



TIFFANY STAR

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STAFF: Mike Mikesh and Ed Edwards.

TIFFANY STAR is a monthly amateur periodical published in support of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG). The activities of HIWG are devoted to the development of the setting for Game Designers' Workshop's (GDW) science fiction role playing game of the far future, TRAVELLER. TRAVELLER is the registered trademark of GDW and is used with permission only. Portions of this periodical are derived from other TRAVELLER materials published by GDW or Digest Group Publications and are the copyright of the

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Articles in specific format and illustrations are welcome. Send mail to Mike Mikesh, TIFFANY STAR, 3124 75th Ave #3, Landover MD 20785.

THUNDER FROM ABOVE

by Joe D. Fugate, Sr.

MegaTraveller on upswing

3/9/90

Just returned from the GAMA Trade Show in Las Vegas (that's a show to distributors and retailers — not gamers). The general consensus is that interest in MegaTraveller is on the upswing, and GDW is especially gearing up their support for the game.

In our discussions with Marc Miller at the show, it is now looking like GDW is planning up to 8 MegaTraveller releases between now and the end of 1991. With our quarterly magazine and 6 to 8 releases planned for the same time frame, that could bring the total new products for MegaTraveller to a whopping 24 items in the next 18 months.

Status of Black Duke...

3/29/90

Because of the need to get this product out the door like we promised, and because of GDW's renewed interest in producing more MegaTraveller products, PLUS some big plans GDW has up their sleeve for 1991, we have had to make a significant philosophy shift with our campaign sourcebooks.

We promised we will do Black Duke, and we will. However, it will be the only adventure featuring an archduke as an NPC, and it has been trimmed to a 48-page "Adventure Sourcebook". We are trimming more adventure than we are trimming source material. The adventures that are left are the more fun ones, anyway. All future campaign sourcebooks on the Domain Archdukes are cancelled.

Never fear, we will fill the vacant slots with other neat products (like Starship OPs Vol 2 and Robots and Cyborgs).

Because of the 48-page format, we now have enough writers to fill the book. Wilson, Mike & Charles, and Dave — thanks for your kind offers but Black Duke is now covered. HOWEVER, we now need HIWG volunteers to fill the next project on the list: REBEL'S TALES (a GDW product).

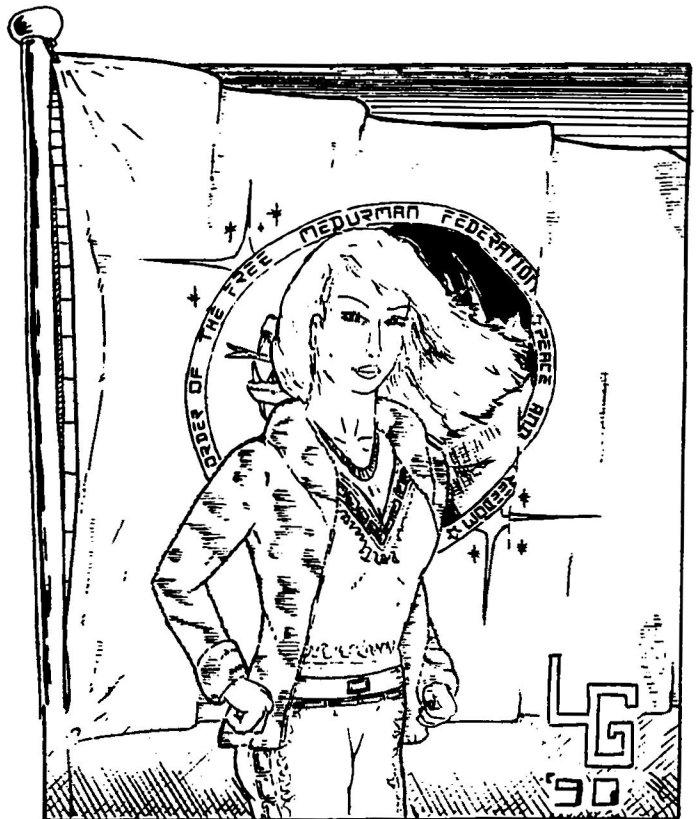
Black Duke has sure taken a beating as we have kicked it around trying to figure out where it fits. As the internal GDW/DGP discussions concerning the rebellion have taken an intriguing turn over the past few months,

everything suddenly came together in the high level discussions about exciting new developments for the rebellion in the months to come.

REBEL'S TALES is scheduled from the start to be a project with significant HIWG participation — in fact, if HIWG doesn't do a lot of the work, REBEL'S TALES won't get done.

Comments, questions, snide remarks?

—Joe Fugate, DGP





Dear Fellow TRAVELLER:

3/31/90

Did anybody enjoy that HIWG Membership Directory (HMD) in TS16? I'd been wanting to print the HMD for all HIWGs since HIWG began. It shows a bit about what makes HIWG - the members! HMD is a continuous document of HIWG. It may be another year before we can reprint it again for everyone, but two or three updated versions will be available as HIWG Docs until then. Feel free to send Clay Bush, maintainer of HMD, updates to your entry (or your entry, if not done yet). Clay's address is there in the HMD.

While the membership is what makes HIWG - because of my post as HIWG Chairperson - I get to say profound things for all of HIWG. I've been accused of being two-faced. HIWG is bigger and better than me - so:

THE THREE FACES OF HIWG

In HMD my entry says my interest is "keeping HIWG productive, harmonious, and fun" - these are the three faces of HIWG. If sometimes HIWG seems disorganized - it is because of the self-contradictory nature of these three facets.

Adventuring in the Rebellion Era

On 24 Feb 90, Joe Fugate of DGP posted a page to GENIE on the subject of HIWG's Philosophy. This renowned Message #207 contrasts a proposal from HIWG UK for a Vland Domain Campaign Sourcebook which is "nothing but a book full of library data with a couple of amber zone type adventures tacked on the back" with the Ilish Domain Campaign Sourcebook (working title: BLACK DUKE) which is "60% adventure and adventuring details, with adventure oriented background provided in the other 40%".

Well Joe can write as clearly as anybody (remember MT?):

"One thing we have noticed is the recent tendency for several would-be writers to propose to us filling books full of minutia of detail, little of which lends anything to adventure. We ourselves have been guilty of that with our System Survey column (which, you have noticed, we have pulled).

"Let me point out what I am getting at here. When classic Traveller was at its height in the early 80s, the Keiths were doing High Passage and then Far Traveller magazine. If you look at Far Traveller magazine, you notice each issue goes into scads of detail on just one world. Compare the data given about the world in Far Traveller to the data we gave in our System Survey column. Far Traveller has animal encounter tables, city and regional maps, and so on. Now look at how much history is provided about the world in Far Traveller a couple of paragraphs. Our System Survey column was three or four pages of dry background and history. No maps (except maybe a world map). No animal encounter tables.

"The point is, we have lost our adventuring spirit and turned into a bunch of armchair gamers who think our only goal in life is 'detail, detail, detail!' Wrong. The majority of the detail must directly assist the adventuring referee, or forget it. Detail for detail's sake will ultimately kill MegaTraveller, burying it under a mountain of constraining and boring details.

"In that sense, HIWG isn't doing anybody any good. HIWG's motto needs to become 'Adventuring in the Rebellion Era!' You folks need to get out of your armchair role of backfilling details just to have

details and encourage adventuring. That's what will help the game to grow.

"Any comments, thoughts, or snide remarks on this? I'd love to hear anything you have to say."

As a matter of fact - I do have comments, thoughts, and snide remarks (CT&SR) on this. However, my CT&SR comes from the three faces mentioned above: Productive, Harmonious, and Fun.

HIWG PRODUCTIVE

HIWG is a producer of TRAVELLER documents. More than one HIWGer has gone beyond the amateur level of writing for HIWG and prefers writing directly for the higher circulation press. As such, HIWG will write what will sell. If it looks like adventures will sell the next few years - then HIWGs will write adventure-centric drafts.

HIWG HARMONIOUS

One driver for the foundation of HIWG was to provide a forum for the resolution of fact conflicts. The classic case was the two printed personality profiles of Lucan that arrived within days of each other (maybe that is why Lucan is so mean - he is schizoid?). At the time it seemed a waste of effort to create two equally likely Lucans but no ArchDuke of the Sol Domain yet existed.

The desire for harmony cries out for detail filled documents. Scraping through a dozen books filled with adventures is not the fun way to find facts.

The most common reaction to Joe's call for adventure-centric supplements by referees is: give me some facts and I'll write my own adventure. Tell me how the universe works (the MT rules), give me some background (REBELLION SOURCEBOOK, the Alien books, etc), and I'll set the adventure where I please within that context.

There is another side to internal harmony - sheer size. TRAVELLER has the largest internally consistent Science Fiction (SF) background in the world (counter arguments are welcome - but if you come up with more pages of STAR TREK I'll tell you it is NOT internally consistent). Yes, size can intimidate the prospective new TRAVELLER referee. Recall that one force driving MEGATRAVELLER was to consolidate the vast diversity of data.

Early TRAVELLER tended to have dry facts scattered among a group of canned adventures. Putting dry facts in useful packages seems more profitable than scattering them among a bunch of canned adventures.

Back in Board War Gaming days we used to bemoan that half the games bought were never played by anybody - half the games bought and used were only used solitaire. Strange situation where only 1/4 of the items sold are "used" but there is still only barely enough money to keep the gaming houses in business. Is the RPG industry any different? What sells half the supplements to non-users: Fact Filled Fan Funs or Adventure-centric supplements? What ever works - do it. What sells to the 1/4 of the fans that need some structure to their daydreams (AKA armchair gamers)?

FAR TRAVELLER 1 and 2 were suggested as suitable ideals for the Adventure-centric MT products of the future. They did have data centered around the adventure at hand. But the data was not useful in the SPINMAR (most typical scene of refereed adventures) or the SOLRIM (second most typical).

My view of a more suitable ideal for the Adventure-centric MT product is LEE'S GUIDE TO INTERSTELLAR ADVENTURE (Gamelords, 83) by Gregory Lee. Gregory had eleven each 3 to 4 page adventure seeds. Also with many suggestions for settings in both the SPINMAR and SOLRIM.

A MT generic adventure with the Push being provided by the "bad" intel agents and the Pull by the "good"

intel agents could be played in the Antares Sector ("good" Brzk agents and "bad" Julian Protectorate agents), or the Daibei Sector ("good" agents from the University of Warnir and "bad" agents of Dulinor), or the Vland sector, or whatever.

HING FUN

The December 1987 issue of GAMES UPDATE features MT. Discussing MT it said: "... the success of this project rests - as it should - in the hands of the gamers." HING contains some of the most rabid TRAVELLER fans. More than a hand full of HINGers have bought every TRAVELLER product produced since 1977 (and that is several kilo-bucks worth). HING is a hot bed of fannish fervor if not also a consumer advocate. As such - we want backfilled details.

Enhancing the TRAVELLER Adventure

The HING Productive face says YEA to the adventure-centric orientation, the HING Fun faces says NAY, and the HING Harmonious face won't say YEA or NAY for fear of offending anybody (and thus offending everybody).

I propose the HING motto: "Enhancing the TRAVELLER Adventure". If creating additional background turns you (the HINGer) on - create. If selling your writings turns you on - write adventures. If writing novels (see TS 13) is your thing - write novels. Whatever a HINGer does - it should enhance the TRAVELLER Adventure: first for the individual and (if you have what it takes) then for other fellow TRAVELLERS.

Mega Good TRAVELLERing!!!

(Signed: Ed Edwards)

P.S. VILANI & VARGR (DGP,90) is on the streets. The Aliens Series is off to a running start. The ad on the inside back cover of TD18 does not do justice to what you get for your \$12.95. I've yet to read all of V&V - but that is exactly what I intend to do as soon as I finish this HCL.

FIGHTING SHIPS OF THE SHATTERED IMPERIUM (GDW,90) should be on the streets by the time you get this TS17. Live long and keep TRAVELLERing!

WANTED: DEVELOPERS

by Dennis Myers

4/19/90

Temporary Sector Developers to aid in detailing the Hive Federation. Take a small chunk (subsector or two), name it, populate it, write a couple of notes about it and move on. Perfect for those of you who do not have a lot of time. Permanent positions available. Contact G4E Dennis M. Myers, 1161 Nansemond Pky #116, Suffolk VA 23434 (6Enie D.MYERS22).

MTA2 - SOLOMANI & ASLAN

by James Holden, DGP

1/10/90

In February, work gets underway on MTA2. Subtitled "The Rimward Races: Solomani and Aslan," we expect this to be one awesome product. (I can say that because I've seen most of MTA1 - you won't believe the Farley cover on this thing, folks.)

MTA2 is projected to be a third quarter 1990 product, but the time to starting putting in your two cents' worth is now. Aside from the recent discussions about the Aslan's minor race status, what does everyone like and dislike about them?

That's a basic question to survey people's impressions of the Aslan - an easy start to get discussion underway. Send your answers to me [James A. Holden; 923 Clint Smith; Duncanville, TX 75137; USA].

Pete Celesia, my co-author on MTA2, would like similar feedback on the Solomani, so drop him a line, too [Peter G. Celesia; 55 Brunswick Ave; West Hartford,

CT 06107; USA]. He's currently engaged in fleshing out Solomani history from the 21st century A.D. onward, and he's come up with a lot of original thoughts. All of you who complained "Who wants to play a Terran?" or "Terrans as aliens?" have another thing coming.

The Solomani section will be more than a facelift of Alien Module 6, but only if you help. Take a few minutes and give Pete some feedback. He'd appreciate it, and so would I; no writer likes to work in a vacuum.

As writers, Pete and I need to know your opinions, compliments, and criticisms, or we can't work them into MTA2.

DGP STYLE GUIDE

by Joe D. Fugate, Sr.

12/15/89

If you are going to write manuscripts for us, you can get a leg up on your competition (other writers) if you follow our style. Here, spelled out in black and white, are some of our preferences. If you follow these guidelines, you immediately eliminate a lot of editing work we have to do to get your manuscript in shape - and, of course, if you save us work, we love you for it.

BAD PHRASES AND WORDS

Phrases and words we prefer to avoid using...

Phrase/word	Replace with	Comments
due to	because of	"due to" means you owe somebody money
etc.	and so on	etc. ugly, "and so on" more readable
utilize	use	avoid all "ize" words, "use" much better
very	(just pull it)	"very" too general, be more specific

PUNCTUATION GUIDE

Using an "em dash" (—) in place of a semicolon (;) is more modern style. Use a semicolon only sparingly. Occasionally, a colon (:) is appropriate for variety. Examples:

When generating a gas giant, roll 3D for density; at times this will yield...

Preferred...

When generating a gas giant, roll 3D for density — at times this will yield...

Okay once in a while for variety...

When generating a gas giant, roll 3D for density: at times this will yield...

Note: DO NOT capitalize the first word of the phrase following the colon (:).

I wouldn't say *don't* ever use a semicolon; just limit its use to rare occasions.

Use "bangs" (!) sparingly! Overuse of the exclamation point weakens the emphasis and makes the text look cheap!! So watch out for this!!!

OTHER GUIDELINES

We use one space between sentences, not two. Word processing folks use two spaces between sentences, typesetters use only one. You can guess which camp we view ourselves as being in.

Use tabs to align text columns, not spaces. Tabs are easier for us to work with since we can move directly to typesetting the table. Otherwise, we have to manually go in and change all your spaces to tabs the hard way.

At the beginning of a paragraph, put in one tab for the paragraph indent.

Any place where you want us to put in a bullet, type a small "o". For example:

- o Option 1: This option lets you ...
- o Option 2: With option two...

and so on.

Note we do our section headings with all CAPS.

In analyzing the writing currently being produced for MegaTraveller, there are a number of stylistic/content areas we would like to address. With an ever expanding number of competing games on the market, we feel that MegaTraveller needs to emphasize two aspects to keep pace with the pack: keep the game as playable as possible and reinforce the elements that make the game unique relative to other market offerings. The following points are intended to help us better meet these goals.

Unlike several other game systems, the Traveller universe has always tried to be hard SF space opera. That means the science & technology must be accurate, or at least plausibly extrapolated. Be it planet building, alien creation, or super weapon design, your science must make sense. In some cases this may mean researching your subject matter further. If you don't do it, our editors will have to - and it's really you, the authors' job, to do that. It is also helpful to editors working on projects with complicated scientific backgrounds to have the author cite reference works. Of course, if you're unsure of your science background and don't have the time or resources for much research, we are still interested in working with you, but your plot elements should be tempered accordingly.

The next subject is one that should be near & dear to all of us: no matter what your plot, don't ignore the science fictional elements. Though the Rebellion background is one of (mostly) human empires in conflict, MegaTraveller is foremost a science fiction game. When this is ignored, some plots could as easily be run in the TWILIGHT:2000 universe! In even the most mundane, political adventure plots, we urge everyone to instill some element of SF. This could be in the form of exotic cultural habits, strange environments, alien patrons, or a myriad of other possibilities. Imagination is the key (but keeping in mind the first point: scientific accuracy).

Ideally, we'd like to see more SF plots for both our magazine and the products. We're not talking about an Ancients adventure in every issue (we actually discourage overuse of the Ancients). There are many scientific challenges and alien mysteries that can take place on even the most ordinary of planets. Explore the possibilities on the smaller scale. Adventures need not be of sweeping scale to be fun. In fact, with a larger scale it often difficult to produce an adventure that is meaningful to a player's (character's) personal goals.

The last point is on background detail. Traveller is probably unrivalled in the level of detail its universe exhibits. However, the greater this bulk of information gets, the more a referee needs to absorb in order to play. It can get intimidating, especially to those new to the game.

The rule to keep in mind is this: if you present background detail, it should serve to make adventuring with the game more enjoyable. By reading it, a referee should feel inspired, not restricted. Even in a feature like Library Data, our goal is to produce material that will spark the imagination and suggest scenarios. Detail for detail's sake does a mature RPG such as MegaTraveller a disservice. It can serve to limit gaming possibilities, not expand them.

A fine example of well-executed detail can be found in the Keiths' world treatments in FASA's old Far Traveller #1 & #2. Rather than simply citing facts, their background creates useful situations for the referee. We strongly suggest you take a look at this work. It shows not only how detail should be handled, but illustrates our earlier points on science, technology, and the SF feel as well.

Current Progress For Traveller

Fighting Ships of the Shattered Imperium has just been published (March 1990) and is currently shipping to distributors and stores.

The Spring 1990 GDW catalog (which describes Fighting Ships) is at the printer and will be bulk mailed to GDW's 20,000 person mailing list in early April.

The present schedule plans for Knightfall an intriguing technology-oriented adventure set against the background of the Rebellion to be shipped in September.

The Rebel's Tales, planned for December, has proven difficult to obtain by that date, and so has been bumped to August of 1991.

Long, difficult discussions at GDW have finally produced a schedule which again gives Traveller its proper place in the game production schedule, with six titles out of 24 in 1990. That increase in attention to one of GDW's premiere game systems would not have been possible without the continued support of HING, continued pressure from Traveller gamers, and especially the letters to customer service DEMANDING more Traveller material.

The 1991 schedule is still tentative as far as titles, but fairly firm as to slots for releases. In addition, it is even possible for additional titles to be published if they can be written in time. The 1991 (bear in mind that most game companies have to look this far ahead) is:

An unnamed module to be written by Mike Stackpole.

A boxed set of deck plans and player material tentatively titled Oberlindes Lines.

The Rebel's Tales to be written by Joe Fugate.

A world sourcebook to be written by J. Andrew Keith.

Second Survey maps of the Imperium (unfortunately, the maps date from the Second Survey in 1065), plus world data. Plus some essays on the Rebellion.

Star Viking. Miniatures rules for raids, boarding parties, and battles in the lawless wastes of the Shattered Imperium. To supplement these rules, we are currently negotiating for a boxed set of plastic soldiers (the Star Vikings), several blister packs of figures (Imperial Marines, Aslan, K'kree, Vargr, and others), and a boxed set of plastic vehicles (Grav Tank and Grav APC).

Other late breaking news includes:

Spanish Traveller. *Desenos Orbitales* has published a Spanish translation of Traveller in a beautiful slip-cased hardbound edition.

Computer Traveller. Paragon Software will release MegaTraveller 1 *The Zhodani Conspiracy* for IBM PC on May 1, 1990. This computer game is spectacular! After the opening scenes, you can play out the scenario and puzzle, or you can go the other way and play for days and days... trade and commerce, exploration, travel, piracy, and whatever. In addition to being faithful to the Traveller rules, the game provides mountains of opportunity for role-playing science-fiction. A second game in the series (MegaTraveller 2) is already planned.

German Traveller. Fantasy Productions GmbH has been publishing Traveller for several years, and has a variety of modules out.

Japanese Traveller. Hobby Japan has been publishing Traveller for several years, and also has a variety of modules out.

Readers are encouraged to provide feedback (please reference the specific Imperial Bulletin Number in your feedback message) as well as potential subjects for future Imperial Bulletins.