

The Tricolor's Shadow

Traveller: 2300 Adventure on Beta Canum Venaticorum





Introduction

"*The Tricolor's Shadow*" is an introductory adventure intended for a group of **Traveller: 2300** characters. It serves as a vehicle to show both the referee and the players a glimpse of the future and of how **Traveller: 2300** is played.

The *Player's Situation* on the back page of this booklet is intended for the players: it tells them the basics that they need to know as the adventure starts.

The inside of this booklet is reserved for the referee. Information in the booklet tells the referee the plot of the adventure, how to go about administering parts of it, and suggestions for interesting events. Players should discover the information inside the booklet only through the referee.

REFeree'S SYNOPSIS

This synopsis provides an overview of the adventure; by reading it, the referee can gain a broad overview of what the adventure will deal with.

The adventurers have been hired by Rebco (a large frontier corporation) to perform a survey of a remote mountain valley in a southern region of the French Continent of Beta Canum-4.

The Rebco Survey

Rebco has been hired by the colonial government of the French Continent to perform a survey of several regions of the continent.

The intent is to locate mineral resources, major geological formations, potential farmland, and anything else that is interesting.

One of the designated regions is a mountain valley south of Premiere.

The group will be equipped with modern surveying equipment and satellite photos of the area, but there is no substitute for having people on the ground looking at geologic structures and soil qualities.

The survey produces a variety of reports; the characters find the process interesting and informative. The adventurers have the opportunity to find several potential mineral sites, and they find much of the valley floor is suitable for farming.

Moreover, although the valley is completely surrounded by high mountains, the group discovers the underground river which drains the valley. Their report will suggest the river tunnel be expanded and used for a direct airfilm transport line connection with Premiere.

At the time of the survey, an alien exploratory vessel has entered the Beta Canum system, probed several of the worlds, and then dispatched a lander to Beta Canum-4. While in orbit, the lander grappled a small surveillance satellite and brought it along when

it landed in the mountain valley. After a short time devoted to taking samples and looking at the satellite, the lander took off again and returned to its parent ship. Together, they leave the Beta Canum system.

In the final days of the survey, the group witnesses a streak of fire at the far end of the valley. Recognizing that a ship has landed, they set out to investigate. Before they arrive, the ship leaves again.

Upon arrival at the landing site, the group finds a burned out spot and some trash with no other clue to the identity of the ship. They do find, however, a mangled weather satellite (of French manufacture) carelessly discarded at the edge of the field. Exposed by a rip in the casing of the satellite is a small orange metal device that is recognizable as alien, but which no one in the group can identify.

One person detaches the orange device as a souvenir, and the group then returns to finishing its survey. Everything they see can be put into their report.

The French Surveillance Bug

Surveillance satellites are not acceptable on Beta Canum-4. For years, there has been no need for them between friends, and now no one is ready to escalate tensions by putting one into orbit.

The French, however, have felt a need to maintain a surveillance of the German Continent, and to do so, they have bugged a weather satellite. They have acquired a small optic device of great power and recording ability, and they routinely recover it and read its contents under the guise of servicing the satellite.

The satellite is in low orbit to see and relay weather patterns and to provide warnings of storms.

The German Continent cannot be observed from the French beanstalk, but the weather satellite is an ideal vehicle to do so.

The satellite was on the far side of Beta Canum-4 when it was taken by the alien ship, so the French have no solid information on what has happened to it or why it did not report on schedule. The French fear that anyone recovering the satellite will discover the orange bugging device; if its discoverers are the Germans, there may be a severe international incident. When signals from the satellite are detected coming from the mountain valley, the authorities are totally confused, but delighted that the satellite is within their own territory. They dispatch a force of local militia to recover the satellite in the hopes of finding answers to the puzzle.

The orders to the militia, however, mention possible German military involvement in the satellite disappearance. Consequently



the militia force sets out trigger-happy and itching for battle.

The Attack

The military force is a component of the Milice Grise, the Grey Militia, a local force established to help keep the peace in frontier areas. It arrives at the satellite site only after the adventurers have left. They discover the data cartridges are missing, and this heightens their conviction that the satellite was stolen by German agents.

After a period of time searching for the cartridges, the military locates the adventurers and when they get within range, opens fire. In the course of a running gun battle, the adventurers must make their escape from the mountain valley. At this point, the adventurers are unclear as to who is attacking them and may believe them to be revolutionaries, bandits, or invaders. It is only later, en route to Premiere, that they discover (from news reports) that their attackers were local French militia.

Passing through small towns on the way to Premiere, the group becomes aware that they are viewed with suspicion. Locals treat them warily. Finally, the group comes to realize that they are hunted criminals. They may or may not realize that their data cartridges are the key to their dilemma.

The Cross-Continental Trek

To escape from the French authorities, the group must leave French territory. It would be simplest to board a beanstalk capsule and ride to orbit, but that route is impossible. The group would be identified in seconds.

Once upon a time, all three continents had catapult facilities, but the beanstalk has nearly driven them out of business. Only the German Continent maintains an operating catapult, as well as a scramjet service with the terminal in orbit.

The German Continent is the group's goal. To reach it, they must travel overland across the French Continent to the straits opposite the British Continent, cross about 20 kilometers of water, then cross the British Continent to the straits opposite the German Continent where they must cross 40 kilometers of water, and finally trek south to the German catapult site. From the catapult

site, they can reach orbit.

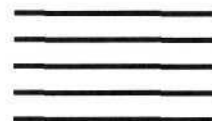
Up To Orbit

Once in German territory, the adventurers need only make their way to Uethen, the largest city on the German Continent, and the site of the catapult and scramjet field, purchase passage to orbit, and board the jet for the trip.

The catapult site provides some potential for adventure: French agents may be keeping watch, and the adventurers could try subterfuge, pretending to attempt a ride on the catapult (although an actual trip on the catapult would probably be fatal).

In orbit, the group can contact their employer and take steps to resolve the entire matter. Rebco is an ideal intermediary. It is frequently a contractor for nations, colonial governments, foundations, and large companies, and most trust it to produce good work for good money.

Since Rebco hired the adventurers for the survey, it can vouch for their original mission and explain that they are not agents of any power. At the same time, Rebco can provide the adventurers' side of the story and help clear them of any criminal complaint. Finally, Rebco can serve as a conduit to transfer the data cartridges back to the proper authorities.



Adventure Events

Rebco has hired the group to survey a remote mountain valley in the south of the French Continent.

The overland journey to the valley is about two thousand kilometers. The first thousand can take advantage of the road net which handles the agricultural areas around Premiere. The remainder of the journey is through flat prairie to the mountain range. The mountain range wall of the valley is about two hundred kilometers deep and requires careful trip planning and reconnaissance.

THE MOUNTAIN VALLEY

The object of this survey is an unexplored, uncolonized valley on the southern edge of the French Continent. Surrounded by mountains, the valley is difficult to reach overland, which is one reason the area has not been exploited.

The valley is about 500 kilometers long, and about 300 kilometers wide at its widest point. Its area is about equivalent to the nation of Hungary.

The valley can be mapped with about twelve terrain hexes (each 100 kilometers). The referee must map them either before the adventure begins, or as the adventure proceeds.

Surveying the valley involves surveying each hex. The group can be expected to spend about three days per hex, investigating the lay of the land, local flora and fauna, possible mineral deposits, and unusual features.

A Survey of the Valley: The valley is drained by two rivers which join at the western valley edge. There the single river flows for several kilometers before falling over a rock escarpment into a large sunken basin.

The Underground River: From the basin, the river flows underground for thirty kilometers before emerging outside the valley and draining to the sea.

At one time, the river filled the entire underground passage, but erosion has since deepened the tunnel and lowered the river level. It is now possible for hoverscouts to travel the length of the tunnel with little difficulty. This tunnel is one area that the group must explore.

Interesting Things: The survey can be used as a vehicle to show many interesting things to the characters. This phase is limited only by the imagination of the referee. Potential items of interest could include:

- A giant dense forest.
- Weird geological formations such as spires, natural bridges, or deep pits.

- A murky swamp populated with plants that emit poison gases.
- Herds of strange armor-clad herbivores.

The only restrictions should be that there are no artifacts of previous races or settlements. Beta Canum-4 has never evolved intelligent life, and has not been settled previous to the arrival of the French about a hundred years ago.

The Old Man: There is one current settler in the valley, an old man who moved there about 20 years ago. He has homesteaded a farm of several square kilometers, raising grain and beef for his own needs. He is independent and is content to live on his farm pursuing his own interests.

The old man has had many experiences in the valley, having explored it many times. He is willing to accompany the group on several of their explorations, helping them to see special or important features that might otherwise be overlooked. The group must still visit the various areas in order to record data on their cameras.

The old man is an NPC device that allows the referee to provide input and direction to the player characters. The referee, through the old man, can provide clues as to where to investigate next, and what special things to look for. If the players are slow to understand something, the old man can be used to help explain it.

Although the old man is much like a hermit, he is not antisocial. Further, although he likes his isolation, he has staked claims to large areas of land, and if the valley is developed, it will rise in value. Although he has little need for more money, he wants his grown daughter (who lives in Premiere) to benefit.

The Streak of Fire: Toward the end of the survey of the valley, the group sees a streak of fire reaching down to the valley some distance away. The phenomenon is recognizable as a lander, but no one expects a lander to put down in the valley.

Because this may be an emergency, the group can be expected to rush to the landing site and investigate.

On the way there, the group sees the lander take off again. By the time they reach the landing site, they find nothing but a burned patch of ground. However, someone does notice the casing for a weather satellite at the edge of the field.

Someone notices a small orange device within the casing and, although unable to identify it, can at least note that it is not a standard piece of equipment. It should be taken as a souvenir.

The entire encounter with the satellite should be recorded on camera. This is a natural function of the survey anyway, and (if the players forget) the referee can assume it is recorded. Later

checks of the cameras can confirm that it was recorded unless the players have specifically decided to turn the cameras off.

The Militia Attack: About three days after the satellite incident, the French militia arrives. They have been dispatched from a small settlement at the foot of the mountains outside the valley, and have been travelling for nearly two days.

The militia has been given orders to proceed to the specific site of the satellite and to recover it, preventing examination by any unauthorized individuals. Specific instructions are given to recover and maintain separately the orange device, and to conceal its presence from everyone. A method of pinpointing the device by tracking the signal it emits is also given. The orders mention possible German involvement in the satellite disappearance.

When they find the satellite casing (or some stray pieces, if the adventurers have taken it with them), the militia captain interprets his orders to mean the recovery of the satellite or its parts if they are taken.

Using the tracking system, the militia captain follows the adventurers trying to overtake them. He also jumps to the conclusion that the adventurers are Germans, and decides that they must be stopped, even if it means killing them; he conveys this opinion to his men.

When the militia catches up to the adventurers, one of the soldiers opens fire, beginning a running gun battle as the group tries to escape. Since they have no knowledge of the militia's assignment, they perceive the militia to be bandits or invaders and flee for their lives.

Once shots have been fired between the two groups, the adventurers are in trouble. Regardless of the explanation, exchanging gunfire with local authorities is considered extremely grave. Ultimately, an explanation that the militia fired first might be accepted, but the problem is getting someone to listen.

FLIGHT FROM THE MILITIA

The first step for the adventurers is to evade the militia. Several

possibilities exist, but all call for the same thing. First recover the fuel station so that the hoverscouts can be refuelled. Second, warn the old man that he is possibly in danger. Third, leave the valley as soon as possible.

The old man can help advise the adventurers if they do not already see certain facts. He may elect to accompany them on their trip.

The old man points out that, after a gun battle with the militia, the group can hardly just drive back to Premiere as if nothing had happened. Surely more military will be brought into action against them and quickly. The adventurers must flee the French Continent and make their way to the German Continent. There they can catch a scramjet to orbit and turn in their report to Rebco. The old man is not aware of all the facts so he cannot suggest any other responses. During the journey the adventurers themselves may discuss their situation, think through various explanations, and finally find their own solution to the problem.

ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

An examination of the map of Beta Canum-4 shows that the group needs to travel halfway around the world to get to the German Continent and their catapult site. Located along with that site is a scramjet field that provides service to orbit as well as to Premiere. The only problem is getting to the catapult site on the German Continent.

Crossing Oceans: Hoverscouts can cross large bodies of water with relative ease. In the event of an engine failure, they would sink, but as long as the engine keeps running they are able to maintain an air cushion and keep going. Actually, water surfaces are ideal because they are flat and open. Hoverscouts can make maximum speed with relative ease.

Crossing Continents: Crossing continents involves several problems that must be continually addressed—fuel, food, and locals.

Fuel can be purchased in areas which have fuel stations. It can





also be begged from small farms or ranches that have their own fuel stations. If the group brought their fuel station along, they could use that to refuel their vehicles.

Food can be bought from local establishments or hunted in the wild.

Local citizens can be expected to have a variety of responses to the adventurers. If the conflict with the Milice Grise reaches the authorities and is made public knowledge (on news broadcasts), contact with locals may be dangerous. Contact with British or Germans on the other continents will be less so.

RESOLUTION

The adventurers have all the elements they need to resolve their problems with the French Continent government, assuming they have acted properly during their adventures.

They have their own camera records of their investigation of the weather satellite. Those records reveal the presence of the orange device, which shows that someone has bugged the satellite and turned it into a surveillance satellite over the German Continent.

They have camera records which show that the militia opened fire on them first.

They have the orange device itself.

With this evidence in hand, it might be possible to convince the French authorities to drop all charges and perhaps pay a finders' fee (Lv10,000) for the recovery of the orange device (and for signatures on documents which acknowledge and agree to respect the secret nature of what they know).

However, the best approach to the authorities would be through an intermediary—Rebco.

THE MILITIA

The French authorities dispatch the closest military unit they can find, and it happens to be a small militia unit on training assignment about 300 kilometers from the location of the satellite.

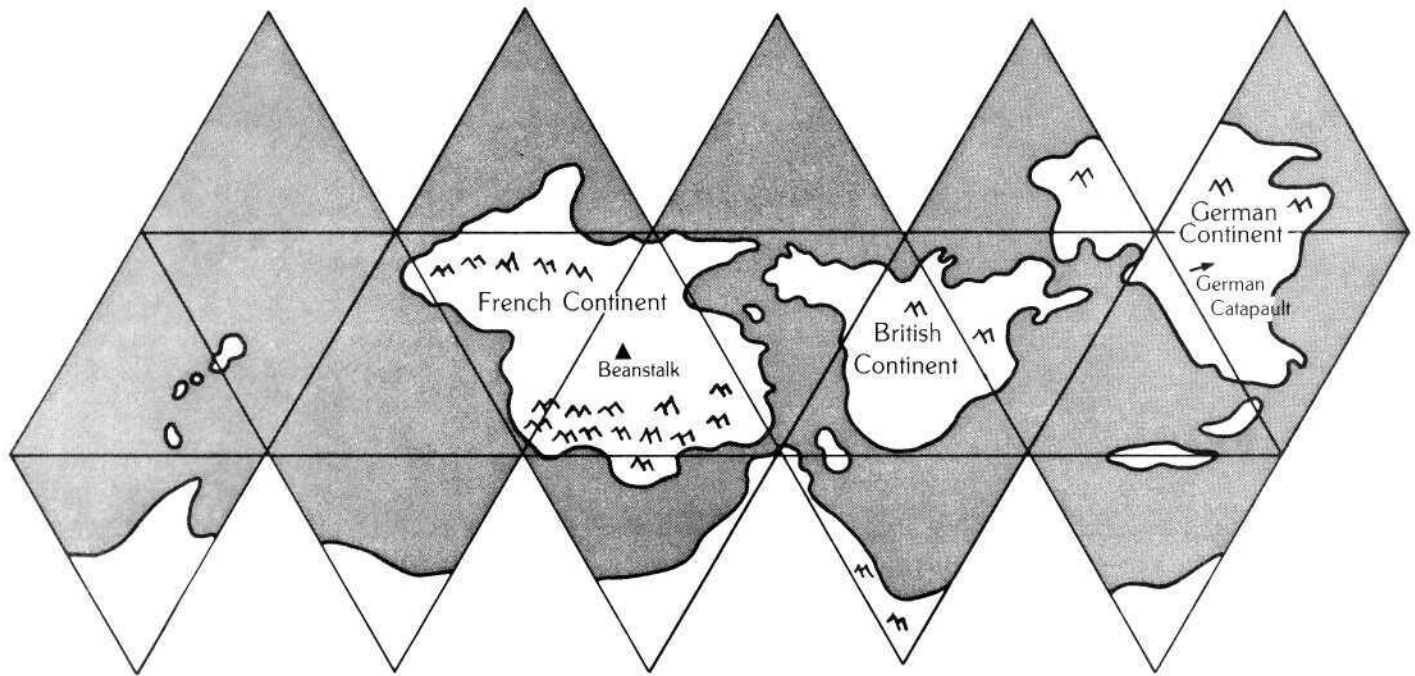
The squad is an element of the Milice Grise (local militia bat-

talions are named for colors—Rouge, Noire, Verte, etc); this is the 'Grey Militia.' It consists of twelve soldiers: a captain (veteran), a sergeant (experienced), and ten troopers (seven green, three experienced). They are equipped with Wu-Bejing Type 49 Assault Rifles.

The unit travels in four military hoverscouts, and can be expected to have standard (although not the latest issue) military equipment.

VEHICLES

The adventurers have been provided with hoverscouts by Rebco. They are roughly equivalent to Bridgeport Swift Songbirds, but fitted for wilderness survival by the addition of removable fabric tops, roll bars, and high survival plenum shrouds.



Beta Canum-4

Beta Canum Venaticorum

Beta Canum Venaticorum is a solitary GO V star very similar to Sol. The system has eight worlds. Beta Canum-4 is located at precisely the optimal life zone distance from the star, and the world developed its own life forms early in its history.

Beta Canum-4 is 12,000 km in diameter and has a density of 1.0. Its mass is 0.82 Earths, and local gravity is 0.94 Gs. Atmospheric pressure is 0.923, and oxygen pressure is 0.175. Overall, the world is eminently habitable and is a desirable place to settle.

Beta Canum-4 is very much like Earth. The colors of the vegetation are somewhat different, but not enough to be striking. Perhaps the most apparent difference is the day length: one local day is 20.4 hours long.

History: Beta Canum Venaticorum was first visited by a French exploratory squadron in 2181. Operating under the authority of the European Space Agency, the squadron identified the planet in the fourth orbit as a garden world and staked a claim for France. Exploration and survey took another twenty years; the first colonists arrived in 2205. British and Bavarian colonists followed in 2207.

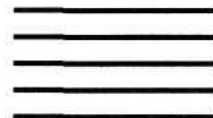
As a matter of convenience, the three settling nations each claimed one of the world's three tenable continents. Originally

given names reflecting the inhabitants' national origins, the current custom is to refer to them as the French Continent, the British Continent, and the German Continent. Older colonists still slip and sometimes say the Bavarian Continent.

Nearly a century of settlement has created a large local population, but it would take more than a century of breeding to fill up a world the size of Earth. Populations are centered on farming areas circling the large cities.

The French Continent is the largest of the world's land masses, with an area slightly larger than Asia. The German Continent is about equal in area to Africa. The British Continent is about equal in area to North America. The uninhabited south polar continent is covered with a permanent ice cap and is equal in area to South America.

Mapping: Beta Canum Venaticorum can be mapped using map triangles eight hexes on a side. The geodesic map of the planet provides a rough indication of land masses, coastlines, and major terrain features. As necessary during the adventures of the group, smaller terrain hexes can also be mapped. It is not necessary to have the world fully mapped out before the adventuring begins. It is a good idea, however, to have a supply of blank terrain forms available for mapping as the need arises.



Player's Situation

Beta Canum-4 is the hub of French power in the French Arm. Originally settled in 2205 by the French (and in 2207 by the British and the Germans), the world is now a well-developed colony whose power can be felt for light years around.

The key to Beta Canum's power is food. Everyone needs food: outposts, young colonies, merchant fleets, naval vessels, etc. But getting food up against the pull of gravity makes it expensive. Beta Canum-4 is one of only two worlds which have beanstalks (Earth is the other). The farms of Beta Canum-4 produce food in abundance, and it can be carried to orbit cheaply in the cargo capsules of the beanstalk. Cheap food has a way of gaining friends, and that friendship translates into power for Beta Canum-4 and its French owners.

Beta Canum-4, however, has been using the profits from food exports to support increasing industrialization. Every argument that makes Beta Canum-4 a good, profitable supplier of food goes double for manufactured goods. The beanstalk is making the planet a major supplier of basic machinery and consumer goods.

All is not especially rosy on Beta Canum-4, however. The world was originally settled under the auspices of the ESA: France, Britain, and Bavaria each took one of the world's three continents and established a colony there. Over the years, the three national colonies have prospered with a minimum of friction.

Until recently.

The War of German Reunification transformed the many independent German states into one nation—Germany. The Bavarians of the Bavarian Colony found that they were now Germans. Initially, they were cool to the idea.

At the same time, the French of Beta Canum-4 have become more nationalistic. Their colony has a beanstalk; they became increasingly prosperous. They also became increasingly belligerent.

The result was a falling-out between the French and the German colonists. Each saw the other as a potential enemy. Each grew wary of the other.

THE SURVEY

Within this atmosphere of economic boom and intercolonial distrust, the adventurers find themselves looking for jobs. Local companies are anxious to hire people, but they prefer long term employees. Adventurers liable to move on are poor employment prospects.

There are still opportunities, however. Rebco is a major contractor which specializes in short-term contracts for governments, foundations, and other companies. In this particular case, they have

a contract from the government of the French Continent to survey and explore several locations on the continent.

Rebco, in turn, wants to hire a group of people for a short-term contract to explore a remote mountain valley and produce a report on its potential for settlement and exploitation.

The job pays Lv2,000 per person per month for two months, plus a completion bonus of Lv1,000 per person when the report is turned in. During the survey, the group is provided with full rations, medical insurance (just in case), and the equipment they will need. Finally, Rebco will pay for a ticket up the beanstalk once the job is finished.

EQUIPMENT

Rebco will provide a basic array of equipment for the survey party. Supplies include:

- **Two Hoverjeeps:** The vehicles operate on liquid hydrogen and begin with full tanks.
- **Fuel Station:** This automated, solar-powered station cracks water into hydrogen and stores it in liquid form for vehicle fuel. The station also provides electrical power for use in camp and to recharge batteries.
- **Cameras:** Two survey party members are provided with cameras to record the activities of the group. Later analysis by Rebco will help confirm the findings of the survey.
- **Sensors:** All survey party members are provided with a portacomp and attached sensors to take readings on temperature, make chemical analysis, and reach logical conclusions. Sensor data is recorded for later use in the survey report.
- **Camping Equipment:** An adequate supply of camping gear is also provided including tents, sleeping bags, and cooking equipment. The group can live comfortably on the frontier with it over the coming two months.

Miscellaneous Equipment. Each survey party member is given two separate allowances. The Lv500 gun allowance may be used to purchase defensive weaponry and ammunition. The Lv500 equipment allowance may be used to purchase equipment that is considered desirable or necessary. Both allowances are provided as credits in the Rebco company store, so unused allowances are forfeited rather than taken in cash.

The company store has used equipment available at 60% of new price (used ammunition is not available).

Major items of equipment must be returned at the end of the survey. Items purchased with the equipment and gun allowances are considered consumables and may be kept.