small diameter (UPP size 3), the characters can only see into the 6 hexes surrounding the hex they are currently in. Certain terrain is visible from farther than 1 hex distance:

Badlands (hills)	visible from 2 hex distance
Mesa	visible from 3 hex distance
Pinnacle	visible from 4 hex distance

Surviving in the Desert

Food: Each character needs 70 units of food per week. For every 10 units less than 70 consumed per week, apply -1 to STR, DEX, or END. Characters may not recover lost points unless they eat the full requirement. They recover 1 point per day.

Unit value of food items:

- 1 kg of edible meat or eggs 20 units
- 1 kg of edible plants 10 units

Water: Each character needs 1 liter of water per day. For every 0.2 liters less than the required amount consumed, -1 to STR, DEX, or END. Lost point recovery is the same as for food.

- Some plants will provide water (see plant descriptions).
- Aybee's fuel cell power plant produces 1.5 liters of pure water per day.

Forced Marching: If the characters want to reduce the time needed to traverse a certain hex, they may "force march" at the cost of -1 END per hex. The time needed to cross the hex is then reduced by half.

Sleep: The characters must sleep 8 hours of every 24 hours ("one day"). If they travel more than 12 hours in one day, roll END or less for each hour they continue travelling to avoid -1 to END. After 24 hours of travel without sleep, -1 to END for each hour they continue travelling. One full day of rest (no travel) will recover 1 lost END point.

Plant and Animal Descriptions

This is the information for the illustrated plants and animals which may be encountered on Wal-ta-ka. Keep this information separate from the illustrations page; players may learn this information only from the nomads or from their own hard experience. Whenever an item is rolled on the encounter table, show the players the corresponding picture.

PLANTS

- 2 These scrubby trees always indicate water at or near the surface. They may also harbor birds and nests. 1D liters of muddy water available.
- 3 After breaking off the thorns, the stalks of this cactus can be pulled apart at the joints and carried for water. Cut the stem and pure, slightly sweet water will drip out. About 60% of the plant's weight is water stored in this way. *Water value:* 1 liter per day of gathering (per character), weight 1.5 kg. NOTE: On a roll of 6 on 1D, the cactus may harbor worms in its flesh, which reduces the water available by half.
- 4 The spines of this cactus secrete a toxin useful for hunting. One spine will do 1D damage. An unhelpful nomad will simply refer to the plant as taboo and prevent players from touching it.
- 5 The small stems and pink, ball-like flowers of this plant belie its vast root system, which spreads over many square feet. A few of these plants dispersed on the face of a dune can stabilize the entire slope. An edible tuber grows at the ends of some of these roots, about a meter from the stalk in any direction. On those rare occasions when it rains, the flower blooms brilliantly; the nomads then place a few of its petals in their waterskins to produce a mildly euphoric drink, considered a blessed gift of Father Wal-ta-ka. *Food value:* 1 kg per day of gathering (per character).
- 6 If one can avoid this bush's sharp needles, its blue fruit is edible though bland. *Food value:* 2 kg per day of gathering (per character).
- 7 This grass is the staple diet of Wal-ta-ka's grazing animals; a large patch of it means good hunting. Roll an extra animal encounter.
- 8 This lichen mitigates the poison of plant number 10 below, if eaten within an hour of the appearance of the first symptoms. The player's physical characteristics will return to normal at a rate of 2 points per day following treatment.
Nomads may refer to the lichen as a healing plant without elaboration, unless pressed by characters for information. It may be carried dry without loss of potency. The wise woman keeps a small supply. The UTP for finding this lichen is (DIFFICULT, survival, Int, REPEATABLE, 5 minutes).
- 9 This prickly ground cover is useless to humans, but supports colonies of rodents (see animals number 5 and 7 below).
- 10 The sweet-smelling, yellow fruit of this cactus is poisonous, and the nomads will always give the plant a wide berth. If the fruit is eaten, dizziness and loss of coordination will result after 1 hour (subtract 1D+1 from dexterity). In the second hour, reduce STR, DEX, and END to 1. If not treated, the poison is fatal after another 2 hours.

- 11 This cactus's blossom opens only during windy conditions. The pollen of the blossom causes a form of "hibernation" in humans; respiration and heartbeat slow drastically, and water needs are reduced to 0.1 liter per day. The influence of this pollen lasts 3D hours. *Referee:* Perceptive players will discover the cause of this hibernation, and perhaps will realize its medical value offworld.
- 12 The so-called torch bush has resinous stalks that will burn for about an hour. Highly suitable for exploring caves.

ANIMALS

- 2 Sand crabs, found in and near any body of open water, are edible and considered a delicacy. Any nomad child will cheerfully demonstrate the technique for finding and catching them.
- 3 The sand swimmer is the most dangerous native inhabitant of Wal-ta-ka. It hunts alone, moving through sand slightly below the surface, seeking the pressure which tells it that an animal is standing on the sand above. It can surface and strike very rapidly. The sand swimmer's approach makes a low, crunching sound, detectable by an alert sentry if no other noise interferes. The sand swimmer cannot move or strike except through loose sand, for which reason the characters will be strongly enjoined by the nomads *never* to sleep on such ground. If this cannot be avoided, a watch must be set. If not in loose sand when this encounter is rolled, roll again.
- 4 These carrion birds stink, but will not harm anyone still moving.
- 5 These long-tailed, spotted rodents are taboo. Their flesh frequently transmits disease; if eaten, on a roll of 8+ lower END by 2 for 1D days.
- 6 These lizard-like creatures are edible but fast! There are tricks for catching them which the nomads know. Specifically, the creatures usually dodge first to the right because of the way their vision works, so having a net or trap placed that way when goading them to run is often effective.
- 7 These short-tailed, gray rodents are edible. They like to live in the prickly ground cover prevalent in the desert hills.
- 8 This jackal-like scavenger is dangerous to children but can easily be frightened away from its prey.
- 9 Songbirds nest in trees and bushes. They mate and lay eggs year-round, paying little attention to weather except to hide from storms in rock outcroppings. Their eggs (0.1 kg, 1D+1 eggs in nest) are edible. It is considered offensive to Wal-ta-ka to take all the eggs from any one nest.
- 10 These grazers are the primary prey of nomad hunters.
- 11 The eggs (0.2 kg, 1D eggs in nest) of these raptors will be found in cliff-side nests, and are edible. See animal number 9.
- 12 All snakes encountered in the desert must be presumed dangerous. Snakebites are not always fatal, but one causes 2D wounds. Turnabout is fair play: the snakes (0.5 kg) on Wal-ta-ka are edible.

Event Descriptions (listed alphabetically)

Animal encounter. Roll 2D on the table below to determine which animal is encountered. Each animal is described in the section *Plant and Animal Descriptions*.

Die	Animal	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds&Weapons
2	2 Intimidators	3kg	3/4	mesh	1 claws A5 F8 S2
3	1 Pouncer	25kg	11/8	Jack	15 stinger A0 F0 S1
4	4 Flying Carrion-Eaters	6kg	4/2	none	4 claws F4 A8 S2
5	1 Gatherer	1kg	4/0	none	1 teeth F3 A5 S3
6	2 Grazers	.5kg	1/0	none	1 claws F0 A8 S4
7	1 Gatherer	1kg	2/0	none	1 teeth F3 A5 S3
8	1 Gatherer	50kg	18/5	none	9 teeth+1 A9 F5 S2
9	6 Flying Gatherers	.2kg	1/0	none	1 claws F4 A7 S2
10	9 Grazers	100kg	20/8	none	6 hooves F2 A7 S3
11	1 Flying Hunter	6kg	5/7	none	1 teeth F4 A6 S2
12	Event- Snake. Roll for surprise; if snake has surprise, will bite one of the characters unless that character can roll dexterity or less. A bite causes 2D damage.				

Blowing sand. Windy conditions cause blowing, drifting sand close to the ground for 1D hours, increasing characters' water needs by 50% for the day. In addition, shelter is needed while resting. If without shelter, roll END or less to avoid taking 1D wounds from sand abrasions, and sand in eyes, nose, and mouth.

Cave. A small cave has been found, and can be used for shelter. On a roll of 10+ the cave contains a spring that provides 1D liters of water per day¹.

Coarse soil. Loose, rocky soil increases travel time by 50%.

Deep sand. Deep, loose sand increases travel time by 100%.

Gullies. A network of shallow gullies have been found. On a roll of 11+, the characters discover a spring providing 1 liter of water¹.

Hot spring. A hot spring with a water flow of 1D liters per day has been found¹. The water temperature is about 80°C (scalding hot, near boiling). Because of the minerals in the water, each character drinking it must roll END or less to keep from being sick (1D damage for 1 day). *Referee:* If the mineral water is diluted with an equal amount of pure water, no roll is needed.

Loose bearings. A region of similar terrain causes the group to lose their bearings. They enter a hex other than the one for which they were headed.

Mirage. The players see the terrain type of the hex for which they are headed as constantly receding distant badlands.

Plant encounter. Roll 2D to determine the number of the plant encountered. Each plant is described in the section *Plant and Animal Descriptions*.

Rain. A brief rain falls for 1D minutes.

Seismic tremor. A strong seismic tremor shakes the ground. Each character must roll DEX or less to avoid taking 1D wounds from falling.

Violent duststorm. High wind whips up dust into a blinding storm for half a day. Travel is interrupted for 1 day while the group digs themselves out. Characters not sheltered take 1D damage from exposure to storm.

Violent sandstorm. High winds whip sand into a vicious, blasting storm for half a day. Travel is interrupted for 1 day while the group digs themselves out. Characters not sheltered take 3D damage from exposure to storm. Any transparent items not in shelter become translucent from sand abrasion.

Windiness. Excessive windiness increases characters' water needs by 50% for the day.

¹Whenever **water** is found, roll for a plant encounter. The plants will often be found by the characters before the water source is discovered.

Plants



Animals



No. 2

No. 3

No. 4

No. 5

No. 6

No. 7

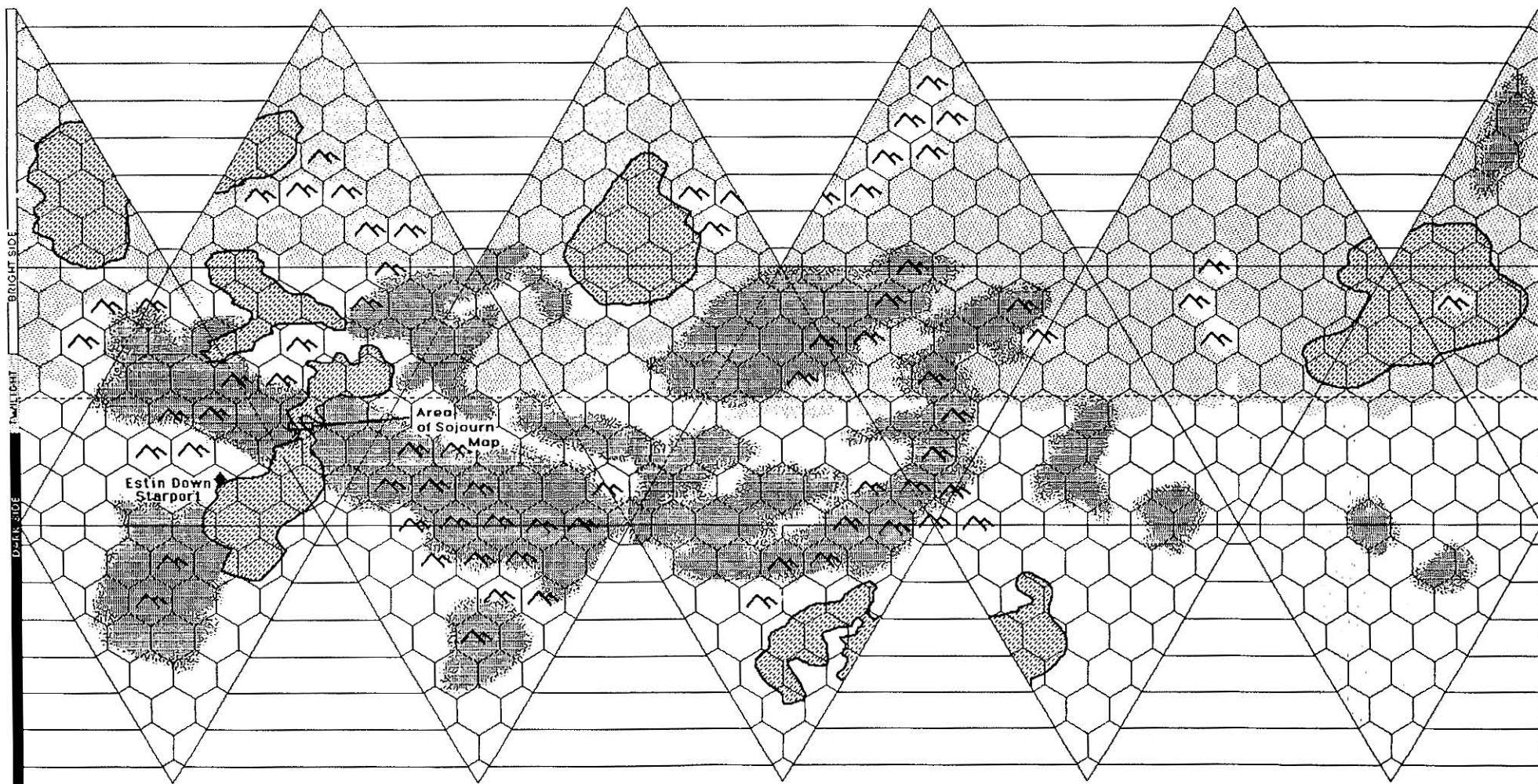
No. 8

No. 9

No. 10

No. 11

No. 12



Wal-ta-ka C360431-A



Terrain Event Tables (roll 2 times for each hex entered)

Open Desert (2D): Fairly flat, open ground. Occasional plants or small animals.

- 2 Rain
- 3 Coarse soil
- 4 Animal encounter
- 5 Mirage
- 6 Windiness
- 7 No event
- 8 Blowing sand
- 9 Plant encounter
- 10 Plant encounter
- 11 Violent duststorm
- 12 Seismic tremor

Loose Sand (2D): Fairly flat, open ground, with loose sand soil. Few plants or animals.

- 2 Rain
- 3 Animal encounter
- 4 Deep sand
- 5 Mirage
- 6 Windiness
- 7 No event
- 8 Blowing sand
- 9 Mirage
- 10 Plant encounter
- 11 Violent sandstorm
- 12 Seismic tremor

Dune Sea (2D): Rolling expanse of sand dunes. Few plants or animals.

- 2 Rain
- 3 Sand swimmer
- 4 Blowing sand
- 5 Mirage
- 6 Windiness
- 7 Lose bearings
- 8 Blowing sand
- 9 Lose bearings
- 10 Plant encounter
- 11 Violent sandstorm
- 12 Seismic tremor

Boulder Field (2D): Fairly flat, strewn with rocks of various sizes. Few plants or animals.

- 2 Rain
- 3 Animal encounter
- 4 Lose bearings
- 5 Mirage
- 6 Windiness
- 7 No event
- 8 Lose bearings
- 9 Gullies
- 10 Plant encounter
- 11 Violent duststorm
- 12 Seismic tremor

Badlands (2D): Mixture of flats, hills, and gullies. Somewhat rocky at times. Few plants or animals.

- 2 Rain
- 3 Animal encounter
- 4 Gullies
- 5 Mirage
- 6 Windiness
- 7 Coarse soil
- 8 Cave
- 9 Lose bearings
- 10 Plant encounter
- 11 Violent duststorm
- 12 Seismic tremor

Alkali Salt Flats (2D): Extensive barren flatland with high mineral salts content in soil. No plants or animals.

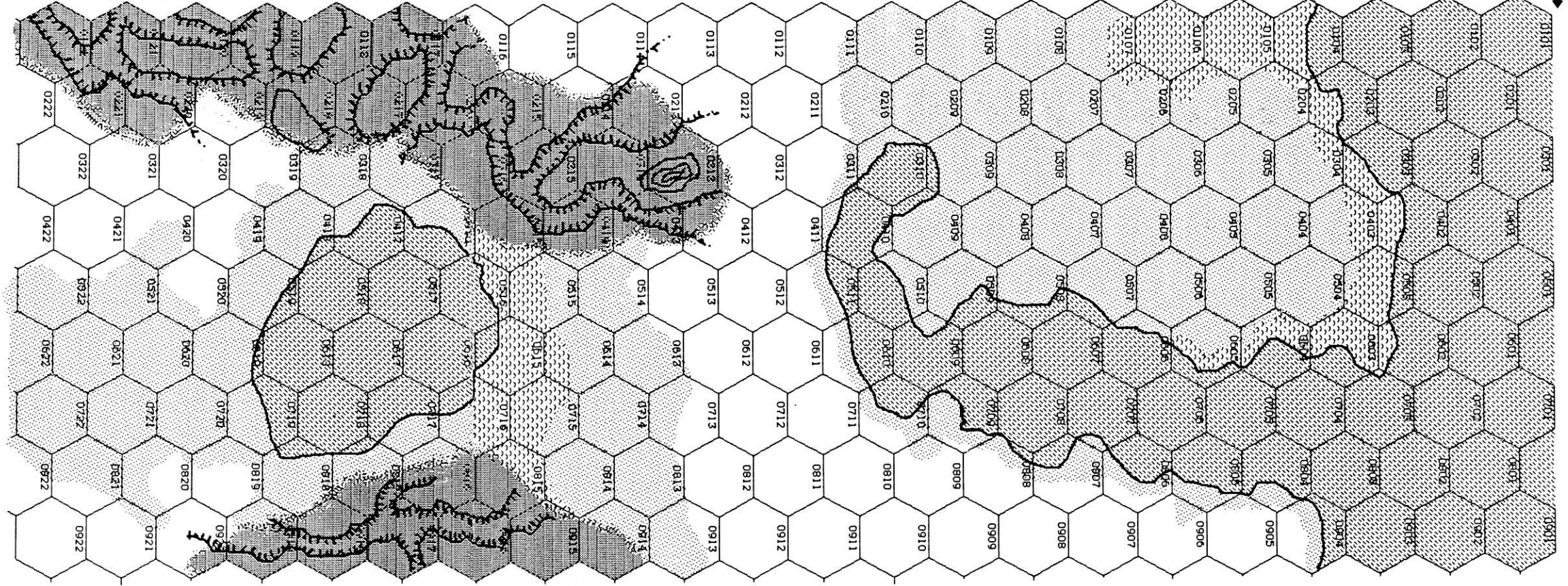
- 2 Rain
- 3 Blowing sand
- 4 Lose bearings
- 5 Mirage
- 6 Windiness
- 7 Mirage
- 8 Blowing sand
- 9 Hot spring
- 10 Lose bearings
- 11 Violent duststorm
- 12 Seismic tremor

Sojourn map terrain key

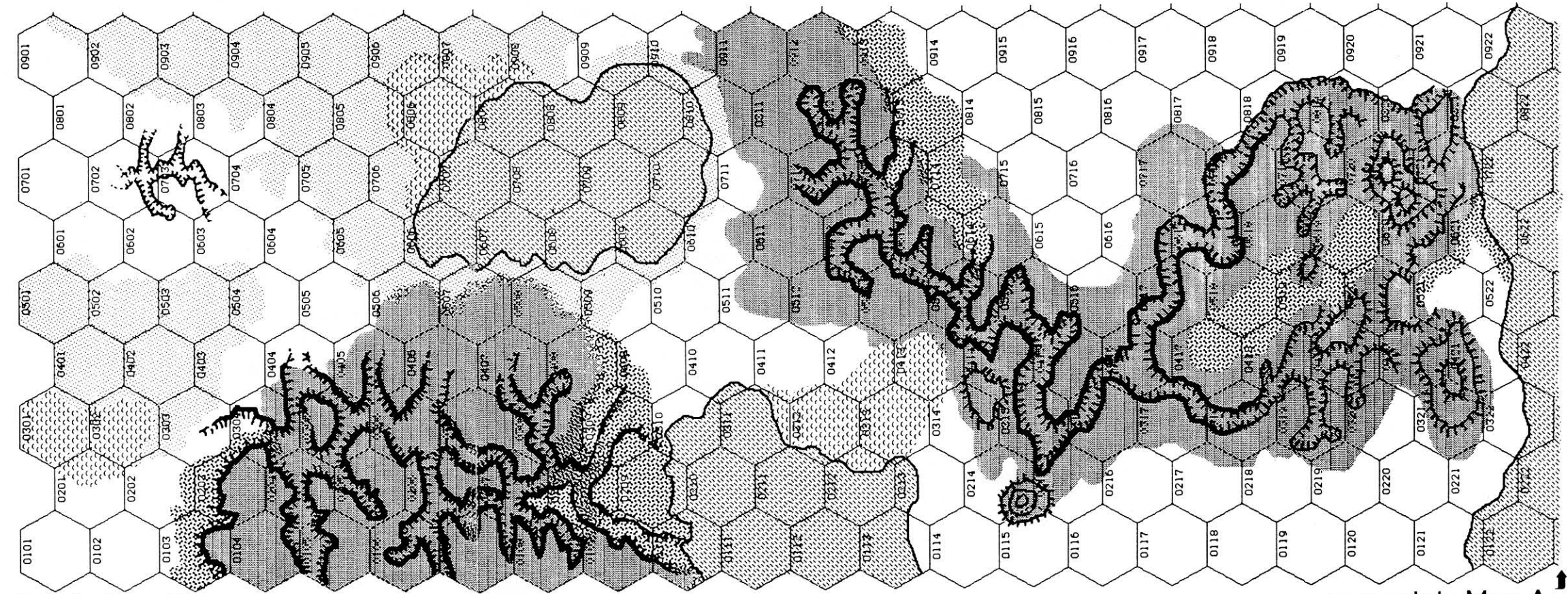
	Open Desert		Alkali Salt Flats
	Loose Sand		Canyon
	Dune Sea		Mesa
	Boulder Field		Pinnacle
	Badlands		

1 hex = 5 km
Roll for encounters 2 times in each hex.

MAP A



SOJOURN MAP



MAP B

connects to Map B

connects to Map A

Notes on the NPCs

The NPCs were generated using a variant of the Barbarian character type from *Citizens of the Imperium*. The *Citizens* Barbarian has ventured out to the stars and is more aware of technology. We modified that system to generate Barbarians who are closer to their environment and less experienced in technology. The modifications include:

- Replace the automatic Sword-1 skill with Survival-1
- Replace Gun Cbt skill with Brawling
- Replace Mechanical skill with Hunting
- Replace Streetwise skill with Animal Handling (see below)

Remember, a Barbarian starts at age 14, rather than age 18 as in other services. We also gave a 6 year old barbarian a level 0 in the automatic skill. At age 10 the character gets 1 roll on the service skills table and receives the rolled skill at level 0.

Animal Handling is adapted from an article by Phil Masters in *Journal #10*. It is a cascade skill from which the character chooses among: *Guard/Hunting Beasts, Falconry, Riding, and Herding*.

Skill Descriptions

Guard/Hunting Beasts: The individual is skilled in controlling and directing land animals, usually carnivore/chasers.

Referee: When a character has control of such an animal, he or she may issue it simple commands (how simple depends on the species' intelligence). If the characters are attacked by guard/hunting beasts anyone with any animal handling skill may spot a chance of turning or delaying the attack.

Falconry: The individual is skilled in controlling and directing winged carnivores that have been trained to assist in hunting.

Referee: In general, such creatures are most effective when they are less than totally tame, so this skill is rather complex, and quite rare. Exerting control can be handled as with Guard/Hunting skill, but roll more often. Attacks of such creatures are easier to turn but Falconry skill is needed to try.

Riding: The individual is skilled in controlling, directing, or riding draft animals, beasts of burden, and transport animals. This skill is similar to Equestrian in *Scouts*, Book 6.

Referee: Animals subject to this skill are often herbivores. General control can be maintained by anyone, but precise control requires this skill. This skill can also be used to attempt control of a panicking or stampeding animal.

Herding: The individual has the ability to control large groups of domesticated food or draft animals.

Referee: Animals subject to this skill are generally herbivores. This skill allows the individual to judge the mood of a herd of domestic herbivores and to prevent stampedes. The skill also allows some *limited* degree of control over wild herbivores.

The Time of Testing

There once were men who lived beyond the wall of darkness, evil men who hated mighty Wal-ta-ka and in their arrogance plotted to suck the very life from his inner depths.

Wal-ta-ka's wrath was kindled against these men. In his great fury, Wal-ta-ka drove the men from their contrivances; away from an existence of weakness and insanity, to a true understanding of Wal-ta-ka and his ways.

Many men in their foolish pride fought Wal-ta-ka and his blessed wisdom; for this they died.

Those who listened to mighty Wal-ta-ka and embraced his ways were in mercy.

Those who listened to mighty Wal-ta-ka and embraced his ways were given the "great light of the journey".

Those who listened to mighty Wal-ta-ka and embraced his ways were shown the way from the terrible darkness into light and life.

Those who were tested by Wal-ta-ka and proven by his wisdom were shown the truth and fullness of his ways: harmony with Wal-ta-ka is life; emnity with Wal-ta-ka is certain to bring his wrath.

Reteree: Linguists are divided over the etymology of the term Wal-ta-ka. Some claim that Wal-ta-ka literally means "Wall [of] the catastrophe" or "Separated from the catastrophe [by the wall]", because the twilight zone/dark side boundary forms an "inpenetrable" wall of sorts separating the nomads from the bitterly cold dark side area where the catastrophe occurred. Another theory derives the term Wal-ta-ka from the name of the original mining company, Wellington.



Playing the Characters

AB-101 (Sir Aybee Wan Owen) is the featured character in this issue's *Playing the Characters*.

Aybee is a tech level 15 pseudo-biological robot, engineered with lavish attention to detail by one of the top men in the field, Dr. Theodor Krenstein. Aybee is on the leading edge of intelligent pseudo-biological robot technology in the Imperium: he is an excellent imitation of a human being, but he is not perfect. Casual observation will not reveal him as non-human. Conversation at close range by someone with interview skill or observation at close range by someone with medical skill does have a chance of detecting Aybee's roboticity. The UTP for this task is:

(DIFFICULT, max(medical,interview), min(int,edu), REFEREE)

REFEREE: roll once in the first hour and every four hours thereafter when at close range.

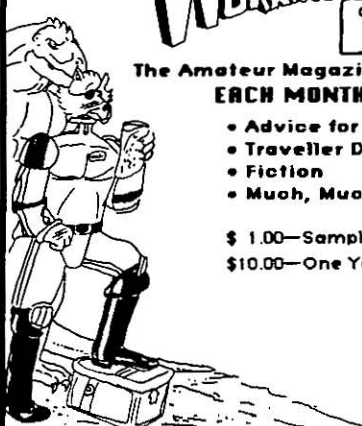
The points that may be noticed are as follows:

- Aybee's abdominal contents are less compressible than a human's; he cannot easily crouch or curl up.
- While Aybee does have a "pulse" in all the right spots, he has no heartbeat. His skin is warmed by a circulating fluid which radiates the heat of his internal mechanisms. This fluid is milky blue in color; the color in Aybee's skin is pigment. He cannot flush, blanch, or sunburn. He does not "turn blue" or get goose bumps in the cold. He never sweats or tans.
- Aybee's skin is not easily abraded (treat as jack). If his skin is abraded (1 - 6 damage points in one hit), it will not bleed or bruise. If his skin is deeply cut (over 6 damage points in one hit) he will leak milky blue coolant for 1 combat round, after which the wound will automatically self-seal.
- Aybee's bones are super-dense ceramic material (similar to battle dress), almost impossible to break. Anyone who punches Aybee will regret it—and so will anyone he punches.
- Aybee cannot, of course, heal from within. All damage requires Dr. Krenstein's attention for complete repair.
- Aybee is exceptionally strong, bordering on superhuman (he has a strength of 15); one would never guess this from his physique. Dr. Krenstein designed Aybee this way intentionally: would-be assailants should expect Aybee to be an "easy mark" in melee combat.
- Aybee has a problem with being too helpful. Dr. Krenstein has been trying to perfect Aybee's programming so that Aybee will use more discretion in his helpfulness, but the doctor has not entirely succeeded yet. The necessity of saving a human life will override all other programming restraints, and the doctor's well-being outweighs the welfare of any other human being.
- Aybee never needs a haircut, shave, or nail trim.

- Aybee weighs more than 300 kg (700 pounds). This poses a problem in some situations, but Aybee's programming tries to compensate for this where possible.

Countering the above are the following:

- The doctor's careful programming makes Aybee a splendid actor. He can feign illness, rage, amusement, even enthusiasm.
- Aybee's emotion simulation program does not control Aybee. His general programming is able at any time to override it, so Aybee need not react emotionally to all stimuli. He laughs at things that are funny, and expresses sorrow and concern over other things. When "frightened", he can show fear, but he is *not* afraid; his emotions are only apparent, and he is not constrained by them. He does not take offense at comments for which a human would be angry.
- Aybee's pseudomuscles bulge normally when he "exerts". Krenstein paid close attention to this area in Aybee's design, so his muscle contours seem natural.
- Aybee's chest moves realistically, as his hydrogen-oxygen fuel cell takes in its required oxygen from the air. Thus Aybee will not function in a vacuum—he must be in a vacc suit just as any human. He uses a bathroom to eliminate the pure waste-water produced by his fuel cells.
- Aybee has touch sensors throughout his skin and is programmed to grimace and say "ouch!" at the time of injury, but thereafter will show no apparent pain.
- Aybee knows how to bandage a surface wound to avoid being seen as "blue-blooded".
- Aybee can "eat" and "drink" a limited amount, which is stored temporarily in a receptacle holding 1 liter. Aybee will seek privacy (typically a bathroom) to empty this sac.



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Ref Notes

The goal of this adventure is not to kill off the characters in the desert, but for the players to have a good time. If they prepare well, and are careful, it should be easy for them to keep the characters alive and to enjoy the adventure.

For your part, you should make sure that they do go on the Sojourn. Some players will be understandably hesitant to commit themselves to a "dangerous" desert excursion without the hi-tech assistance their characters are used to. In this case, you can appeal to the pride of the characters. In Dur's case, Navet could sneeringly ask if Dur is afraid "to do what any of our young children can do." The players could also be convinced that Aybee's water supply minimizes any danger.

In the worst cases (or if your players enjoy confrontations), the characters could be forced by the nomads to take the Sojourn because the characters have offended Wal-ta-ka. This is a delicate situation for you to referee, because the characters should *not* attack their nomad hosts. You must make sure that the players do not feel that the nomads are their enemies, even if they are physically forced to make the Sojourn.

Remember, too, that Akidda's motivation for the visit is to find material for a story. The Sojourn could be just what he needs, particularly since induction into the tribe could open up additional sources of information for him.

When the players start the Sojourn, place them arbitrarily at either end of the Sojourn map. To travel to the middle of the map and back should take the characters no more than 14 days, particularly if they minimize their travel through canyons. The characters may find that travelling to the Sojourn tower takes more than 7 days, but the return trip is faster, because the characters will already know of locations of food and water. The players should be allowed to follow the same route back to the tribe, with the assistance of Dur's skill in survival and Aybee's memory.

You should also use the "hibernation plant" (plant number 11) as a hi-tech enigma for the players. The first or second time they encounter windy conditions, let the three humans experience the effects of the pollen. They may or may not make useful hypotheses when they recover; in any case, after returning to the nomads they will learn of the cause of the hibernation. The nomads are careful to cover their noses and mouths against the effects whenever it is windy enough. The source of this pollen, and its physiological effects, are known only by the nomads of Wal-ta-ka.

Atsah Subsector

During the First Imperium, the Atsah Subsector was on the spinward frontier. The early years of the Third Imperium were a time of rapid population growth and exploitation of this subsector as the frontier pushed on spinward.

The worlds of Atadl and Sherad were well established by 100 as the heart of a major resource and industrial cluster. The extensive Sherad belt currently provides many resources to support the worldwide industrialization of Atadl. However, no major finds have occurred in the last 150 years and many beltlers fear that the vast belt may be playing out. The flow of resources to Atadl is slowing, unemployment is on the rise there, and the populace is growing uneasy.

Niven has a dangerously insidious atmosphere and is rated an Amber Zone—caution is advised if travel there is necessary.

The Scout Service has found no native intelligent life in this subsector.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>UPP</i>	<i>Bases</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	
Niven	0102	E9C3237	6	NonInd.	A G
Kasmar	0105	E631754	9	NonAg. Poor.	G
Erita	0109	E99A575	8	NonInd. Water world.	G
Kiirindor	0110	B446666	B	A Agricultural. NonInd. Owned by Erita.	
Berora	0205	B100672	D	NonAg. NonInd. Vacuum world.	G
Wal-ta-ka	0303	C360431	A	NonInd. Desert world.	G
Daphkah	0305	B647777	B	N Agricultural.	G
Errogel	0306	B150554	A	N NonInd. Poor. Desert world.	G
Segan	0307	B3509AB	C	N Poor. Desert world.	G
Og Bere'	0402	B464002	8	NonInd.	G
Doho	0403	A696444	C	NonInd.	G
Gampin	0410	D668644	7	S Agricultural. NonInd. Rich.	G
Atsah	0503	A656750	D	W Agricultural. Subsector Capital.	G
Khishuda	0508	C856040	5	NonInd.	G
Corfinium	0601	B443664	8	NonInd. Poor. Owned by Atsah.	G
Ivora	0603	E999533	5	NonInd.	G
Atadl	0605	B2109C7	F	NonAg. Industrial.	G
Zerderu	0606	B441685	B	NonInd. Poor.	G
Lamar	0701	C410410	7	S NonInd.	G
Berth	0702	B547345	B	A NonInd.	G
Prevsla	0703	D243300	8	NonInd. Poor.	
Arabah	0705	C877233	5	S NonInd.	
Sherad	0706	A000447	F	N NonInd. Asteroid Belt.	G
Salaam	0803	D576300	4	S NonInd.	G

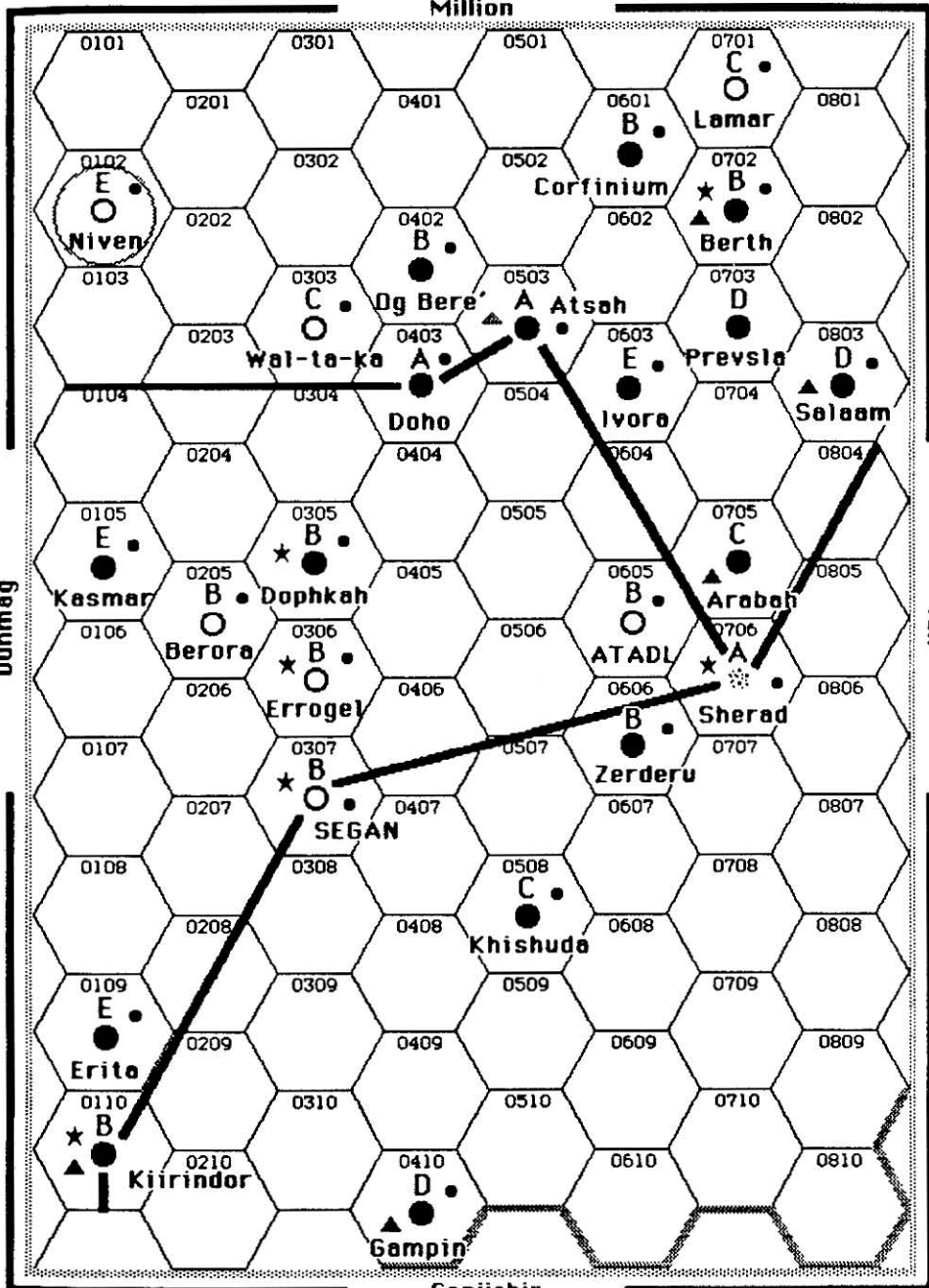
The Atsah subsector contains 24 worlds with a total population of 8.237 billion. The highest population is 5.2 billion at Segan; the highest tech level is F at Atadl and Sherad. All worlds are members of the Imperium.

Million

Dunmag

Ian

Geniishir



Library Data

The following items of information may be found in any ship's library program or through any vidnet terminal.

"Behind the Claw": A Galanglic slang term used by inhabitants of the Spinward Marches, Deneb, and Trojan Reach sectors to refer to these areas. The term derives from a supposed resemblance between a claw and the Great Rift, as seen on maps of the Imperium. Inhabitants of this region feel a certain pride in this designation, and it is used to imply that they share a camaraderie and common interest. The name was once used as the title of a popular newsmagazine with a circulation area encompassing the three sectors named above. The term is rarely used by inhabitants of other areas of the Imperium.

Deneb: Imperial sector containing 385 systems lying beyond the Great Rift; named for the sector's brightest star, Deneb (1925). The Deneb sector is primarily Imperial. The Imperial border runs just within the coreward edge of the sector, and scattered Vargr systems (as well as non-aligned systems and client states) lie beyond the border.

Digest Touring Award: Outstanding journalism award offered by The Travellers' Digest every seven years. The recipient, who must be a professional journalist living and working "behind the claw", is given honorary membership in the Travellers' Aid Society (worth 1 million credits); he is then expected to travel through the region during the tenure of his award, and to submit a feature article about his latest journey once every thirteen weeks. The intent of the Digest with this award is to "promote understanding of the cultural diversity within the Imperium". The most recent winner of the award, in 1100, is Akidda Laagiir of Mora/Mora.

Galanglic: "Galactic Anglic", the official language of the Third Imperium. Galanglic is a direct descendant of Anglic, the language used during the Rule of Man (-2204 through -1776). The popularization of Galanglic is important to the Imperium, because a common language known by all is beneficial to commerce. On many worlds, Galanglic is in fact a second language, used only in dealing with offworlders and Imperial officials. Although Galanglic is the official name for the language, it is often called Anglic by its speakers.

Shudusham Concords: Agreement signed by twelve worlds of the Sylean Federation at Shudusham/Capital (Core 2214) in -110, dealing with weaponry carried by robots. The Concords have no legal force now, of course, but many worlds have adopted similar or identical standards, using the Concords as a template, and most robots produced commercially in the Imperium are designed with this in mind.

Journalist Character Generation

In a group of individuals as diverse and widespread as those of the Imperium, journalists are important to the progress of commerce, government, society, and science. Journalists can be found at any tech level above zero, as long as writing exists.

The journalist character class described in this article flourishes at the higher tech levels, from 7 to 15. At different tech levels, the journalist will use different equipment, and the resulting productions will vary as higher technology makes new media possible. Toward the lower end of the scale, the emphasis is on permanent written materials and flat (photographic) images. At higher tech levels, powerful, easy-to-use equipment gives a journalist more leeway in what he produces, and materials may be stored electronically. Writing still exists, of course, but it is freely supplemented by three-dimensional holographic images.

Audiences are more sophisticated at higher tech levels, too, and this puts demands on the journalist to produce material which can be viewed differently by different people. Computers assist the journalist in research and production of material at the higher tech levels.

What are the results of journalism in the Imperium? Wherever a character can find a vidnet terminal, whether on a starship, in a space station, deep inside a hollowed-out asteroid, in a public building, or at home, the character can instantly gain access to the vast array of information popularly called 'library data'. The journalist is responsible for keeping this information current and complete.

The journalist character generated by this article works for a periodical production, such as a newspaper, magazine, broadcaster, or vidnet information service. Some journalists will be in the public eye because of their work; others stay 'behind the scenes' in exciting and varied undertakings.

In their day to day activities, journalists acquire many skills useful to a party of adventurers. Journalists are adept at gathering information: not only do they write the library data, but they read it, and the best journalists can find the specific information they need in the shortest possible time. Journalists also acquire many skills in dealing with people of all social classes, individually and in larger groups.

Together with a few tables from basic **Traveller**, this article contains all you need to generate a journalist. Initial character generation, acquiring skills and expertise, mustering out, aging, and retirement pay are all handled as described in basic **Traveller**, using the tables from this article where appropriate. Skills and benefits not found in basic **Traveller** are described at the end of this article.

PRIOR SERVICE TABLE

Journalists

Enlistment	7+
DM +1 if	Intel 9+
DM +2 if	Educ 10+

Survival	5+
DM +2 if	Intel 9+

Position	8+
DM +1 if	Soc 8+

Promotion	8+
DM +1 if	Educ 8+

Re-enlist	6+
-----------	-----------

TABLE OF RANKS

Rank 1	Reporter
Rank 2	Senior Reporter
Rank 3	Commentator
Rank 4	Assistant Editor/Columnist
Rank 5	Editor
Rank 6	Publisher

BENEFITS TABLES

Table 1	1 Low Psg	Table 2	1	1000
Material	2 Mid Psg	Cash	2	1000
Benefits	3 High Psg	Benefits	3	2000
	4 +1 Soc		4	2000
	5 Weapon		5	5000
	6 Recorder		6	10000
	7 Travellers'		7	20000

The first occurrence of a weapon benefit is taken as one physical example of any personal weapon stated in basic **Traveller**; it must be taken immediately. Additional occurrences of weapon may be declared as skill in the weapon previously taken. Characters with rank 5 or 6 may add +1 to their rolls on this table. Recorder allows possession of the appropriate recorder as described in the benefits section. Second and subsequent occurrences of recorders and Travellers' are treated as no benefit.

A maximum of three rolls on table 2 are allowed per character; all remaining rolls must be made on table 1. Individuals with gambling skill or who have retired are allowed a DM of +1 on table 2 (the DM is not cumulative).

Personal Development Table

1	+1 Int
2	+1 Educ
3	+1 Endur
4	Brawling
5	Carousing
6	Streetwise

Service Skills Table

1	Streetwise
2	Vehicle
3	Gun Cbt
4	Blade Cbt
5	Gambling
6	Bribery

Advanced Education Table

1	Technical
2	Persuasion
3	Interview
4	Interview
5	Forgery
6	Admin

Advanced Education Table (allowed only if character has education of 8+)

1	Liaison
2	Persuasion
3	Leader
4	Computer
5	Admin
6	Jack-o-T

Characters consult this set of tables during each term of service. A character must have an education characteristic of 8 or greater before using the fourth table.

Blade combat, gun combat, vehicle, and technical are cascade skills which call for additional specification by the character immediately.

AUTOMATIC SKILLS

Reporter	Interview-1
Editor	Admin-1

SKILLS AND BENEFITS

For the most part, skills presented here are identical to those available in the basic **Traveller** rules. Some new skills are introduced for the *Journalist* character.

Interview: The character is skilled in conversing with others individually. By his knowledge of psychology, body language, and oral communication, the character will have a better chance of discerning someone else's feelings. Someone with interview skill will be able to draw others out; they will be more apt to discuss things with him than they would with someone who does not have interview skill. A person with interview-6 or higher may even be suspected of being psionic.

Referee: Half of any interview skill level (round fractions upward) serves as a positive DM on the reaction table when used initially in an encounter with an individual. A person with interview skill will know which line of questioning to

follow when trying to learn something from an uncooperative subject. Interview skill may be used as 2 levels lower in interrogation skill; thus, interview-3 may be used as interrogation-1 where needed.

Detecting a lie can be an easy task for someone with high interview skills. For example, the universal task profile to detect a lie in a certain pre-arranged question-and-answer session could be (ROUTINE, interview, int, NON-REPEATABLE, 10 seconds). Because of the -5 DM for no skill, someone of average intelligence and education who lacked Interview skill would need to roll 10+ to detect such a lie. On the other hand, Akidda Laagjir (with interview-5) would fail only on a natural roll of 2 under these circumstances.

The maximum benefit of this skill can be obtained only when the interviewer is in a pre-arranged conversation with one or two individuals. The interviewer's time spent in preparation is important, and referees should specify a greater difficulty for situations in which preparation was inadequate. The referee should always feel free to adjust task difficulties for different situations, in order to maintain game balance.

Persuasion: The individual is skilled in using the mass media to persuade others to take a particular course of action. Preparation is as critical to this skill as it is to interview skill. While interview skill is used particularly in a one-to-one situation, persuasion skill is more aptly applied to large numbers of people, using live or recorded media.

Referee: Any level of persuasion skill gives a +1 DM on the reaction table when used initially in an encounter. Half of any persuasion skill level (round fractions downward, minimum +1) serves as a positive DM on the reaction table when used in a written or recorded presentation. In determining the universal task profile for persuading a group, adjust the difficulty and duration for an attempt according to the nature of the character's proposal to a group, and the makeup of the group.

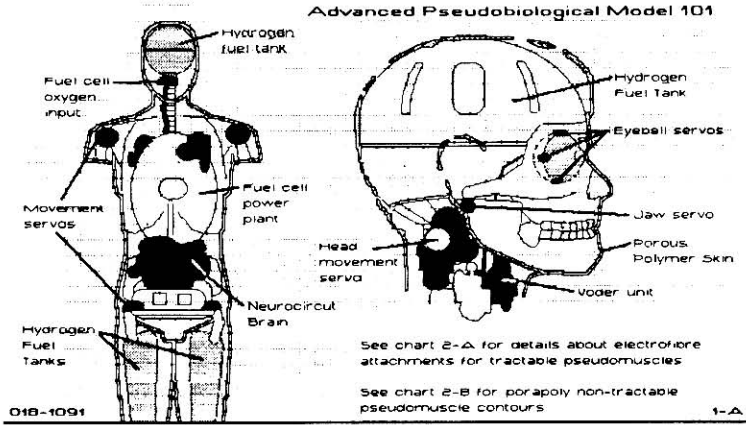
It is important to understand that persuasion and leader skills are not the same. Leadership involves responsibility, knowledge, and action; a leader will himself try to choose and direct the best course. Persuasion skill implies only the ability to influence others, whether for their good or not. Individuals with high levels of persuasion skill may become propagandists.

Technical: Technical is a cascade skill, gained from the subject matter of the journalist's work. Upon receipt of this skill, the character must immediately choose one of computer, communications, electronic, mechanical, and medical skills.

Benefits: Mustering-out benefits may be characteristic alterations or some physical object. Membership in the Travellers' Aid Society is possible; subsequent receipt of weapon benefits may be taken as skill levels instead. Similarly, subsequent receipt of recorder may be taken as skill in interview.

Recorder: A journalist may receive a recorder suitable for keeping information he acquires while working. Depending upon the tech level of the society in which the journalist works, this benefit may vary from a typewriter to a holocrystal recorder. Appropriate selection is made by the referee from the items described in this issue's Traveller Tech Briefs.●

Robot Design Revisited, Part 2



Part 1 of Robot Design Revisited described the new robot design system in detail. Basically, the new system is a recast of the original robot design system published in *The Best of the Journal #1*. We have added lots of detail and as a bonus made it compatible with *Striker*. Our goal is not to replace the original system but to provide an updated, expanded alternative that is still consistent with the original.

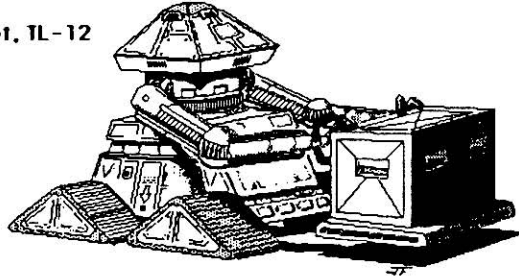
In Part 2 we will cover several topics related to the design process. For starters, let's look at more examples of robots created using the updated robot design system.

SOME ROBOT DESIGN EXAMPLES

We gave the details of Aybee's design as an example in Part 1. Although Aybee is a good example of a pseudo-biological robot, pseudo-biological robots are rare in the Imperium (we'll discuss why in part 3). Other designs are much more typical.

One of the most common robots in the Imperium is the cargo handling robot. Often seen in starports of tech level 12 and higher, this robot is typical of the cheap, workhorse robots found on high tech worlds.

Cargo Robot, TL-12



Cargo Robot, TL-12 (continued)

	Power(Mw)	V(m3)	Wt(kg)	Price(Cr)
1. Chassis				
a. size - 7	-	+0.2	20.0	2000
b. config 1 - box				
c. armor - normal (5)				
2. Power Plant - 6	+0.09	-0.1	165.0	2000
3. Locomotion - tracks				
a. suspension 40 units	-	-0.04	40.0	1000
b. transmission 90 units	-0.036	-0.054	135.0	1350
4. Brain				
a. CPU, 10 units	-0.001	-0.005	1.0	100000
b. Storage, 30 units	-	-0.015	3.0	75000
5. Appendages				
a. head, 40%	-0.012	+0.06	8.0	800
b. hvy. work arms (2)	-0.02	-	100.0	2000
6. Sensors/Devices				
a. basic sensor package	-0.004	-	3.0	1700
b. voder	-0.002	-	1.0	200
subtotals	<u>0.015</u>	<u>0.046</u>	<u>476.0</u>	
7. Programs				
a. fundamental logic, type 1 - learning				3000
b. fundamental command, type 1 - basic command				1000
c. cargo handling				200
				<u>190250</u>

Fuel: 46 liters, wt 3.22 kg

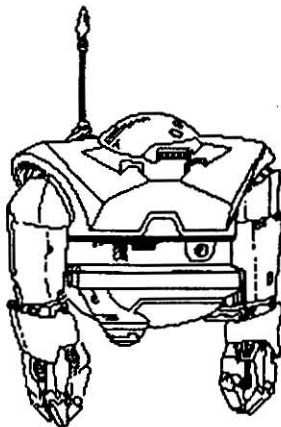
Enough fuel for 115 hours (4.8 days) of continuous operation, or 14.375 days at 8 hours operation per day.

Weight multipliers: none
479.22 kg

Cost Multipliers: none

Stock starport model, can have other sensors/devices installed.

We learn in Alien Module 4, *Zhodani* about the Zhodani preference for robots in military applications. Such robots are likely to be tech level 14, the predominant tech level of the Consulate. Here is a typical stock Zhodani warbot:



Warbot, TL-14 (continued)

	Power(Mw)	V(m3)	Wt(kg)	Price(Cr)
1. Chassis				
a. size - 6	-	+0.15	15.0	1500
b. config 2 - cylinder				
c. armor - normal (5)				
2. Power Plant - 3	+0.08	-0.05	56.25	1200
3. Locomotion - grav				
a. 300kg thrust	-0.03	-0.003	30.0	7500
4. Brain				
a. CPU, 11 units	-0.001	-0.0055	1.1	110000
b. Storage, 22 units	-	-0.011	2.2	55000
5. Appendages				
a. med. work arms (2)	-0.01	-	40.0	1400
6. Sensors/Devices				
a. basic sensor package	-0.004	-	3.0	1700
b. voder	-0.002	-	1.0	200
c. radio	-0.001	-	1.0	200
d. laser rifle	-0.015	-	14.0	5000
e. electronic circuit protection	-	-	-	-
subtotals	0.017	0.0805	163.55	
7. Programs				
a. fundamental logic, type 0 - Info				400
b. fundamental command, type 0 - limited basic				500
c. weapon handling (laser rifle)				300
				<hr/> 184900

Fuel: 80.5 liters, wt 5.635 kg

Enough fuel for 402.5 hours (16.77 days) of continuous operation, or 50.3 days at 8 hours operation per day.

Weight multipliers: 1.5 electronic circuit protection

$$169.18 \times 1.5 = 253.78 \text{ kg}$$

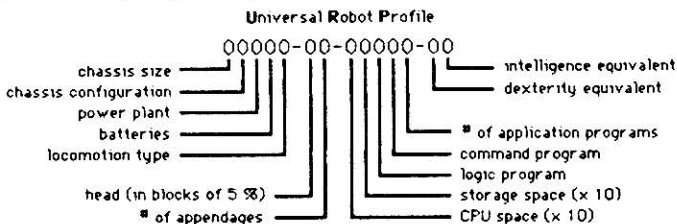
Cost Multipliers: 1.1 cylindrical configuration

$$184,900 \times 1.1 = 203,390 \text{ Cr}$$

Stock Warbot model, can have other sensors/devices installed.

THE UNIVERSAL ROBOT PROFILE AND OTHER DESIGN NOTES

Once you have designed a robot, you can use the Universal Robot Profile (hereafter referred to as the URP) to quickly and concisely describe the robot's primary attributes. The format of the URP is:



The one-digit codes for each digit position in the URP include 0-9 for the numbers zero to nine, followed by the letters of the alphabet: A for 10, B for 11, and so on. The letters O and I are dropped because they are too easily confused with zero and one. A table of codes is presented below.

URP CODES

no.	code	no.	code	no.	code	no.	code
0	0	9	9	18	J	27	T
1	1	10	A	19	K	28	U
2	2	11	B	20	L	29	V
3	3	12	C	21	M	30	W
4	4	13	D	22	N	31	X
5	5	14	E	23	P	32	Y
6	6	15	F	24	Q	33	Z
7	7	16	G	25	R		
8	8	17	H	26	S		

Some items in a digit position, such as the chassis, have a pre-determined URP code given on the component table (the tables were in part 1 of this article, printed last issue). Others are simply a computed number value, such as CPU space.

Part 1 did not give the URP codes for locomotion. They are:

- 0 none
- 1 wheels
- 2 tracks
- 3 legs
- 4 air cushion
- 5 anti-gravity modules

The dexterity equivalent is determined primarily from the robot's locomotion, with the appendages and fundamental logic modifying the base dexterity. See the tables in part 1 for wheels, tracks, and legs. Anti-gravity and air cushion locomotion always give the robot an apparent dexterity characteristic of F (15), the maximum possible.

The intelligence equivalent is determined by the robot's fundamental logic program type, as shown in the tables.

The URP is not all-inclusive, however. As with *High Guard* ship designs, some additional data should be listed. The format for this is:

```

Robot type/name URP price weight
fuel=? tech level=?
locomotion details
appendages
sensors/devices
application programs
  
```

Let's look at the URPs of the example robots given earlier to see how the URP works.

Zhodani Warbot 62305-02-12001-F9 Cr203,390 245 kg
Fuel=80.5 TL=14
2 med work arms
basic sensor pkg, voder, radio, laser rifle, elec circuit protect
General weapon handling (laser rifle)

Cargo Robot 71602-82-13111-38 Cr190,250 479 kg
Fuel=46 TL=12
head(40%), 2 hvy work arms
basic sensor pkg, voder
Cargo handling

And, of course, Aybee...

AB-101 56123-22-43227-DC Cr 6,660,240 318 kg
Fuel=93 TL=15
2 legs
head(10%), 2 lt work arms
2 eyes(+1 lt intens), 2 ears, voder, touch, pwr interface,
brain interface, lt laser welder, holographer, elec circuit protect
Medic-1
General Language
General Vehicle
Vale1
General weapon handling (laser welder)
Fire-fighting/rescue
Emotion Simulation

Pseudo-biological robots may also have an apparent UPP; we will discuss this more in part 3.

Incorporating other details from *Striker*, such as ground pressure, power to weight ratio, and elaborate radio/radio jammer units, are beyond the scope of this article. The referee should be able to adjust the *Striker* rules to fit without much difficulty.

As you experiment with robot design, you will find that at the higher tech levels, the increased power plant output and reduced power plant weight allow you to build increasingly more compact robots. This is particularly noticeable when attempting to build pseudo-biological robots, since you often cannot vary their size much. The quest for space in pseudo-biological designs can lead to unorthodox techniques such as "fat" robots or backpacks. Model AB-100, the predecessor to AB-101, carried a permanently attached briefcase holding peripheral devices!

In the final part of this article, we will discuss robots in the Third Imperium, the Shudusham Concords, and how to use robots in a Traveller game.●

Easy Task Definition

THE GAMING DIGEST

Aybee the robot has been damaged in combat, and Dr. Krenstein needs to repair him. You, as the referee, examine Aybee's UPP; his dexterity dropped from 13 to 7 in a first blood hit. You rate the repair task as ROUTINE (7+) with mechanical skill as the primary skill and dexterity as the primary characteristic, so Krenstein gets a +2 DM on the roll. He rolls a 4, which with the DM of 2 yields a 6, which means he failed. Now what?

Can Krenstein try again? Can he try right away, or must he wait a while? How long did his attempt take? If he can try again and he succeeds, how long will the repair then take?

Traveller players and referees ask questions like these often, so in this issue we'll provide some methods to ease the referee's job when defining tasks. But let's not go overboard: the system must be quick and simple, in order to maintain playability.

RATE THE TASK

The referee must rate the task in three areas:

- level of difficulty (simple, routine, difficult, formidable)
- repeatability (repeatable or non-repeatable)
- time duration (instant or a time increment)

We discussed the first item, level of difficulty, in the charter issue (see also *The Universal Task Profile* in the Feature Adventure Introduction). In this issue we will consider the other two items.

TASK REPEATABILITY

Some tasks can not be repeated—one try is all you get. Other tasks, however, are repeatable, and the character can make more than one attempt if he fails. When defining a task to the players before they roll, the referee should specify whether the task is *repeatable* or *non-repeatable*.

FORMIDABLE tasks are more likely to be non-repeatable than are DIFFICULT tasks; DIFFICULT tasks are more likely to be non-repeatable than are ROUTINE tasks, and so on. In other words, as the level of task difficulty increases, so does the likelihood that the task will be non-repeatable. Non-repeatable tasks are often desperate attempts or the result of emergency situations.

The secret to making a repeatable task believable and not just "rolling the dice until you succeed" is to include the factors of character determination and time pressure.

Even though a player may wish to repeatedly attempt a "repeatable" task, his character may not want to try again—the character gets frustrated, discouraged, or he may just be one who gives up easily. Once a character has failed an attempt, for him to

maintain his determination and remain dedicated to the task at hand is itself a DIFFICULT task (11+). No skill DMs are possible, but characteristic DMs are allowed of END÷5 and INT÷5 (cumulative). This represents the character's physical and mental determination.

The character may roll immediately for determination after he has failed at the task attempt. If he succeeds at the determination roll, he may immediately make another attempt at the task. If he fails the determination roll, he may still immediately attempt the task again, but at the next higher level of difficulty. Thus if it had been a ROUTINE task, it is now DIFFICULT (FORMIDABLE tasks become impossible, which means the character has given up, and no more tries can be made. It is recommended that a character not push a task this far, but that he wait a suitable length of time and then try again—see below).

Jack of all trades (JOT) can be used when considering how determined a character is. A player with JOT skill can fail his determination roll but "save" the task from moving up in difficulty as many times as his JOT skill level. In effect, his JOT skill is enabling him to approach the problem from a fresh angle, and the character thereby avoids the penalty of increased task difficulty.

If the character is willing to wait a suitable length of time (say, 10 days), he *can* attempt the task again at the normal level of difficulty *if* he can succeed with a determination roll. If he fails the determination roll anywhere along the line in this delayed attempt, he has totally given up and may no longer try the task.

Let's apply this to our example. We rate the repair task (remember it's ROUTINE—likely to be repeatable) as REPEATABLE.

So even though Krenstein failed, he can immediately retry if he can make a determination roll (11+), and he has a good chance with a DM of +4 (+3 for INT÷5 and +1 for END÷5). All he needs to roll is a 7 or better and he can try again without losing his determination. And if that doesn't suffice, he has JOT-2 so he can *fail* the determination roll twice and still not have the task difficulty level raised. The doctor may fail at first, but his determination (from his intelligence) and his phenomenal ingenuity (from his JOT skill level) will likely win out in the end.

TASK DURATION

But how long did the task (or its failed attempt) take? If a task is lengthy enough, it may turn out to be for all practical purposes a one-shot task, even though theoretically it may be repeatable. (For example, consider a starship with a damaged maneuver drive, when the ship is falling toward a system's star. Even though the players could conceivably repeat an attempt to repair the maneuver drive, the duration of each repair attempt might limit them to just one try.)

In the context of a game's current time flow, how long the task requires may be of no consequence, as long as the characters are under little time pressure. For example, if the characters are spending a week in a starport and they want to repair a broken piece of equipment vital to a planned excursion in the following week, it may

not matter that the repair could take up to 6 hours. In cases like this, declare the time duration to be INSTANT and that's that.

In cases where how long a task takes *is* important, a simple method of determining time duration can be used.

First, make a rough estimate of how long the task might typically take. Next, determine a time increment by dividing the typical task duration by 10. Let's use our example of repairing Aybee; we'll say typically it will take about 2 hours, which is 120 minutes. Dividing 120 minutes by 10 gives us 12 minutes. We'll fudge and round the time increment to an even 10 minutes for easier calculation.

To discover how long the task actually takes, roll 3D for the number of time increments taken. If the attempt was successful, apply a negative DM to the duration roll of the amount by which the actual success roll exceeded the needed roll.

In our example, Dr. Krenstein rolls 13 on the three dice, giving us 13 time increments of 10 minutes each. The repair attempt took 130 minutes—2 hours and 10 minutes and Aybee still isn't fixed.

LET'S TRY AGAIN

Let's take everything we've discussed and follow Dr. Krenstein in his repair attempt on Aybee.

The doctor has failed once in his repair attempt, which we have determined took 2 hours and 10 minutes. We have rated the task as REPEATABLE, so what happens now?

The doctor rolls 2D for his determination. He needs to roll 11+ because staying determined is a difficult task, but he has a +4 DM on the roll because of his intelligence and endurance. He rolls a 3, plus 4 giving him a 7—less than needed. Ordinarily, failing the determination roll would cause a DIFFICULT task to become FORMIDABLE, but the doctor has JOT-2, so he can "save" up to two failed determination rolls. He decides to use one of these "saves" now, leaving only one.

He rolls again to repair Aybee and rolls *another* 4. Adding his skill and characteristic DM of +2 gives only 6; he failed *again*. Rolling 3D for duration this time gives him 16 time increments of 10 minutes each or 160 minutes. After another 2 hours and 40 minutes, poor Aybee is still not fixed. This is apparently not the doctor's day.

He tries for determination again. He rolls an 8 now, which with his +4 DM gives him 12, more than enough for the 11+ required. He didn't need to use the last JOT "save" he has left. Things may be looking up.

He tries again, and rolls an 8, which with the +2 DM gives a 10, well beyond the required 7+ (it's about time). Krenstein rolls 3D for duration this time and gets a 7. Applying a -3 DM for the amount he overshot his needed success roll (he needed at least a 7, and he rolled a 10) gives 4 time increments, or 40 minutes. After 5 hours 30 minutes and two significant bouts with frustration, Aybee is *finally* fixed.

Speaking of fixing things, there are other issues that need to be discussed such as levels of damage, attempting repairs without tools, and the like. We'll discuss these and other topics related to damage and repair in this column in the next issue. See you then.♦

Recording Devices

TRAVELLER TECH BRIEFS

More than five thousand years ago, the Terran philosopher Aristotle said that literacy destroys memory: when humanian society develops writing, its individuals tend to lose some of their natural ability to remember details. But this is not an argument against such tools as writing; rather, it is a continuing impetus to create more powerful and more available machines to record the events important to us.

In this issue, we present a potpourri of recording devices found at higher tech levels. Although many of these items are tools of specialists, especially when first developed, they come into widespread and common use as they become more portable and less expensive. Prices and capabilities of the devices described here reflect their professional nature and use.

TEXT RECORDERS

At tech level 0, text recorders may consist of nothing more than a slab of clay and a blunt stick. At higher tech levels, specific writing instruments are designed, such as pencils, pens, typewriters, and computer-assisted word processors. At TL10, text recorders can transcribe: they can produce written text directly from spoken words.

Text recorder: Described in basic **Traveller**. Memclips for specific languages are also available: each allows transcribing from a specific spoken language.

Text Recorder	TL 10	1 kg	Cr 1200
Linguistics Memclip	TL 10	-	Cr150
Recording Tape (20 mill. word capacity)	TL 10	-	Cr3
Recording Crystal (200 mill. word cap.)	TL 13	-	Cr3

SOUND RECORDERS

Sound recorders did not appear until TL 5, as crude vibration devices storing information in soft substances. By TL 13, sound recorders use holographic crystals as the recording media.

Sound Recorder: This small, lightweight recorder can easily record anything detectable by the human ear. Dedicated computer software within the recorder allows the user to instantly playback any part of a recording.

Sound Recorder	TL 10	-	Cr 300
Recording cartridge(10 hour cap.)	TL 10	-	Cr 5
Recording crystal (100 hour cap.)	TL 13	-	Cr 5

IMAGE RECORDERS

The old Vilani proverb says an instant of seeing surpasses a day of hearing; no one disputes the value of an image over sound or text. Since the invention of crude still image recorders at TL 4, two-dimensional images remain the most common method of image recording, with the speed and ease of use improving dramatically at

higher tech levels. Although holography is generally invented around TL 7, inexpensive and practical methods to produce and view still holographic images are not perfected until TL 11. Inexpensive 2D recordings are still a popular alternative to 3D images beyond TL 11.

Two-dimensional Still Camera: The TL 10 still camera is inexpensive, easy to use, and produces detailed images that can be viewed instantly. The 'recording card' used to record images is re-useable.

2D Still Camera	TL 10	.1 kg	Cr 150
Recording card (200 images)	TL 10	-	Cr 3
Recording crystal (2000 images)	TL 13	-	Cr 3

Three-dimensional Still Camera: In spite of the awkwardness of using the first marginally portable 3D still cameras (which require a separate power pack) at TL 11, 3D image recorders are in public demand, because of their advantages over the 2D machines. At TL 13, with the advent of compact batteries providing the necessary sustained power level, 3D still cameras reach handheld size.

3D Still Camera	TL 11	8 kg	Cr 1,500
Power Pack (for TL 11 and 12 camera)	TL 11	2 kg	Cr 600
Recording card (40 images)	TL 11	-	Cr 10
3D Still Camera	TL 13	.5 kg	Cr 5000
Recording crystal (400 images)	TL 13	-	Cr 10

VIDEO RECORDERS

Even though holovision typically becomes available at TL 10, producing holovideos still requires expensive, bulky equipment and high power at that tech level. Often, not until TL 13 are effective techniques devised for producing inexpensive holovideos with simple, lightweight equipment.

Two-dimensional Video Recorder: Described in basic **Traveller**.

Two-dimensional Video Recorder	TL 8	1.2 kg	Cr 900
Recording tape (1 hr cap.)	TL 8	-	Cr 2
Recording crystal (10 hr cap.)	TL 13	-	Cr 2

Three-dimensional Video Recorder: The 3D video recorder is barely portable at TL 13. More portable units are commonly available by TL 14, with TL 15 bringing forth the handheld 3D recorder, such as that used by Akidda Laagiir. All of these recorders use holocrystals for image storage. Separate powerpacks are not needed.

Three-dimensional Video Recorder	TL 13	15 kg	Cr 15,000
	TL 14	6 kg	Cr 20,000
	TL 15	2 kg	Cr 30,000
Recording crystal (1 hr cap.)	TL 13	-	Cr 15
Hi-cap recording crystal (5 hr cap.)	TL 15	-	Cr 50

(note: works only with TL 15 recorder)

OTHER RECORDERS

This article barely scratches the surface of the myriad types of detectors and recorders available at higher tech levels. Others will be discussed in future **Traveller Tech Briefs**.•

Coming in the Next Issue...

- **Visit to Antiquity**

A Vargr archaeological team uncovers a startling artifact on the world Antiquity—one of the best preserved Ancient sites in the entire Imperium...

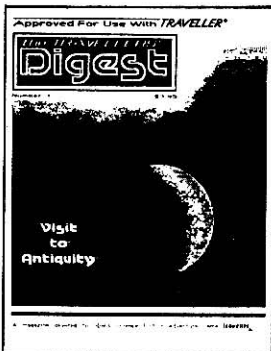
...in next issue's Feature Adventure!

- **An In-depth look at Vargr languages and how they reflect Vargr "culture"**

- **Robot Design Revisited—Part Three**

- **Library Data of the Corridor Sector**

- **Another detailed subsector. Tech Briefs, Gaming Digest, and more...**



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