

Understanding

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

TRAVELLER[®]

The New Era



GDW



THE THOUSAND-YEAR IMPERIUM IS DEAD!

When I was a child, Grandfather told us stories at night, stories of dukes and admirals, of galaxy-spanning empires, of star fleets locked in titanic battles. And he showed us the shiny radiation scars he had earned in those battles, scars which were red and ugly and came flickeringly to life in the dancing firelight.

None of the others believed the stories. Some said they must have happened generations earlier than Grandfather's time—others said they could never have happened.

But I believed. And late at night I looked up and dreamt of the stars, and of others like myself on the cold worlds circling them who must also look up and dream.

And I knew that one day, somehow, I would walk among them.

An emperor shot down in cold blood. A hundred BatRons tumbled to glowing vapor in titanic battles. A thousand worlds ravaged, burnt, and broken.

And then came the Virus.

Developed from silicon-based life forms, designed as a weapon to attack enemy computer systems, released by a commando raid before safeguards and controls could be perfected, the Virus swept human space with the speed and destructive power of a firestorm. Computer defenses designed to stop invasive programs slowed it up, but none of them could stop it for long, because the Virus was alive, self-aware, and intelligent.

It was also mad.

Now, 75 years later, the star-spanning Imperium and its technological wonders are a dim memory. What remains besides ruins, decayed artifacts, and pockets of civilization clinging desperately to their preserved knowledge?

The unbowed human spirit.

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

When I hit the Hiver technical curriculum, it was as if I'd come home for the first time. This was where I belonged, and it's where I would have stayed if the first expeditions into The Wilds had turned out differently. But all of that came later.

I loved deep-space astrogation, loved it with a passion I'd never felt before. Putting a jump ship "into the hole" at just the right angle of attack so that 150 hours later it climbed out three parsecs away with the exact

residual momentum to throw it to within skimming distance of a gas giant was the most beautiful thing I'd ever done.

There was a logic, an elegance to it that I'd never imagined existed, and nobody was better at it than I was. Nobody.

Although **Traveller: The New Era** is set after the spectacular collapse of a star-spanning civilization, it is not a game about endings—it is a game about beginnings. It is the beginning of a new dawn as humanity rediscovers the worlds it once owned and the knowledge it once commanded.

It is about an era rich in adventure. Players explore long-abandoned worlds; recontact cultures which have regressed to primitive status or retreated into xenophobic superstition; help rebuild struggling societies and damaged ecosystems; conduct trade, diplomacy, and even espionage into unknown or little-known regions.

The **New Era** is a time when individuals make a difference again, and the players are on the cutting edge of that era.

Humanity's birthright will not be denied. Once again—once and for all—mankind will own the stars.



THE HARD EDGES OF SPACE

When we found out what happened to the crews of those first ships we sent into The Wilds, it was as if everyone went a little crazy. Or maybe we all just grew up. Maybe there isn't a lot of difference. Veronique had been on one of those ships—sweet, brilliant, gentle Veronique.

Grandfather, by then a white-haired patriarch, stood in council and spoke for a long time—spoke about what it must have been like for the people in The Wilds to have lost so much so quickly. The memory of what had been before was still strong in him—strong enough that he could understand what the loss of it could have done to people, could have driven people to do. And he wanted all of us to understand, too.

I understood. I understood better than Grandfather. This was disease—disease worse than the Black Death, worse than the Virus. And we had the cure ...star-hot plasma and RAM grenades and coherent light. I said as much.

Things were never the same between Grandfather and me after that. There was just too much of the past in him to have much heart for the future...or much stomach for it.

Once human-settled space was reasonably uniform, but those days are gone. The diversity of post-Imperial human space is typified by four regions.

- **The Regency:** What was once known as the Domain of Deneb is now the Regency, the self-proclaimed keeper of the Imperial flame. Protected from the spread of the Virus by the tide of Vargr invasions as well as the currents of the Rebellion itself, the Regency erected a strict quarantine which preserved it from contamination. Only here is there a remnant of the old Imperium with a sense of continuity with the past.

- **Pocket Empires:** Here and there throughout the old territory of the Imperium are small groups of worlds which have re-established space flight and trade. These pocket empires are isolated islands in a sea of anarchy.

- **The Rim:** Along the trailing rim of old Imperial territory are a handful of worlds which have partially recovered from The Collapse with Hiver technical assistance. Having tried to re-establish trade and diplomacy with The Wilds by peaceful means, and having suffered terrible losses doing so, they have now begun a more vigorous campaign. They are called Reavers or, by some, Star Vikings.

- **The Wilds:** The vast majority of the Old Empire is made up of Wilds, ruined worlds struggling in ignorance and barbarism. On many of these worlds there remain relics of pre-Collapse technology, and these are used by small ruling elites to force absolute obedience by the masses of the population, medieval subsistence agriculture existing side-by-side with grav tanks and battledress-equipped feudal overlords.

A DIFFERENT GAME FOR A DIFFERENT ERA

By the time we hit Hastaan and liberated it from the benevolent rule of its "God-Emperor" (I am not joking), we had the drill down pretty tight. We were on the ground before his air defense network had a decent fire control lock, inside the city before his troops had the guntracks powered up, and inside his palace before anyone thought to button it up. Then we hit his Sacred Guard, 500 of the roughest, toughest guys he had.

They were probably pretty good at shoving sodbusters and stealing chickens, but when it came to a real fight, they were just another bunch of jerks in silly outfits. We found out later their motto was "Death Before Defeat."

All they got wrong was the order.

Traveller: The New Era is more than just a change in background; it's a major revision of the game system that all existing Traveller players should welcome. This revision has two principal features.

A Compatible System: The new game uses a new system—at least it's new for Traveller. We've used the GDW House System for the game, because it provides a number of exciting advantages.

- The House System is a third-generation game system, with rich and detailed character generation and a heavy emphasis on roleplaying.

- Fast, realistic combat, a major improvement over the old Traveller/MegaTraveller system.

- An elegant, realistic task resolution system which is the unifying game mechanic throughout the system and which combines skills, attributes, and difficulty level in one D20 roll.

- Completely compatible with *Twilight: 2000*, *Dark Conspiracy*, and *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, GDW's other house roleplaying games. Not only can characters cross over from one game to another, but animals, vehicles, weapons, and equipment are usable across game lines as well, expanding the volume of useful supplements tremendously.

A Universal System: The basic Traveller game retains its setting in one historical time line and one possible pattern of future technological development. However, with the publication of the **Traveller Technical Architecture**, the game becomes expandable to fit any science-fiction milieu desired.

Technical Architecture provides design sequences for starships, vehicles, weapons, and other equipment, and explores different technological approaches to weapons and transportation—stutterwarp, star gates, matter transmitters, and more. It also provides useful ideas on universe-building, for players and referees yearning for a trip into the genuine unknown.

A UNIVERSE TO EXPLORE...

A UNIVERSE OF SUPPORT MATERIAL

The resources GDW has already poured into the **New Era** project are just the down payment on its commitment to a renewed and revitalized **Traveller** product line. In 1993, **Traveller** resumes its place as GDW's flagship game line, led by the following releases:

Traveller®: The New Era

The new core product in the **Traveller** line, this book contains all of the rules necessary to play the game: character generation, tasks and skills, travel and exploration, combat, nonplayer characters (human and alien), planetary encounters (including unusual flora and fauna), world generation, and more, as well as a broad assortment of equipment, weapons, vehicles, and spacecraft.

Starship Combat

Although the basic game includes rules for resolving hostile encounters in space, this product expands those rules into a rich and detailed board-game. Useful for single-ship encounters as well as squadron actions, **Starship Combat** breaks down the barrier which used to exist between these two and integrates them into a coherent whole.

The Technical Architecture

Every wonder what an MHD turbine was and how it worked? Ever want to calculate the range at which a laser stopped being dangerous? This book is for you!

No science-fiction game has ever offered a product of this scope or vision before, and yet it is the very essence of science fiction.

First, the **Technical Architecture** provides a layman's explanation of the *real* science behind the numbers in **Traveller**, addressing issues such as acceleration, gravity, power generation, laser light dispersion, and much more. Then it provides design and construction formulae for vehicles, spacecraft, weapons, sensors, and more.

Finally, it examines technologies and gives design sequences for systems not normally found in **Traveller**. This enables you to use **Traveller's** game rules to re-create almost any science-fiction universe found in popular literature, or create your own.

Deluxe Traveller®

Combining the **New Era** rules with the **Technical Architecture** and a variety of playing aids, **Deluxe Traveller** becomes the ultimate science-fiction role-playing game, a genuine paper time machine.

Reavers

Where do the Star Vikings come from, where are they going, and why? This first region sourcebook is rich in adventure material and background, covering the Old Expanses where the Star Vikings are based, their Hiver patrons, and The Wilds they have sworn to tame.

Survival Margin

How did the Imperium die? How did the Virus work? And what forces have arisen to fill the vacuum in the 70

years since? **Survival Margin** bridges the historical gap between **MegaTraveller** and **Traveller: The New Era**, plus offers guidelines for referees to update their campaigns and convert **MegaTraveller** characters to the new system.

Challenge

Challenge magazine continues to support all science fiction gaming, but with the release of **New Era**, it will focus more on **Traveller**, providing a constant stream of optional rules, new equipment, and unusual adventures.

Miniatures From RAFM

We're really excited at the prospect of RAFM's new line of **Traveller** 25mm figures, which we know will capture the exciting feel of the new game.

Equally important, and an historic first, will be the line of detailed **Traveller** starships, designed for use with the **Starship Combat** rules. With luck, these will release at about the same time as the boardgame.

Novels

Although we have allowed authors to set their worlds in the **Traveller** universe in the past, we have never had a GDW-sanctioned **Traveller** novel. That's going to change as well. Although it's too early to say anything definite, we're sure you're going to like what we have in mind.

