

Tidewater Traveller TIMES ORIGINS REPORT



ORIGINS

BY MARK GELINAS

What can be said about Origins that can adequately describe this phenomenon. I had expected it to be large, but, being used to local conventions, I was overwhelmed with the sheer size of the event. I arrived in downtown Baltimore about noon on Friday, July 3rd with what it seemed to be half of the population of the eastern seaboard. After finally finding some parking and then registration, I proceeded to look around the convention.

After a few minutes, I found my way into the dealers room. For a gamer, it was like reaching paradise. Imagine a game store with a display area the size of a football field, with the employees of this store being the game company personnel themselves with their latest products and information on future releases. If you can imagine this, then you have an idea what the dealers room was like, with dealers from as far as England, Canada, and Australia.

Of course, I proceeded immediately to the GDW booth. There I talked to some of the Workshop staff and managed to pick up some out of print books. They had some Striker sets available, but without the box, for about \$10.00. Next, I visited the Digest Games Group and purchased Traveller's Digest 9. I will be reviewing them in future issues, but if you have not picked up Challenge 29 or Traveller's Digest 9, it would be well worth your while to do so, there is a lot of information in them which will effect Traveller for years to come. Later in the afternoon, there was a party for Traveller's tenth birthday. During that time, attendees met and discussed Traveller with people who have influenced Traveller over the past ten years, including Workshop people, Digest Games Group people, Seeker people, and the prolific Keith brothers. These people want to know what we want for Traveller. One suggestion that met with a good response was that the Keith brothers finish their environment series with the Arctic Environment and Vacuum Environment. It is important to let GDW know what you want!

Afterwards, Marc Miller had his seminar on Traveller during which we learned much about the direction that game is going. I managed to obtain a copy of an article which describes the future of the Imperium for the Club, to whom this data will be made available.

After the seminar, I was forced by sheer exhaustion to return home. There is much more to tell and many questions to answer, but such is best saved for a post game bull session. In all, it was a very worthwhile trip, and one that will be repeated as possible in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TIDEWATER TRAVELLER TIMES

The Tidewater Traveller TIMES is the official newsletter of the Tidewater Traveller Club. The editor of the times welcomes your questions, comments, or opinions, as well as submissions of articles or artwork. While no guarantee is made as to the inclusion of submitted items, the editor does guarantee that he will consider them. Items cannot be returned without an included SASE. The section "GEO'S VARIANTS", normally only included in club member's copies, is included in this issue for promotional purposes.

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IN MEMORY

of

EMPEROR STREPHON ALKHALIKOI
 1049-1116

ASSASSINATION UPDATE

CAPITAL (GNS): The assassin of Emperor Strephon, Archduke Duinor, has claimed the Iridium Throne by right of assassination, a procedure that has not been used for imperial succession for several hundred years. Strephon's nephew Lucan as heir apparent has been crowned as Strephon's successor, but without the approval of the Moot, the Imperium's legislative body composed of Nobles. This disagreement between Lucan and the Moot is liable to create a third faction claiming legitimate right to the Iridium throne. For more detailed information, read the applicable articles in Challenge 29 and Traveller's Digest 9. Challenge 30 will also have more information on the assassination when it is printed.

WORKSHOP NEWS

In this column last month, we spoke of Advanced Traveller Combat system and the wait we entailed. Well, gamers, it will be worth the wait! From the information that we have received, ATC will not be released as a separate product but will be part of a great new Traveller production: MEGATRAVELLER.

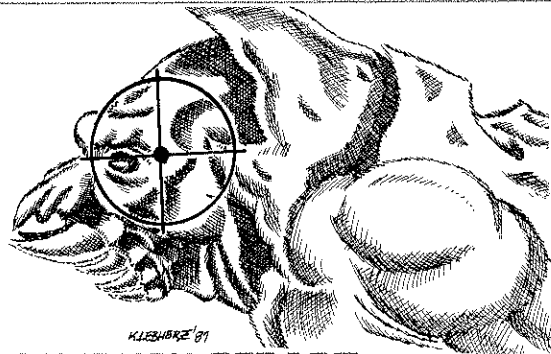
This edition of classic Traveller will be contained in three separate books of about 96 pages each. The first book will be the Player's Handbook, containing character generation and combat systems. The second book will be the Referee's Handbook containing starship, system, and vehicle generation sequences as well as other information useful to the referee. The last book will be the Traveller Encyclopedia containing equipment, library data, world data, and other information useful to both player and referee.

Each of the books will be available separately, and all will be in a boxed set with some extra items. The proposed release date will be September for the Player's Handbook, October for the Referee's Handbook, and November for the Traveller Encyclopedia. The Boxed set will be released sometime after the third book, probably in time for Christmas. The individual books will run about \$10.00 with the boxed set going for about \$30.00. From the description of it, this edition is taking all the systems that we have been using for years and compiling them in one source, with improvements and updates. Contact the editor for more information.

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Editorial by Mark Gelinus



CAMPAIGN REPORT

STAR OF EPSILON INDI- The characters are still in the Pakru system. There are rumors of unexploded military weapons in the outer system. Will our intrepid adventurers seek a cheap source of salvage and explosives, or will they continue on seeking to escape the clutches of the Baron.

BALCONY BOYS- The characters are still on Aurore fighting the insidious Kafers. Hopefully the Kaffer problem in the Tanstaafi colony will be cleared up soon and the adventurers may move on to other worlds. Maybe things are not so hot for them back of Beta Carum.

THRILLSEEKERS III- Although it is not yet an active campaign, there has been some interest generated in a new or continued Thrillseekers campaign, which, by the way was one of our longest running campaigns. If you are interested in Thrillseekers or any other campaign, Active, Inactive, or Upcoming, contact your referee and let him know what you want.



BULLETINS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARTER

The Charter for the Tidewater Traveller Club has been drafted and is awaiting signatures. The charter membership period is open from July 15 until midnight August 15, 1987. If you are a member of the Tidewater Traveller Club it is important that you get in touch with the current spokesman, Mark Gelinus, to sign this document. If you are not a member and would like to be, this is the best time to get involved in the Club.

MEETINGS

The July meeting of the Tidewater Traveller Club will be held at CHQ in Norfolk at 7:00 PM, Wednesday, 29th. The Charter will be there for signing, and an election will be held for one of the Club's officers. Active participation is encouraged.

The August meeting of the Tidewater Traveller Club will be held at the same place and same time Wednesday, the 13th. At this meeting we will be firming up some of the things that we will be working on for Sci-Con 9. Your inputs are welcome and encouraged!

SERVICEMEN

Recently two of our members have entered the military service of our country. Being at training commands, they have little time to get out and would appreciate hearing from friends at home. One is Gerry Hartman, whose school address you will find in this month's ROLL CALL section. The other is Steve Kostoff, who is sweating it out in Army boot camp in Oklahoma. His address is: PVT J. S. Kostoff, E-1/33FA Fifth Platoon, Ft. Sill, OK 73503. Write soon as he should be back in time for GEOCON.

MAILINGS

What do you want to see for Traveller or Traveller:2300. Talking about it in bull sessions will not get it done. Believe it or not you have a say in what you get. The people at Game Designers' Workshop are interested in what you would like to see, but they won't know unless you tell them. Suggestions made at Origins include background materials, political workings, generic starports and buildings, more deck plans, and environment modules. If any of these interest you let them know, or if you have some other ideas, let them know those as well, even if they seem far out. About two years ago some friends in Idaho had some ideas, and now they are known as the Digest Games Group producing quality products approved for use with Traveller and Traveller:2300. GDW's address is Game Designers' Workshop, P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646. Drop them a letter today!

Where have all the gamers gone?

Why is role playing in the state that it is? What can be done about it? To answer the title and first questions would present suggestions and opportunities for answer to the third. This article does not propose to be an end unto itself, but will present some ideas and open a forum to you the readers. As you respond, the base of ideas will broaden and perhaps together we can find a solution to increase gaming activity, at least in our area.

Where have all the gamers gone? Well, to begin with, have they really gone? True, some of those we know and have gamed with have gone on to other locations because of jobs or family. However, is that the case with all? I think not. Part of those who have left active gaming remain in the area. Why have they departed? Was it dissatisfaction with the game? Was it lack of time or interest? Has something come along of greater interest? I think that there are those who fit in each of the above categories.

But what of those that are in the area and who are honestly interested in gaming? Why do we not see them at our games? I think that three major obstacles stand in the way.

The first is scheduling. Many gamers are of the 16-24 year age group. Historically, this group is just beginning their years in the labor force and consequently find themselves on the less desirable shifts, usually those during the evening or weekends. Unfortunately, these are also the best gaming times.

The second obstacle that I see is that of distance. That there are a lot of gamers out there as is evidenced by game store sales, but they are separated by vast distances. This can be especially true here in the Tidewater area. From Virginia Beach to the Williamsburg area is about 60 miles one way. This may not seem like very far, but given our typical gamer it can be quite a distance. Why? Two main reasons: lack of transportation or lack of funds to support "road trips".

Then, we come to the third reason, lack of communication. One would think that gamers would communicate with each other to get together and game, but in many cases they do not. Unfortunately, in our area, the telephone company complicates the matter by making the James River a dividing line for long distance calls, compounding the monetary problem. But money is not the only obstruction to communication. Lack of knowledge is also a big problem. How do we communicate to those whom we do not know. The obvious answer is that we can not.

Where have all the gamers gone? The answer is some have left, but many have not. Part of the problem may be found in the second question, which will be examined in next month's column. In the meantime call or write with your thoughts on any of these questions.

GEOCON V INFORMATION

This summer's GEOCON will primarily be devoted to Traveller and related games. There will be a session of Traveller, perhaps the kickoff for a new campaign, and a session of Traveller:2300, probably the conclusion of Kaffer Dawn.

Characters may be brought in for the Traveller game provided they follow certain guidelines. First they must be of the 36-30-30 format, for those of you who have never been in a Geo Open this means that your characters strength, dexterity, and endurance when totaled cannot exceed 36. The total of skills and skill levels cannot exceed 30, and the character may have, if earned through mustering out no more than 30,000CR in cash and/or equipment. Psionics can only be obtained during the course of the game. Humans are preferred, but I will accept an Asian, Vargr, Hiver, Bwap, or Robot only if you call me and convince me that you can effectively role-play your chosen race PRIOR to the beginning of the con. K'tree need not apply. Weapons selection for benefits or purchase must be from book one, an assault rifle, or a laser pistol.

Traveller:2300 characters may be created at the con in our spare time before the session. Weapons choices are limited, so it would be best to wait for the con to choose those. If you have been participating in the Balcony Boys campaign, you should be all set.

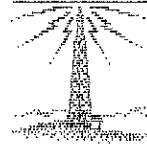
One special event will be a mixed tech level Striker game, with a cadre of high tech mercenaries and their native contingent fighting against a large enemy native contingent. The point value will be even, so it should be a question of quantity verses quality. I would ideally like to have one player as the mercenary cadre and two to five other players representing the native contingent. Time permitting I will run a determined herd of K'tree in a Striker session and show you flesh eaters to your doom. (continued on page 3)

KAFER DAWN-The second module released for Traveller-2300. This module concerns itself with mankind's struggle for survival against the Kafers on Aurora. It has four separate scenarios included in the module which can be played separately or in a series. Also included in the module is an extensive background on the Tanstaaf colony on Aurora, Aurora herself, and the system around her. This module, written by William H. Keith, Jr., is very informative and highly recommended.

BEANSTALK-The third released module for Traveller-2300. This module contains a wealth of information on Beta Canum as well as the elevator to the sky, the Beanstalk. There are three scenarios included, and although they are somewhat structured, there is a lot of leeway for variations. The scenarios are well written and full of task descriptions. This module contains a lot of activities for those who would prefer to use their brains rather than brawn or bullets, although there is certainly some room for those. The tasks also allow the characters to use some of the more esoteric skills such as psychology. As the adventures take place on Beta Canum, this module lends itself readily as a follow-up to the adventure included in the game. Of course this becomes a little difficult if you have already stranded your players on another world, but still, if the characters were in Tricolors Shadow, getting them into the situations of Beanstalk is fairly simple. The module was written by Lester W. Smith.

CHALLENGE 29-This issue marks the tenth year of Traveller, and the seventh year of the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society which may still be found internal to Challenge. This issue is well worth having and is full of useful articles. For Twilight-2000, there are articles on building descriptions and the inside of the M-1, written by a tank commander who has been there. For Traveller-2300 there are two scenarios, some general information on money in 2300, and a module for Trade in 2300. For Traveller, there is a lot. First of all, there is the Traveller News Service which describes the Emperor's assassination and events surrounding the same. Also included is a description by Marc Miller of the future of Traveller, including information on MegaTraveller. There is an article on tasks in Traveller, which readers of the Traveller's Digest will be familiar with and which will form a significant expansion of Traveller in the MegaTraveller edition. Oh, I almost forgot, the Club has an ad listed in the classified section. This issue is of great value to referee and player alike.

TRAVELLERS' DIGEST 9-Travellers' Digest has become the longest running non-GDW magazine devoted to Traveller. The Digest Games Group, who are responsible for this magazine, have contributed a lot to Traveller, and have been commissioned to put together the MegaTraveller edition of Traveller for GDW. Issue 9 finds the magazine with two additions. First, they have expanded to the full size format, and, second, they have begun coverage of Traveller-2300. This issue contains additional information on the Emperor's assassination, and two separate scenarios, one of which takes place on Capitol the day of the assassination. There is an excellent article on Nobles (I may even permit Nobles in my games now) and the final article on a character's UPP. (Both referee and player alike would gain a greater insight to the UPP from this series.) Besides having a wealth of information on Capitol, the Imperial palace, the Imperial guard, and Core sector, this issue has information and illustrations on two new vehicles for 2300. This is a highly recommended issue, for its abundance of information as well as background data on the Emperor's assassination.



ROLL CALL



Note: in last month's ROLL CALL column, I neglected to add the statement that not all members were listed in the column. For those of you who were left out please accept my apology. This month's column contains the names of honorary members who gained that status by being a part of the pre-club group, being involved with what was to become a club campaign, "Thrillseekers", or being involved with our group in some other manner. If your name does not appear here but you feel that you fall into one of these categories and should be included, let me say that you were left out because either I do not know where you are, or you still live in the area, and I am not sure of your current status with relation to the Club. Contact me so that we may correct this oversight.

HONORARY MEMBERS

- Cooper, Kevin-
- Gelinas, Bruce A.-
- Hartman, SA Gerry W.-
- Smith, Carl-
- Worthy, Troy D.-

GEOCON V

(Continued from page 2) Also, during the con, there will be a seminar on the use of the task system developed by Digest Games Group. There are some time slots still open for those of you who would like to conduct a game or hold a seminar. Contact the editor to co-ordinate such an event.

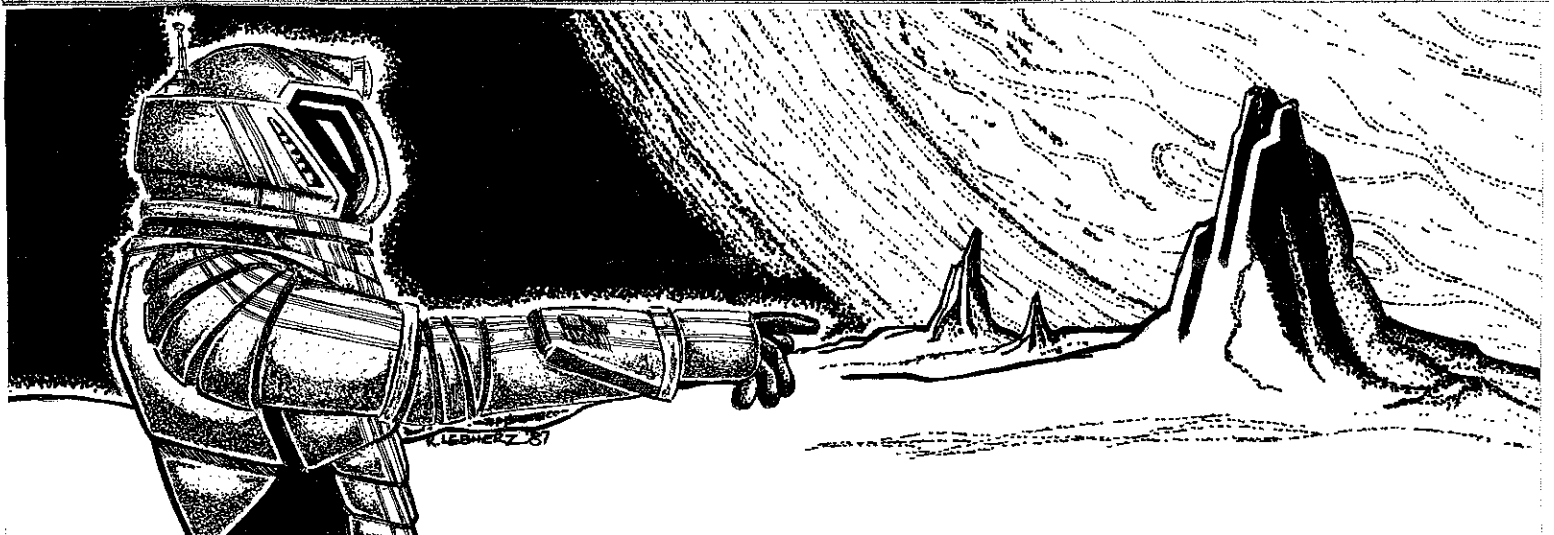
As usual, GEOCON will be held at the residence of Mark Gelinas. For those who would like to spend a night or two, there is a limited amount of space available, call early to reserve your spot.

There will be a \$2.00 entrance fee charged at the door. This fee is intended to keep transient kibitzers away and will be used for the benefit of the attendees.

What to bring? You should bring your gaming materials of course, but you may need some other items. First of all, those staying over should bring some form of bedding, a sleeping bag and pillow will do. You should also bring something to drink and perhaps some snacks, as gaming tends to make people hungry and thirsty. Bring some money for food which can either be spent at the local fast food establishments, or pooled with other attendees' money to purchase something at the supermarket for preparation at the house (this is usually the cheaper way to go). We are considering getting a party pack from Ceaser's Pizza on Saturday, which would work out to about \$2.50 per person for a half a large pizza.

Attendees are expected to abide by the house rules. Two in particular, which may or may not effect you, are 1) no alcoholic beverages and 2) no smoking in the house (if you have to smoke, you may do so on the porch). Also, to prevent distraction from gaming events, the use of the VCR will be limited to times when there are no gaming events scheduled.

If you have any question, suggestions, comments, or opinions, feel free to call me at 428-4636.





COMING EVENTS

GEOCON V- AUGUST 14-16- This GEOCON marks the second anniversary of this semi-annual gaming event. See the article on GEOCON in this issue for more details.

GENCON- AUGUST 20-23- Not to be confused with GEOCON above, this is the annual TSR sponsored event held this year in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is reported that Darrians will be released at this event.

GEO OPEN- SEPTEMBER 12- Yes, once again Mad Geo will be running an open Traveller scenario at CHQ in Newport News. Watch for a poster in that shop for more information and a sign-up sheet. There will be spaces for eight players. If the response is good Mad Geo may be persuaded to do more.

SCI-CON 9- NOVEMBER 6-8- A local science fiction convention. The Club will be running some games there. More information on the games at the next meeting.



MGE PRESENTS: PLAY BY MAIL

Far away from other players or referees? Now you can play Traveller by mail through MGE. Individual players or small groups living outside the Tidewater Area of Virginia are invited to join the fun and adventure of science fiction role-playing. Turn around time will usually be less than a week, and you can submit "turns" as often as you like. During the "set-up" turn, such details as starting point and character background will be established. After that situations will be presented and play will proceed normally. Players are required to have access to a copy of at least basic Traveller, but are not limited to that set if they have additional books and supplements. For more information send a SASE to Play-By-Mail, MGE, 1302 Riverfront Ct., Suite 302, Virginia Beach, VA 23451



AUGUST 1987

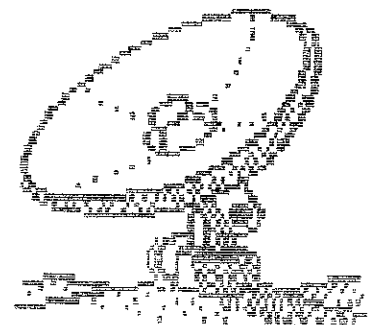


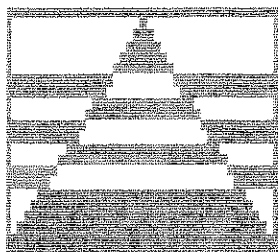
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AD ASTRA

Tidewater Traveller TIMES

1302 RIVERFRONT CT, SUITE 302
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GEO'S VARIANTS

Greetings, and welcome to the first edition of GEO'S VARIANTS. This section is currently an addition to the Tidewater Traveller TIMES and is intended to distribute a variety of information for Traveller and Traveller2300. This section will normally be included only in copies of the TIMES going to Club members.

This first edition brings a vehicle designed using the Striker rules, but I have included stats for both Traveller and Traveller2300. The vehicle is loosely based on the colonial marine APC in the movie ALIENS, not that I intend for players to go on a "bug hunt", but rather use the vehicle as one would normally use an APC.

TRAVELLER STATS (STRIKER FORMAT)

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT WHEELED APC (TL 10)

The vehicle has a crew of four (commander, driver, gunner, and troop director) and carries six passengers. It mounts a twin barrel 3 cm auto-cannon in a remote mount on the chassis deck. It has tech level 10 direct fire control. Height: 2 m (+remote 0.5 m). Width: 2.5 m. Length: 6 m. Total volume: 24.3 m³. Weight: 25 tons. Price: Cr579,097.

Movement: Road speed, 195 kph/162 cm; cross country, 98 kph/81 cm; ground pressure 16 tons/m².

Movement effects on firing: None.

Armor: Chassis front, 25; chassis sides, 20; chassis rear, 10; belly, 5; deck, 15; remote front, sides, and rear, 20.

Target size DM's: +1 high; +2 low.

Equipment: Laser sensors (roll 6+); 20 smoke dischargers; 2 prismatic aerosols; 5000-power radio; map box; battle computer; basic ECM; thermal image; image enhancement; visual searchlight; 8 television monitors; 10-power all-weather target acquisition radar; 10-power ladar; sealed environment with life support for 10. (An optional model may be obtained without life support for the passenger compartment, increasing capacity by two passengers. Passengers are assumed to have life support in their armor. Price for this option is about the same as the regular version.)

Power: 2 megawatt fusion power plant consumes 6 litres of fuel per hour; fuel capacity is 175 litres, enough for 54 hours.

Weapons: 2 barrel, 3 cm, hypervelocity auto-cannon with electric action. It engages 16 targets; its signature is +1; 2240 rounds are carried on board, enough for 7 bursts; its other direct fire characteristics are given below.

EFFECTIVE	LONG	EXTREME
300+6	400+5	550+4

Rounds weigh .8kg each. Their characteristics are listed below.

Type	Price	Characteristics
HE	4	Contact/burst size/fragmentation penetration: 5/-/-
HEAP	6	Contact penetration: 6
KEAP	4	Contact penetration, effective/long/extreme: 19/17/15
KEAPER	4.4	Contact penetration, effective/long/extreme: 17/15/13
Illumin	8	Illumination radius: 25 cm
Chaff	8	Effect radius: 25 cm
Ch. Smoke	8	Cloud size/burn time: 1x1 cm/4 turns
In. Smoke	4	Cloud size/burn time: 1x1 cm/2 turns

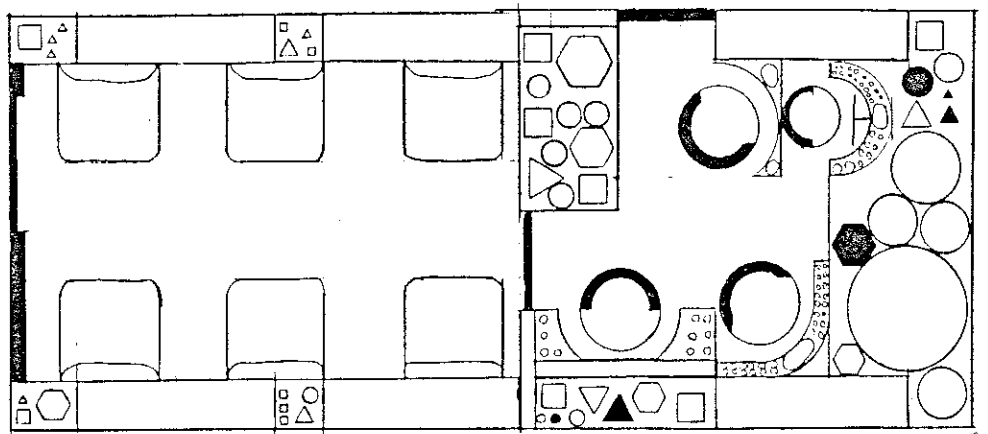
NOTE: There may be some minor differences between the STRIKER and 2300 versions of this vehicle. These are due to some basic differences between the two games that were accounted for during the conversion process.

TRAVELLER:2300 WHEELED APC

This vehicle is typical of those used on worlds with no atmosphere. The vehicle is internally divided into two separate compartments, one for the crew and the other for the troops, allowing the troops to deploy without requiring the crew to be in protective gear. The troop controller station has a map display, computer, multi-channel high-power radio, and monitors for eight remote televisual cameras. Its six tires are independently driven and steered using computer assisted controls. The tires are puncture resistant and have a run-while-flat capability. An optional version is available which eliminates the life support for the troops, but increases passenger space to eight. Carried troops are assumed to have some form of personal life support. This optional version cost about the same as the regular APC.

Type: Wheeled hostile environment APC. *Crew:* Troop controller, driver, gunner, and commander. *Weight:* 25,000 kg. *Armor:* *Suspension:* 1. *Front:* 9. *Other faces:* 5. *Armament:* Twin barrel 30 mm auto-cannon. *Action:* Electric single shot or bursts. *Ammunition:* 30x180 mm fixed cartridge APFSDS. *Muzzle velocity:* 2200 fps. *ROF:* 5. *Aimed fire range:* 1125 meters. *Area fire burst:* 20(AFV-2) *Area fire range:* 800 meters. *Rounds carried:* 2000. *DP:* 6. *Signature:* 3. *Evasion:* 1. *Sensor range:* 10 km. *Cargo:* 6 passengers and 500 kg. *Max speed:* 195 kph. *Cruising speed:* 130 kph. *Combat movement:* 400 meters. *Off-road mobility:* Halved. *Power plant:* 2 MW fusion. *Fuel capacity:* 12 kg. *Fuel consumption:* 02 kg/hr. *Endurance:* 60 hours. *Price:* Not generally available on open market; procurement cost 2253 was Lv 193,033.

Interior not to scale



SCALE 7/16" = 1 meter

