



Q COLONIAL TIMES

THE JOURNAL FOR THE 2300AD SCI-FI ROLE-PLAYING GAME

liquidity

THE NEW MUSIC STYLE THAT IS SWEEPING THE CORE

'GOODBYE EDMONTON'
MUSIC IN GAMES OF 2300
CONTRABAND!
THE PETREL CLASS SCOUT
A WORD OR TWO WITH CHARLES GANNON
YOUR WORLD: NEWS FROM THE CORE & THE COLONIES



SPRING 2013


STYGIAN FOX



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trademark of Mongoose Publish-
ing for their science fiction role-
playing game. *Colonial Times* is a
trademark of Stygian Fox for its
magazine of sci-fi roleplaying and
futuristic design and is published
to an irregular, but charming,
schedule.

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Colonial Times is a magazine dedicated to the science fiction RPG '2300AD'. '2300AD' is copyright 2012 Mongoose Publishing. This free fan based magazine is not for sale and is a work of fiction. No similarities to real world people or events are intended.

EDITORIAL

One of the interesting, and very daunting, things about becoming the editor of a fanzine is the high expectation of its return. The lofty standards of its source material need to be upheld, its ethos sustained, and any future issues must pay due regard to the dedication of the setting, the contributors and most importantly the source's fans and readership.

Many fans of 2300AD have, until recently, spent many years without any new material for their sessions. It has been a lonely hobby and while we've seen new editions of other RPG's come and go we've all been thinking, or hoping rather, for our favourite game to be covered in a magazine or for new books and new outlooks on previous settings.

We're in an amazing period of renewal for publishing. Much is made of the supposed death of print and in fact Amazon in the UK preported that last year, for the first time in its history, downloaded material outsold the printed word. For those who think that the printed word is in peril worry not. It has never been easier to self-publish, to market your own ramblings, or to sell them to those who are eager for a new and interesting read.

Technology has enabled everyone with an average computer to produce work in their own home and with the advent of decent Print-On-Demand, PDF sales, and content device management there is

now very little outlay required to reach your readership and with tablets, laptops, and smartphones the ability to reach those readers has blossomed into something quite miraculous. Large tech corporations have given us all the ability to be a new William Tynedale, a new Leon Trotsky, or a new Thomas Paine. We can print at our hearts desire on any subject we care to choose both for good and ill.

But will anyone out in Readerland listen? Success for any publication hinges on communication. If we don't know what our readership is thinking, how can we appeal to them?

My ravings will usually be on the opposite page and written in my role as Editor but I wanted to appeal to you, the discerning 2300AD gamer who has downloaded this fanzine, to make sure we are producing the kind of content that you want to see.

The space on the page which you now read will be filled with your ramblings upon this organs subjects via e-mails, messages from our Facebook page, and Tweets. Another helpful development of those huge corporations cyberpunk rpg's & fiction warned us about.

Plot a jump ...

On Facebook, search for '2300AD'

Steff. J. Worthington
Editor



GOODBYE EDMONTON

A SHORT STORY OF DEATH IN THE DARK BY COLIN DUNN

Ryan pulled himself down the accessway to the bridge, his hand sweaty on the rope. The Andiron was a merchant ship, hastily refitted with weapons for the run from Beta Canum to Aurore. In her hold were several hundred tons of supplies for the troops combatting the Kaefer occupation. The old Anjou-class freighter, along with three other freighters, was accompanied by a pair of warships, the HMCSS Edmonton and the DSKM Sachseny, both heavy frigates, though of very different design.

The run from Beta Canum to Aurore was very dangerous these days, but highly profitable. The various human military forces on Aurore needed a constant stream of supplies, everything from ammunition to food to clothing. The profits attracted merchants and freighter captains from throughout human space. Unfortunately, the merchant ships attracted attention of their own, everything from human pirates to Kaefer raiders. Many of the discharge were thankfully in occupied systems, but some were not. At this moment, Andiron was in one of those frontier systems.

Ryan was a gunnery officer by training, retired these last thirteen years since the Central Asian War. In that time, he had worked his way to Executive Of-

ficer, or XO, on the Andiron, and had been in charge of fitting her out with weapons and drones for the run. He was a heavyset man, a native of Chengdu over on the Chinese Arm. His bulk was that of a heavyworlder, born on a world where everything weighed 50% more than on Earth. His face was rough-hewn, criss-crossed with scars, and his eyes were narrowed from squinting at too many suns. No one but his mother had ever called him handsome, certainly not since the War. He told people he had been in the War, but seldom went into much detail on which side he had been on.

Right now the Andiron was running through the DM + 36 2393 system, fresh from having discharged her drives into the well of one of the outer planets. In 2 hours they would be clear of the system's flt shelf and safe from attack. Until then, though...

"What do we got, Chin?" said Ryan, as he floated onto the bridge. The tall, thin Nigerian at the sensor ops post didn't turn his head away from the screen as he replied. "Got a relay from Edmonton. It's off her grav scanner. She posts a bogey, possibly two, at about 5 light-minutes out."

His long-fingered hands played over the controls as he tried to coax information out of his console.



"We showing anything yet?"

"Nah. It's way beyond range of our passive systems, and I'm not lighting up the actives without a direct order from God Almighty. Or the captain." Of course, the captain was drunk in his cabin, and Ryan had stopped requesting orders from the Almighty years ago, after watching passenger starships flame and burn out in the silence of a space battle, hundreds dead in seconds.

Ryan had obtained a military active/passive sensor suite from a Nibelungen tech rep on Aurore. It had cost the profits from the last couple of runs, but he had a feeling they would need it. He fervently agreed with Chin regarding the actives. No way were they going to light those off unless there was no choice. Might as well stand in the middle of a dark field with a searchlight and yell out "Shoot me!"

At the console next to Chin, Michelle lounged in her chair, popping a big wad of gum. She was a remote-object controller, recently hired on at Aurore. Her job was handling the drones, two stutterwarp-powered decoys, complete with an inflatable "hull" that was designed to mimic the Andiron.

"Michelle, get ready to pop your decoys. I think we got a couple of raiders out there, or maybe one with missiles running out."

The woman nodded assent, stuffing her wad of gum on the console next to the controls for the drones.

"Ryan! I got a flash from Sachseny!" The communications officer's voice was just on the edge of panic. The German frigate was running out ahead of the convoy, using her own drones to probe yet further ahead.

"Sachseny to all ships. Repeat. Sachseny to all ships." The speaker's Teutonic accent wasn't overly heavy, but still noticeable. "We have multiple inbound. Looks like a Beta and four fighters."

A Beta was bad. They had formed the core of the alien task force that had smashed the human fleets at Aurore in 2298. It carried enough missiles and guns to pound the escorts, and the mer-



chants would be ripe for the taking. The fighters were likely there to head off any escapees.

"Sachseny to all vessels. Break and run. Repeat. Break and run..." Static erupted from the speakers, as outside a sudden burst of light washed over the convoy. Somewhere out ahead of Sachseny, at least one nuclear weapon had just exploded, powering a spray of X-ray lasers that speared through the frigate's thin hull. Without screens or armour to absorb the strike, the Sachseny died, hull flashing into vapor under the intense outpouring of energy from what was undoubtedly a Kaefer missile.

The four merchant vessels scattered in opposite directions, hoping that the raiders couldn't get them all. Like the old joke: "I don't have to run faster than the bear. I just have to run faster than you."

Edmonton, however, did not break. She had no choice. Just duty. A shepherd must defend the flock, after all. The frigate launched her sole decoy, and moved to intercept the Beta. Her sacrifice might give the merchies enough time to get away. A frigate was no match for a battlecruiser, and wouldn't last long against the heavier missile load and guns of her opponent. The Halifax-class frigate at least had some armour and screens to protect her, unlike the German Jute-class.

On the Andiron, Ryan didn't even bother to watch the battle. It would take an hour or two to run its course, and he had other things to do. The fighters weren't staying behind to assist the Beta, but instead broke off on their own to pursue the merchant vessels.

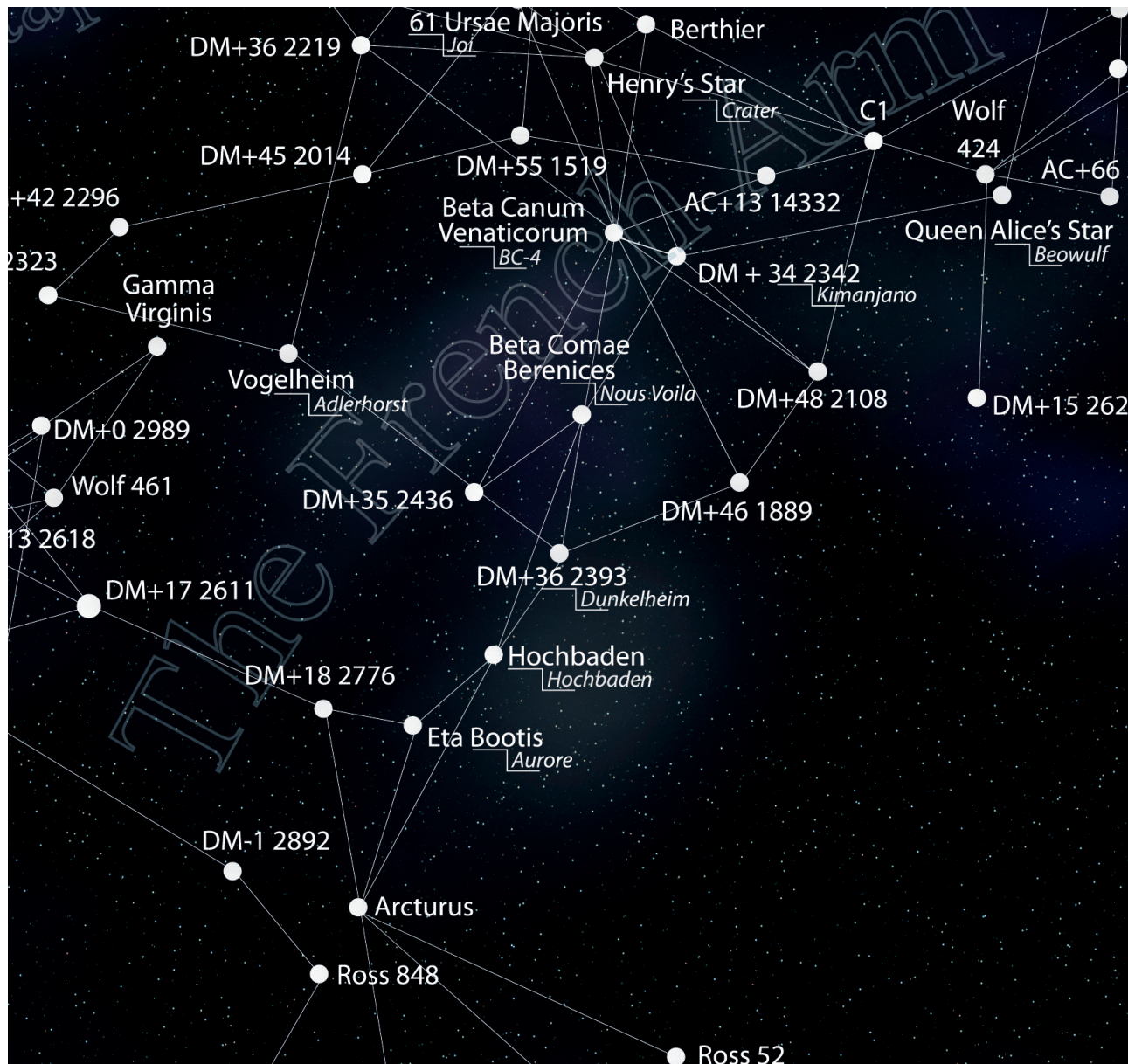
"Chin? How long before that fighter overtakes us?" It was simple question. How long do we have to live? Despite its new weapons, the Andiron wasn't a warship. Those guns were more of a last-ditch defense sort of thing. Like now, really.

"Um, hang on." Chin had been a civilian air traffic controller before signing on, and even he was rattled. "I'd say about an hour, perhaps an hour and a half, tops."

He turned to address the bridge crew, the eight men and women looking to him for leadership. "OK. Here's the drill. Everyone into p-suits. Michelle, when that thing is 20 minutes out, pop both decoys. Chin, get me a firing solution. I'm going to warm up the guns."

As everyone moved to obey his orders, he wondered about their chances. If the fighter caused them any delay at all, the Beta would be able to catch them. He held out little hope of a lucky shot by the Canadian frigate. A Beta was just too big, and too well-protected.

suit was a relic, like him, a veteran of the Central Asia War. As he dogged the helmet on, he sent a subvocalized command to the radio implanted in his throat, and called up the ship's engineer.



Armour, screens and lots of mass to absorb incoming fire. All the Andiron had to answer the fighter was a single jack turret with a pair of old LL-88 lasers. A black-market knock-off of a UTES suite on the turret rounded out the weapons mix.

In his quarters in the gravity wheel of the ship, he pulled on his old p-suit. Getting into the thing was so much easier in gravity, even in the weak approximation the small wheel on Andiron could generate. The

Back in engineering, the Andiron's chief engineer was pulling on her own p-suit. Unlike Ryan's battered and bulky military suit, Sandra's was a skintight marvel. She always maintained that the suit was designed to give her maximum mobility in a zero-gee environment, but in that suit she could dance a ballet. She did genuinely prefer the added mobility of the skinsuit, even if it didn't provide as much protection as a standard p-suit. She had started with the helmet, and was checking the



connection on the collar rings when Ryan's call came through.

The headset radio buzzed, and the HUD on the inside of the helmet gave her Ryan's name. She didn't have an implanted radio, but the one in her helmet was sophisticated enough to respond as well as Ryan's implant.

"What's up, Mister XO?" Sandra sealed the gloves on her suit and pushed off into the engine compartment. The massive MHD turbine was making its rumbling whine audible even through the sonic baffling and her insulated helmet.

"I need more power, Scotty." Sandra Scottsdale had never liked that nickname, but as an engineer on a starship she accepted it as a given.

"What, XO not enough?" She grinned behind her faceplate and gave a thumbs-up to her mechanic as she sailed over his head. He wore a tight, flexible suit similar to hers, and for the same reason.

"Ha. No. I need power for the guns." The Andiron was a merchant vessel, with little excess power for such frivolities as weapons.

Sandra executed a neat turn-around in mid-air, and landed against the back wall of the engine space with knees flexed. "All I got is warp power, and I can't spare a lot of that."

"What about the back-up batteries?"

Sandra reflected that Ryan knew too much about ships to be a comfortable boss. "Yeah, I can tap those, I guess. But I don't think it's a good idea."

"I think I know what you're going to say, but why don't you tell me?"

Ryan was back up on the bridge by now, watching Chin's plot showing the little blip of the Kaefer fighter slowly gaining on them. The sensor-operator was double-checking the seals on Michelle's bulky old p-suit, similar to Ryan's surplus military gear.



Chin's suit looked more like it was designed for the slopes, not space, with its bright, clashing colors and

tailored appearance. His helmet was already on, the umbilicals patched into the ship's life-support system.

"As you wish, sir. We can use the batteries, but if the main turbine takes a hit then I'm afraid we're dead in space."

Ryan was thankful that no one could hear the conversation, even with his helmet off. Implants were good for something. "Hmm. Scotty, if they hit the turbine, we got other problems. That's a Kaefer raider out there, and if we lose that drive, they're going to board us and then they're going to skin us. Maybe take our ears first. Or maybe just take us back on the Beta to fill up their fridge."

"As you say. Well, I think I can get you four bursts for the guns from the back-up batteries. That's about all they have, and it'll take several hours to recharge them afterwards. That is, if the main turbine is undamaged. All things considered, I'd rather blow the warp coil than let them board."

"It's not gonna come to that. I got a plan. Those four should do." He paused for a moment in thought. "Scotty, we had better take the spin off the grav wheel. Spin decks aren't safe in combat."

On the other end of the link, Sandra blushed. She was the engineer; she should have thought of that. Then again, she wasn't a combat vet.

"Yessir. I'll have Leibowski start on that right away."

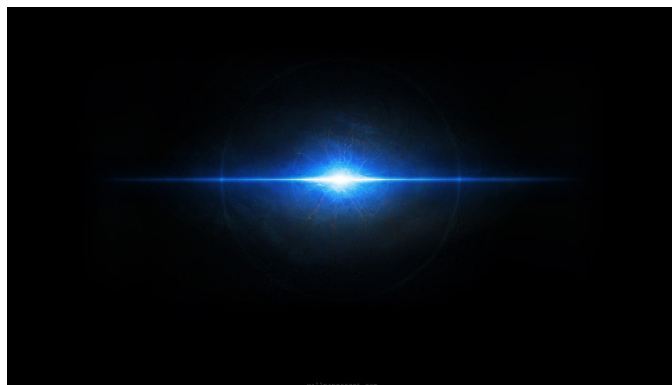
Clicking off the link, he seated himself in front of the newest console on the bridge, a gleaming panel with the turret controls and a connection to the black-market UTES targeting array on the turret. It seemed as good as any he had used before. He reached into his overalls under the bulky p-suit, and pulled out the key hanging from a chain around his neck. He used the key to arm the panel, and release the locks on the controls. His actions also popped the jack turret up from its housing in the hull, the two laser cannons pointing straight away from the ship. They began to move of their own volition as the maintenance program ran them through their paces. Ryan waited for the system to cycle through all its tests and then he grasped the two joysticks in front of him, and moved them about experimentally. He was rewarded by the view changing from the UTES array as the guns and their fire-control system tracked across the sky.

Nothing to do now but wait.

Nearly half an hour later Michelle reached nonchalantly to her console and flipped a switch. The hull gave a brief shudder as the two drones popped free. Ryan watched the screen over Michelle's shoulder as the two drones rapidly inflated, their silvery mylar hulls giving them the same reflected signature as the much larger ship. One continued on the Andiron's original vector, while the ship and the other drone went in different directions. The more time the fighter wasted, the better, but they were still too far from the shelf.

He spared a quick look at Chin's screen. They had range for the passives now, and he could see the battle unfolding between the little frigate and the much larger cruiser. That Edmonton had held out so long was commendable, but the end had to be near for the human vessel. As he was thinking about that, static filled the volume of space where the two ships had been fighting, and a brief, distant flash could be seen in the rear-mounted 'scopes. Another nuke had just gone off.

Goodbye, Edmonton.



His job was to make sure the Andiron didn't follow her. At this moment, he could spare little thought for the other merchant vessels. He knew Veracruz was lost. Her crew had taken her the wrong way, deeper into the system's gravity well. She would have no chance to evade the fighter pursuing her. Makassar had a chance, but Diablo was likely already captured. Even unloaded, the old Metal-class bulk freighter couldn't have gotten away from the Kaefer fighters, and on this run she was carrying 1000 tons of cargo in her train.

He sat back down at his console, and strapped himself in. His chair had connections for the life-support umbilicus of his suit, but he preferred the built-in life sup-

port. He had seen the ship systems fail during the war, and was determined not to go that way. Better a clean death than boiling out through his suit's waste disposal system. He latched down his helmet, and fired up the implant again.

"Mr. Okeye, give me a repeat off your console, if you please." The elaborate formality was part of his war-face. A familiar ritual from his days in the gunner's seat, long ago. Chin complied without a word.

The display lit up with the feed from the Andiron's passive array, a collection of antennas and telescopes perched atop the bridge. The UTES tracking array automatically overlaid its data on the passive display, superimposed as a window looking out in the same direction as the turret.

"Got a fix there yet, Mr. Okeye?" Once again that easy formality. Just like in War, hunting targets throughout the Chinese and French Arms.

"Ryan, I think I got something." Chin's voice whispered urgently in his ear. Then a flash, and Michelle let out a muttered Mandarin curse.

"Well, better the decoy than us, I guess," she said, as she turned her attention to the remaining drone. Her voice sounded hollow coming through the closed faceplate of her helmet.

Ryan pivoted the guns, letting the UTES array do the work for him as he hunted for the fighter. There! Out of range of his low-powered cannons, but hopefully they were out of range of the fighter's guns too.

Then the alarm sounded. Chin's sensor suite included a radar detector, and it was sounding now as the approaching fighter bathed them with radar, using its active systems to try and get a more precise fix on the location of the freighter.

As the lock-on alarm coursed through the bridge, Ryan let the UTES do its work, and in a moment it had locked on to the intense EM flare of the fighter's active sensors. His fingers closed around the trigger of the right-hand joystick, just as everything went to hell.

The ship yawed fiercely as the fighter's guns hammered it, with breakthroughs



in engineering and on the bridge. Sandra saw her mechanic blown in half by the intense laser burst, though somehow the turbine escaped damaged. Life support was not so lucky, but she could fix that, even without her mechanic. The shot likewise had touched off an explosion in the fuel tankage. There was no fire, but Andiron lost half her LOX, and a third of her L-HYD, in that one shot.

On the bridge, Ryan screamed in frustration as his lasers rippled through a long five second burst that went off into nowhere, the lock broken by the ship's violent movement. Somehow, no one was hurt on the bridge, but the stiffness in the joints of his p-suit told him that the bridge was holed, open to vacuum. No time to look, now, as he bent forward and sent the UTES hunting again. So intent was he that he didn't even hear the faint hiss.

He did feel Michelle smack on the side of the head, but he ignored her. If it was important, she'd call him on the link. The most important thing in the world was to find that fighter and blow it to hell. It didn't have the mass of the Andiron to absorb his fire, and a good hit should take it out.

"There!" Chin's triumphant yell rang out in his link after what seemed an eternity of hunting for the small fighter. "Coming at us, range 3 light-seconds, at 228 by 45 by 350."

Ryan found it on the screen, a faint glimmer courtesy of the ship's passive systems. The UTES array refused the lock, however. Not enough of a return for it, and too far away.

"Chin. I need a ping off that thing for the UTES. It's refusing to lock." Ryan could feel a plan taking shape in his head.

"Are you positive?" His clipped accent revealed a touch of panic. "Once I light off the actives, he'll have a positive lock on us, I'm certain of it. Won't he then close for a kill?"



Ryan grinned. "Yep. In fact, I'm counting on him doing just that."

Leaving Chin to puzzle that one out, he flipped the channel over to engineering. "Scotty. How we doing down there?"

There was no response at first, then Sandra replied, her voice low and angry. "That SOB just cooked my mechanic, and blew away half our fuel, sir. Life support is down, and the turbine is groaning like it just blew a few mag-bearings. Other than that, though, everything is fine down here. How are you doing?"

"I'll get him soon. You wanna get that SOB back? With your help, I can do it. I need you to redline the turbine. Get me another shot, maybe two. But I need the bursts to be longer this next time, and the batteries won't cut it."

"I can do it, but if those bearings are bad, we may blow the turbine. And we don't have full back-up power anymore..."

Ryan simply grunted in response. He felt no need to reopen that argument, not just yet. His panel was giving him the same bad news: That UTES mount seemed steadfastly determined to not lock on the fighter. Probably a programming glitch, but a really bad one right now.

He patched both the sensor station and engineering in via his implant. "Mr. Okeye, Ms. Scottsdale. On my mark, you will carry out the following orders: Mr. Okeye, give me a full 5-second ping with the actives. Ms. Scottsdale, get me 120% on the turbine. I only need that power for about ten minutes. Thank you."

He cut the circuit, noticing out of the corner of his eye that Michelle seemed to be doing something rather unusual with the remaining decoy drone. He opened his mouth to ask, then shut it. EW and drones were not his thing. She was the expert, with 12 years in the Aussie space forces. He decided to let her have her head on this. In any case, he had other things to deal with.

He watched the approach of the single fighter. The feed from the passives sensors identified it as a Golf-class, a common and deadly Kaefer fighter. No missiles, but it did pack a couple of laser cannons, and was fast and heavily armoured to boot. He would need an extended burst to punch her hull. And he had to let her get in close.

"Um, boss?" It was Chin, eyes intent on the sensor station. "I've got a bit of bad news. That Beta is coming this way. I give about it 30 minutes before it overtakes us."

Ryan swore under his breath, and called up a new number from his implant. "Vanessa? How long do we got to the shelf?"

Vanessa van Roosling was the ship's helm officer, the pilot. Her name and her skin color didn't correlate until one remembered she was Azanian, a culture where black and white, Afrikaaner and Bantu, had been mixing for three hundred years. "I'm afraid we're looking at at least 35 minutes."

Not good. Even if they burned the fighter, the battlecruiser would still catch them at least 5 minutes shy of the shelf. Time to worry about that after the fighter was burned, however. "Thanks Vanessa. Do what you can."

Ryan switched the implant over to engineering and sensors. "OK, people, this is it. On my mark. 4...3...2...1...Mark!"

The power levels for his guns surged, and the UTES mount finally managed to pick the fighter out as the Andiron bathed it in radar. The Kaefer crew froze a moment in confusion. Their victims weren't supposed to do that. They were supposed to run, or cower and hide. The targeting reticule on the screen at the tactical station finally glowed red, as Ryan pulled the trigger, sending a 10-second burst of laser fire punching into the distant Kaefer fighter.

The heavy armour almost held, but the barrage was too intense. The nearly invisible laser beams scythed through the small fighter's hull, tearing through the engines, crew and finally into the fuel. A moment after the laser fire had stopped, the distant fighter exploded, nice and quietly.

Ryan sat there for a moment, watching the debris field of the fighter spread. In moments it would be dispersed, part of the background junk of this system. Good enough. He patched himself back into sensors and engineering. "That's done it, folks, stand down. Ms. Scottsdale, if you and your people could start patching holes in our hull, that would be a good thing."

As yet, the Beta was still too far away for the UTES mount, but the passives had a good look, thanks to the excessive radiated signature of the oncoming warship.

It would appear that Edmonton had hit the Beta pretty hard, and her masking had failed. Despite that, though, the big battlecruiser came steadily on.

Ryan turned her head to watch Michelle. She was definitely up to something. As he looked at her screen something twigged in his brain. That wasn't the telemetry from the decoy drone he was seeing there, but from something far meaner.

Far out in space, a lone Star Sparrow missile woke up. Launched by HMCSS Edmonton, it had lost guidance from its control station, and immediately went into passive mode, shutting down its drive and awaiting orders. New orders had just arrived.

As Ryan watched, Michelle split the screen, one side being her decoy drone, the other the missile she had somehow managed to gain control of. Michelle's left hand moved in complicated patterns, while the data on the screen shifted and changed. Ryan watched, puzzled for a moment before the answer occurred to him. Augments, a virtual keyboard at least, likely something more. In a moment, the drone had changed configuration, its silhouette and radiated signature shifting to a completely different class of ship than the old freighter. At the same time, the drone managed to interpose itself between the Kaefer vessel and the missile, hiding it.

The Kaefer ship changed course, as the Andiron closed on the ftl shelf. In ten minutes, they would be free. The window for their capture was small, and with the change of course the battlecruiser would be unable to join combat with them before they hit the shelf.

Michelle watched her screen dispassionately, watching the Kaefer vessel alter course to intercept her decoy. She let the subdermal computer handle the drone, while she concentrated on the missile. Both moved towards the Kaefer vessel, the decoy shadowing the missile as they approached.

The Space Sparrow was an older model of missile, still in use with Australia, Britain and Canada. Her warhead wasn't as heavy as the American SIM14-IIIC, but still powerful. Powerful enough for the damaged Beta. Upon receiving its new orders, the missile brought its drive up to full power, screened by the nearby drone. As the warship approached, the missile received its last instructions.



The Kaefer ship came in with screens down, preferring the enhanced accuracy of its sensors to the protection of the screen.

As the huge cruiser noticed the subterfuge and cut its stutterwarp to make a crash turn, the missile executed those final orders. With the stutterwarp disengaged, the Kaefer ship could turn quickly in place, but was hideously vulnerable. Of course, there was nothing there but a decoy. The bridge crew barely had time to react when the missile popped out from behind the drone, its seeker head already in final acquisition mode. At a range of scarcely ten thousand kilometers, the missile detonated, the warhead pumping a cluster of lasing rods that in turn fired a spread of X-ray lasers at the nearby vessel. Eight lances of coherent light stabbed the alien warship, the deadly punch of the lasers compounded by their radiation. Edmonton had given the Beta a few solid hits, and the new missile strike found those rents in the battlecruiser's armour.

Most of the hits were concentrated in the engineering section, damaging the already-vulnerable fusion reactor. Containment failed, and venting plasma sent a torrent of destruction through the engineering spaces. The explosion from the reactor vaporized the Kaefer warship, and the sleet of EM radiation crippled the decoy drone as well. Ryan, watching from the Andiron, whistled in something approaching awe. No one is ever going to believe this, he thought. I don't even believe it.

He turned to Michelle, who was in the process of closing down her board. No drones, so nothing for a drone officer to control.

"Um, Michelle." He was keyed into her private circuit, and the rest of the bridge crew was oblivious to their conversation.

"Yep." Her response was as informative as ever for the laconic drone controller.

"What the frak did you just do? That was amazing!" He paused a moment, then added, "Spooky, too."



"I sent out a recognition pulse from the decoy, and when the missile answered, I knew I was on to something. Glad you liked it."

She flashed him a quick smile from behind her faceplate.

"But where did you get the codes from? That was a military missile, and you're walking civvy street." He paused for a moment. "Not only that, but it was a Canuck missile, and you served with the Aussies. How does that work?"

"Yeah, well, I still hold a reserve commission. Did a lot of training with other Commonwealth nations. And my 'comp holds all the codes. I've kinda been saving them. You know, just in case." She gave him a sidelong glance as she answered, curious to see his response to her behavior.

Ryan had forgotten about the implanted computer the woman had in the back of her skull, and allowed himself a short stream of profanity. "You know what, Michelle, I don't think I want to know. This way, I can just claim ignorance."

It was then that he caught sight of a blob of something on the upper edge of his faceplate. "Ok, but I do want to know why the frak you glommed a wad of your gum on my helmet!" want to know why the frak you glommed a wad of your gum on my helmet!"

Michelle gave him a careful look, then finally replied. "Cuz I didn't want you to croak, boss-man. Your helmet had sprung a leak. I didn't want to distract you, so I just stuck my gum to the hole. Worked well enough. Consider yourself lucky," she grinned at him, "I wanted to save it for later, and I think your contaminated old helmet ruined it."

Ryan shook his head as he marched to the bridge airlock door. He didn't even want to know how the gum could stay sticky in a hard vacuum. Just as he reached the door, he looked outside through the bridge windows. All the stars outside suddenly seemed to stretch, just for a moment, and then became little squiggles across his field of view as the Andiron moved past the shelf, and leapt into deep space at more than 800 times the speed of light. Safe at last.



(ˈmjuːzɪk) n. an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre.

MUSIC

STEFF. J. WORTHINGTON

It is said that nothing portrays mood and emotion more than music. Along with laughter it is the language of Humanity, the one combining language that, along with mathematics, criss crosses the wide expanse of space bringing it together. Well, all space except Eber Space..

With that in mind here's a brief run through of how to implement music in your gaming sessions, what music suits which mood, and why it is important. We'll then look at an example, the core music fad doing the rounds as of 2297-2300 known as Liquidity.

HOW?

It's important to get an equal balance for your table, a measure that will add to the atmosphere but not drown out any narration or player interaction. Any personal home audio system will suffice but portable devices such as iPods, Laptops, & Tablets are ideal due to their portability and their use of digital files. Portable devices let you set up playlists of suitable music for your games and also let you add files if the action goes in an unprepared direction.

Utilise your players playlists to better suit the music to the scenario. Naming playlists as 'Action', 'Gunfight', 'Space', and 'Downtown' are useful when you need to alter the tempo mid game. As a *Call of Cthulhu* 'Keeper' of some 28 years standing, I can attest that

atmospheric music can seriously spook your players and there's no reason that can't be adapted to searching a supposedly abandoned space station for it's missing crew.

Music without a great variation in signature is great for games with long pauses between action while the Players decide on their next move. Something with a crescendo or recognisable theme can only distract your Players unless that music is 'in-situ'. If the players step aboard one of Libreville's floating night-clubs then some upbeat music should reflect that. Obscure movie soundtracks or instrumental pieces from Electronica artists can work wonders and almost become the soundtrack to the game for your friends around the table. A test on the louder part of the soundtrack when you're all chatting pre-game will help find the suitable levels and as many speakers as possible will help. No-one wants to have to shout over a speaker situated next to them.

WHAT?

This is open to preference and to what style of game you play but my games are nearly always serious unless I'm running a session of Paranoia. The sidebar to the right has some suggestions for pieces of music but it's the feel and mood that will carry the game. Variations will occur due to the PC's location but it's themes that are the anchor for any movie, play, opera, or role-playing session.

'The Ghost Writer' OST by Alexandre Desplat

From the 2010 movie of the same name this soundtrack is subtly spooky with excellent menacing undertones. It is perfect for *Call of Cthulhu* (the game i usually play it in) but is great for any 2300AD scenario which has a good deal of investigation and unseen menace. While it has brass, strings, and may seem a little retro for 2300AD it is evocative enough to carry it off.

'Breathe 04' (2009) by Various Artists

Each year the Breathe collection is released featuring a wealth of ambient electronica artists. 'Breathe 04' has a number of sedate ambient tracks suitable for street scenes, corporate muzak infested elevators, and high fashion boutiques in downtown Libreville. The album is overwhelmingly positive in outlook so it's best to use these tracks in the chrome-like gleam of semi-utopian areas on Earth or Tirane.

'Moon' OST (2009)
by Clint Mansell

A bit of a risk here as those who would play 2300AD are also the gamers to have likely seen the brilliant movie 'Moon'.

If they haven't then this is a great album due to it's sense of tension, suspicion, and the eery underscore of isolated piano. While it has a few moments of foreground drums it is still one of the most atospheric albums out there.

'Another Earth' OST (2011)
by Fall On Your Sword

This soundtrack to one of the best indie sci-fi films ever made is optimistic and electronic heavy in places but that perfectly suits a big city setting. Be it Paris, London, or Renton, this album would lend itself well as it has vibrant and futuristic tones as well melancholic down pieces. The track 'The First Time I Saw Jupiter' is a perfect theme for those characters riding the monorail into a major metropolitan hub for the first time. It is charged with nervous excitement.



Setting Uses

-Traveller

I usually find that Traveller is quite the Utopian setting in contrast to others and as such I play long and slow ambient pieces. Electronic in nature but with some strings. This gives the feeling of futurism but also of the epic scale of the setting. Avant garde and unusual pieces if they aren't too 'energetic' are good if they portray a feeling of distance from music of today.

Choral music in an unfamiliar language lends to the imposble scale of the Imperium and its collective histories.

City streets and clubs cast their own musical shadow over the environment and these should be suitably deeply exotic or rhythmic. In 2300AD it is more acceptable to hear strains of music we know and love as the setting is much closer to the present. Some music from today is bound to have survived the Twilight War and will no doubt be seen as classic so a bar with a retro feel playing rock music isn't going to be all that out of place. Match the music to the location if it is meant to be played in-situ. Classy joints will have classy music and are likely to be playing Beethoven or Vangelis before Black Sabbath and Van Halen.



-2300AD

A lot more dystopian and down right dirty than *Traveller*, the 2300AD setting gives us the opportunity for contrast in music. Again subtle themes can be used but due to the darker nature of the setting we can introduce some darkly epic strings, large percussion, and a more vibrant electronica atmosphere.

WHO?

This is more about what fits the scene than what you might personally enjoy. Pick a performer that typifies the scene or required atmosphere and then find a 'sound-a-like'. one way to ruin a good roleplaying moment is for someone to say "Is this from Lord of the Rings?"

A famous piece of music may match the scene you had in your head when you were writing the scenario but if you use a well-known piece it can bring the scene down around your ears. Try scouting on Youtube for that special piece or if you have a music player that shows you 'artists you may like' based on your preferences then not only may you find a piece which is perfect and unknown but you might also find a new piece to adore.

WHERE?

This is a crucial step to get right. Most people have their own space to play their games and music which is a good idea. It's often not possible to play theme music at conventions or games clubs due to the sheer amount of noise and distractions from other gamers. You need isolation in order to get the volume levels right and to be able to envelop your players in the sounds that make your version of *2300AD*.

THE USE OF KEY-PIECES

It might work in some of your games to bring out an especially potent piece of music when the characters face a particular singular adversary. A kind-of 'Villain's Anthem' can work wonders in bringing players back to the matter at hand when facing more machinations by the hand of their enemy. It also channels their minds into making links of the threads that bind plots together in a campaign. Of course, if there is a heavier variation of the theme for when they actually face their adversary, all the better.

A previously unknown piece of music that becomes, in your players minds at least, the theme tune for *2300AD* can only be a good thing.

PACING & SUMMARY

Remember to pace your music for the right scene. A frenetic piece for a love scene isn't fitting (unless you're opening the character for ridicule) and a sedate and optimistic composition can actually slow combat. Timing is important but more so is suitability. Playlists can be put on repeat but the wrong music at the wrong time can sour the mood.

After a while you'll have an impressive playlist (or a collection of themed playlists) to use in games. You can also share them to sites like '8Track' where I keep my 2 Call of Cthulhu 'gametracks'. Once in a while, remember to tweak the contents of your playlists a little so your players encounter the unexpected during their sessions.

It's also a good idea to realise that as much as music adds to a game, it is not the game. Try not to get focused on perfecting the right balance, volume, or playlist. If something goes wrong on your first session, play on. Maybe the battery is dead on your device, or the playlist has that old folk tune you forgot to move and it comes on during a fight scene, don't worry, adapt or ignore. You'll get it right and also learn what your players will put up with.

The ultimate accolade will be your players getting into the mood but not remembering any specific tracks. That's when the music adds to the game and doesn't distract from it.

Steff. J. Worthington,
28 years a GM, 4 years a Harpist.
(GMing is much easier)



'Blade Runner: Los Angeles, November 2019 Edition' by Val Verde Music

A bootleg of tremendous value to sci-fi GM's. Despite how the cover images look it isn't actually from the film but is an album of ambient street sounds lifted from the Blade Runner PC game by Westwood. It isn't readily recognisable as BR when listened to until you hear sounds like spinners taking off, "Cross Now" traffic signs, and the Off-World blimp. An excellent resource for ambient city street sounds. If you can find it.

*If you want the definitive Blade Runner soundtrack then see here:
<http://emsrecombination.blogspot.co.uk/>*

Other Artists

In addition to those highlighted here, there are other artists worthy of investigation such as Vangelis, Symbion Project, Talvekoidik, Philip Glass, The Future Sound of London, James Newton Howard, Jamin Winans (especially his soundtrack album 'Ink'), Jon Hopkins, John Barry, Kolski, Liquid Stranger, Trip-switch, and Solar Fields.





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A MUSIC AND DANCE STYLE FOR THE 24TH CENTURY BY STEFF. J. WORTHINGTON

liquidity

In the Spring of 2297 the location team for the documentary show 'Interplanetary' had filmed their last shot for their latest special series, 'The Deep Beyond'. It was a filler piece about the Brindlefish of Beta Canum but the team, and narrator Tara McKenzie, knew they had something special on their hands. As the film entered the editing suite the producers were already thinking of the award ceremonies which were coming their way. Seven major awards would eventually land in their laps and as Andromedia made the season available for download and streaming they saw the money roll in. The documentary series was a well crafted love letter to the colonies and their aquatic sea life and terrain and detailed huge kraken to small sprats from Earth to Aurore.

What the producers didn't expect was the huge spike in the downloading of the final episode. After examination they discovered it was the final 4 minutes and 20 seconds pre-credits that the public were after. It was a poetically filmed music piece specially commissioned for the show and set to a video of Dame Magdalena Uzana of the Bolshoi slowly dancing underwater as dolphins swam around her. The track was 'In Your World' by the renowned composer 'Yuli' (Juliana Sigurdsdottir) and was a

grand, sweeping, and rhythmic arc of strings, electronic keyboards, and slow drumbeats. Liquidity was born.

Within 2 months the Yuli track had reached the top of the charts and it was starting to make more money than the syndication of the show. Other artists such as TSP, Gavin Herrimund, and the Eclectic Fight Orchestra were creating their own music in the same style. Characterised by flowing themes, majestic symphony, and an almost liquid rhythm, it soon made its way to the dance floor with dancers emulating the movements of Dame Uzana. On normal gravity worlds this meant dancing in pools (one of a few reasons why aquatic exercise clubs saw a resurgence), or just dancing slow on nightclub dance floors and moving in slow and sweeping gestures. However, it is in zero and low-G environments that stars were born. Jonathan Bedler, Elise Joliette, and 'Xu' all made their careers by being the dance pioneers of Liquidity. Characterised by balletic movements while wearing flowing robes and gowns the dancers would entrance millions during live and recorded performances across the worlds of humanity. Soon other sub-styles became popular, sometimes vulgar and up-tempo, sometimes ambient and sedate. The club scene soon brought it

SUGGESTED LISTENING

There are a number of contemporary tracks suitable to convey the fictional art form of Liquidity in your games. Which tracks you choose are, as the previous article highlighted, dependent on the scene and location.

Over the next few pages are listed some tracks by artists available for download today that inspired this article. If you find any more that suit the genre, please e-mail your suggestion to: info@stygianfox.com with LIQUIDITY in the subject line.

Turn the lights off and do tai-chi movements in the dark ;)

The High Classics
(played at concerts,
ballet performances, ex-
pensive hotels, and high
class establishments)

'Lyra' by Tripswitch

YT: [http://youtu.be/
j7LyF9sRAD4](http://youtu.be/j7LyF9sRAD4)

iTunes: [https://itun.es/
i6xt3cs](https://itun.es/i6xt3cs)

For me, 'Lyra' was the track that started the inspiration behind Liquidity. Sultry tones and a pulsating groove, it has a backtone that if you listen hard enough can seem deeply hypnotic and trance-like.

'Oleander' by Bluetech

YT: [http://youtu.be/
AW8r6Ckwvsl](http://youtu.be/AW8r6Ckwvsl)

iTunes: [https://itun.es/
i6xc4Wz](https://itun.es/i6xc4Wz)

'Sol' by Solar Fields

YT: [http://youtu.be/
WNiD9M59FQE](http://youtu.be/WNiD9M59FQE)

iTunes: [https://itun.es/
i6xt3wL](https://itun.es/i6xt3wL)

'Prelude' by Vangelis

YT: [http://youtu.be/
zTc-kaONqJs](http://youtu.be/zTc-kaONqJs)
(the quintessential clas-
sical Liquidity video)

iTunes: [https://itun.es/
i6xc4Qq](https://itun.es/i6xc4Qq)



into the public mainstream and it soon became the only club music in town. To many of the faithful this signalled the end of the genre. Becoming 'too popular' was a problem for an art form initially practiced by ballet elite and many fans were, by January 2300, starting to see it being corrupted by less talented musical acts, hybrid styles, and by hearing their favourite tracks turn into backing tracks for 3-V commercials.

a well respected provincial composer from the Scandinavian Union propelled into mega-stardom. The dance routine was coreographed in secret with trainers and street dancers who were signed to watertight contracts inhibiting their ability to reveal the routine under penalties.

The night of the gala the two artists joined each other on stage with Dame



Dame Magdalena Uzana during the finale of 'The Deep Beyond'.

However, just as the music form was getting wider and its adjoining dance form was dying off, it was given a resurgent boost by the woman who started it off. In September 2300 Dame Uzana and Yuli had both been invited to the Imperial Gala in Paris to perform (separately) in front of Emperor Nicholas I and a 3-V audience of millions. Meeting in secret for 8 months before the event the two artists decided to hatch a plan to surprise the Emperor with a new composition. The music, 'Safe In Your Arms', would become one of the all time best selling music tracks and would see

Uzana announcing "something special for His Imperial Highness". When the music started Dame Uzana was sat cross legged in the middle of the vast stage with only a spotlight for illumination. She began to stretch out and dance across the stage slowly, in almost impossible steadiness and grace, and seemingly in defiance of gravity. Taking her newly aquired knowledge garnered from street performers and acrobats she used her astonishing musculature to seemingly float in front of her audience and, with a dress with an ultra-light material fabricated by Guerlain, the result

was slow motion passion and grace unseen out of special effects. In truth it was all training, muscle use, and high tech materials but it had the desired effect upon the audience who thought what they were seeing was nothing short of miraculous. It was seamless Liquidity but without the water and in normal gravity. With Liquidity going through a resurgence more and more Liquidity artists were appearing in the music charts and by late 2301/early 2302 the music press was dominated by Liquidity artists. There were even stadium tours where temporary pools were built

so that the attendees could dance in the water during the concert.

Sadly, like all distinctive music and dance styles, it couldn't last. No matter the art form people will one day bore of it and with faster tempo tracks starting to appear in the charts, almost as an antidote to Liquidity, the death knell for the music form was sounding. By late 2303 there were fewer than 10 Liquidity artists in the top 100. Four years previously there were approximately 40. It's fair to say that while music and dance critics have moved on and more serious



The Contemporaries
(played at concerts,
used in commercials,
3-V montage segments)

'Sundial Aeon'
by **Pleasure Impact**

YT: <http://youtu.be/z3mm8UO3GAM>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xR3fm>

'Sinking' by Sysyphe

YT: <http://youtu.be/WgyM2QbvRrk>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xc4Qd>

'When The Silence Is Speaking' by Koan

YT: <http://youtu.be/75ukBYcS8Qc>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xt3wn> (album Only)

'Universe Alchemy'
by **Kliment**

YT: <http://youtu.be/w4oOD1HcL8>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xR3q5>

'Glass Soul' by Mokhov

YT: <http://youtu.be/bGebXNlzcRI>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xc4QN>

Elise Joliette in E.F.O.'s 'My Dark Shadow'.

The Club Scene

(played at clubs, bars, used in commercials, the charts, 3-V entertainment, and movie scores)

'Life' by Asura

YT: <http://youtu.be/ldmaM37P9h4>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xR3qL>

'Sploosh' by Ozric Tentacles

YT: <http://youtu.be/QSQNRZKkhVQ>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xc4Q4>

'Blue Harmony' by Zero Cult

YT: <http://youtu.be/aw4JXT4l1-k>

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xc4Qy>

'Voice of Infinity' by Chronos & C.J. Catalizer

YT: http://youtu.be/6ZALtZ_K4q8

'Pandemonium' by Arkasia

YT: http://youtu.be/bw_GhedOX70

iTunes: <https://itun.es/i6xt3nm>

music fans are looking further afield for their fix, the general public still hasn't lost its love for Liquidity. They are a little more discerning to be sure, favour physical prowess over low/zero-G or water assisted dancing, and generally only download the most successful artists, but the love is still there. Strangely, in the clubs there has been no let up in those who dance in a Liquidity style. It seems that the dance form may outlive the music which is almost unheard of in music history.

And the Liquidity pioneers? Dame Magdalena Uzana still dances with the Bolshoi but has left the Liquidity movement behind her. She still receives requests for performances but chooses



Andrew Gorman & Natalia Smith
'Love&Passion.sol' spot ad campaign
by DeLaat & Baur

not to accept the invitation. It's accurate to say that she left at the peak of her art in the genre and even revived the genre so she could go out on a high.

'Yuli' saw a meteoric rise from the S.U.'s most famous musician and composer of pop tunes to a truly interstellar artist

thanks to Liquidity. Although she still tours using the genre as the basis and majority of her act (she recently finished a sell out tour on Tirane), she has largely moved onto film scores, a genre she finds much more fulfilling according to a recent interview with Jason Fallin of 'Sound' magazine. The phrase 'Liquidity' was coined by the afore-mentioned Fallin when he first reviewed Yuli's 'In Your World' for the magazine. "It's a deeply emotional piece that will resonate strongly for anyone who has a love for the open sea. It has a certain 'Liquidity' that some fans of ambient music will recognise."

While a time of deep joy, symbolism, and trance-like states for many, Liquidity will be remembered by most as visually graceful, rhythmic, and sensual. It's almost certain that many performers will once again 'take to the pool' in 20 years time for the inevitable revival.

All except Elise Joliette sadly. It is perhaps indicative of her popularity as a Liquidity dancer that the famous promo still from E.F.O.'s 'My Dark Shadow' was the centrepiece at her funeral. After her diagnosis of terminal Mosavitz Lymphoma she told Dame Uzana how proud she was of that image and how lucky she was to be dancing during the Liquidity 'craze'. Dame Magdalena tried to convince her that she would recover and dance again and Joliette mutedly agreed. Of course, at that point, the wider world was unaware of how far her illness had progressed and that she would never dance again.

It's an art form that is on the wane now but let's remember that for one brief moment it had us all swaying in tribal unison in the primeval dark.


Elise Joliette. A true artist.
2275 - 2303



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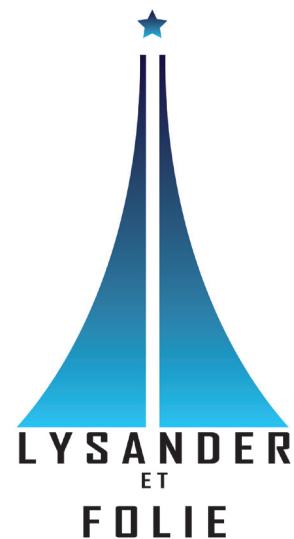
We've rarely had a passenger who's boarded with so few cares yet still would manage to let us know if something wasn't quite right.

Visibly pleased with himself after a long, hard day, he stretched out and went to sleep despite attaining orbit. All he needed now was a little peace and quiet. And because he knew that we knew, he was still asleep when we jumped out-system.

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Public Notice



THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR WORLD

Lysander et Folie would like to sincerely apologise to all visitors to Wiseman Spaceport for the delay in its opening of Terminal 7. Rest assured, Reston's brand new terminal will be open in time for the holidays! We will have special clearing queues for those relatives arriving from off-world.





Beta-Canum Cat (*Felis Domesticus Beta Canum Venaticorum*)

Size: Nose to Tail, 28" **Weight:** 1.4kg **Habitat:** Rocky outcroppings, hedgerows, forests, human homes (rural and urban). Usually found in *New Middlesex, Carmody, Bayview & Jurgenburg* on the world of **Beta Canum** (*Beta Canum Venaticorum IV*), 41 ly from **Earth**.

The Wider Universe via **Quinn**

The Beta Canum Cat rests whistfully at the foot of a garden wall in Hadleyshire, near Carmody. Basking in the long afternoon sun he is ever mindful of approaches to his domain. Possessed of a strong territorial sense these animals have been known to seriously injure large dogs who stray too close to their lair and although cats that have grown up in human homes are known to be easier to handle, most are still used by some farmers as 'watchcats' due to their ferocity. Less able to leap successfully in the slightly lighter Beta Canum gravity, they prefer to approach their prey stealthily and pounce, as cats seem to do all over human space, just at the right time.

Quinn are dedicated to the wide variety of different forms of life all over the galaxy and everyday contribute to protection programs for indigenous and migrant life of all kinds.

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Thanks to Quinn's new and improved image-processing technology, the Quinn CLC920 series faithfully and accurately gauges distance, heat, density, and substance of any object up to 8 miles away, greatly improving on the performance of ordinary trioculars.



CONTRABAND!

SMUGGLERS IN THE 24TH CENTURY

BY DAVID ELRICK

Smuggling, by its nature, is an illicit activity so it is difficult to know when and where it began but wherever a border occurs and taxation or other restrictions apply a smuggler can find a ready market.

If we think about it at all we tend to think of modern-day smuggling in terms of illegal drugs, guns or people trafficking (for immigration or the sex trade), but smuggling encompasses a wide variety of goods, both in recent history and into the present day. For example:

Food

In September 2012 three people, including a policeman, were prosecuted in Canada for smuggling cheese from the US into Ontario and selling it to local restaurants. Tight customs restrictions on the amount of dairy products imported from the US, coupled with higher cheese prices in Canada made this a profitable risk for the men involved. One restaurateur who bought the smuggled cheese refused to believe it was not legitimate as he could not believe anyone would smuggle something as commonly available as cheese.

Until recently US customs did not allow the import of any foodstuff defined as 'offal'. As a result, for over two decades a contraband trade grew up smuggling Haggis to expatriate Scots in the US so that they could celebrate Burns night.

Alcohol

Americans will be familiar with the history of the Prohibition era, when alcohol was banned in the US, but alcohol in one form or another has been a commonly-smuggled item for centuries – more commonly to avoid higher prices or import limits or taxation rather than to avoid an outright ban.

Gin and brandy were commonly smuggled into the UK in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (one official report from that period records that 80% of trade in the Scilly Islands was in illicit goods), but an embargo on selling wine to the French in 1453 generated a healthy illicit trade in selling English wine to the French for a while too.

More recently, in the latter part of the 20th century expatriate workers in the countries around the oil-rich Arabian Gulf went to great lengths to smug-

The Corporate Sector

Part of what makes a setting so rich in any game can be companies and their products and how they pervade the society in which they appear.

Joss Whedon's 'Verse is richer for 'Fruity Oatey Bars' and 'Blue Sun'.

Phil Dick's futuristic worlds owe a lot of their feel to companies like Tyrell, Rosen, and entrepreneurs like Glen Runciter.

In this issue there will be sample companies, foundations, & organisations in many of the sidebars for use in your games.



~ The Livre





X-Mail

*"Throughout the Empire,
We Make It Imperative."*

The carriers of all private sector mails, messages, media, and small packages throughout the new French Empire and beyond. It was given its charter by the Emperor in 2298 when the shipping line Targen Lines sold it as a going concern when it was a mere small letter courier.

Richard Gillian, an energetic and charismatic entrepreneur took control of the company and made great leaps in expanding its core business.

While much of its packages and freight business still resides in France, its mail and media business has boomed since it moved its main distribution centre in Gabon and is spread throughout all major systems and delivers messages & media such as entertainment programming to a very eager audience.

This has led to some resentment by Sergio Angeli as he sees a company he used to own begin to eat into his business. He is extremely reticent to actively



gle alcohol into their camps where it (amongst a great many other things) was otherwise banned under religious law. The religious police in Saudi Arabia took such a hard line that even seemingly innocuous items such as wine gums were routinely confiscated and destroyed.

Tobacco

In many countries tobacco attracts a high rate of duty (taxation) and there are often limits to how much an individual can bring in to the country 'duty free'. In some countries there are restrictions on specific types of tobacco products or products from specific areas (until recently Cuban cigars were banned in the US, for example). All of this creates a trade in smuggled tobacco that continues to this day.

Sometimes this is also used to import and sell on tobacco products which would not normally meet quality controls in the destination country. In a recent case in the UK, a shipping container filled with substandard contraband

cigarettes was seized in Ipswich. Quality controls can also be an issue with smuggled alcohol.

Clothing, Music and Books

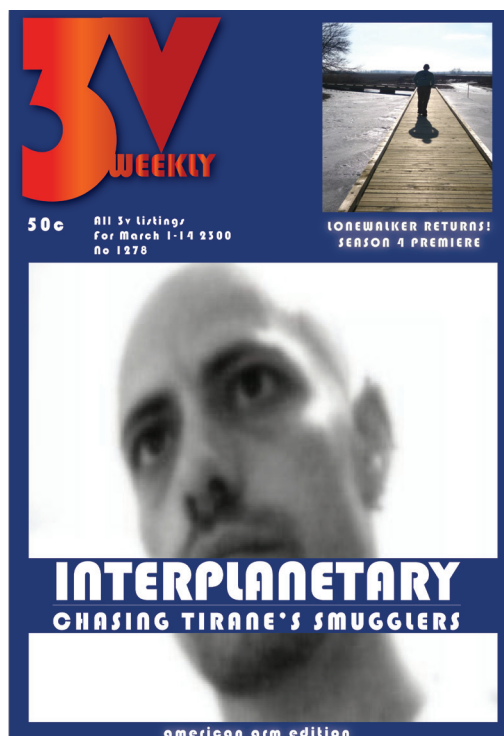
Types of clothing or materials can be restricted for many reasons, or heavily taxed. In the late 18th century lace was commonly smuggled into the UK from France, for example. It was not always brought ashore late at night either - there are stories of smuggler's wives or daughters going aboard vessels in harbour, stripping down and donning layers of lace under their clothes before walking ashore past unsuspecting customs men.

More recently, during the Soviet era there was a brisk trade in jeans and other denim clothes in communist Russia, with western travellers reporting being pestered by young adults eager to buy such clothes.

In the pre-Internet era, some countries also restricted access to other cultural material. Again, the Soviet Union is a good example, with many authors and musicians on the official banned list and, therefore, more attractive to people in that society. Tapes and books could be easily smuggled into the country and sold on. The advent of the Internet has not completely broken down the borders and made such restrictions impossible, with several countries (Iran, China and North Korea spring immediately to mind) imposing official restrictions on what their citizens can access.

Wildlife and Plants

Wildlife smuggling is a growing international problem and a recent Interpol report estimated the 'trade' at between 10 and 20 billion US dollars. Wildlife smuggling includes the killing



of animals (often endangered species) for body parts, fur or skin, as well as a trade in live animals as pets or eggs for egg collectors. In some cases, this kind of smuggling can be domestic (i.e. not crossing international borders), such as the trade in rare bird eggs to egg collectors.

Plant smuggling is also an issue, covering not only live plants but seeds. Restrictions can be to protect endangered species and stop them being removed from their original habitat, or it can be to stop the spread of certain species of plants (such as Japanese Knotweed, which can undermine concrete foundations and damage buildings and roads and is currently banned in the US and Europe) into areas currently free of them to avoid harm to existing habitats.

Historical and Archaeological Artifacts

This has been a problem for centuries, from the Spanish plundering the Incan gold in the 16th century up to the present day. Nor is this necessarily an illicit trade - the ownership and provenance of many artifacts in respected museums and other institutions are disputed even now.

Artifacts can be large or small and range from pieces of bone, pottery or stone all the way up to large items, such as mummies, as well as maps and other documents. Many stolen and smuggled artifacts are destined for the collections of private individuals.

Smuggling in 2300AD

The practical aspects of smuggling are unlikely to change much over the next three centuries. Much will depend on what is being smuggled and whether the smugglers are a large, organised group

(such as the Mafia or the Triads - or even a corporation indulging in a little 'under the counter' work) or a small group of individuals looking to make a profit.

Smuggling Between Planets

Smuggling between the stars is likely to be much the same as smuggling by ship or plane is now: with bulk goods transported in mislabelled cargo canisters and small goods carried by individuals, concealed about their person or in their luggage.

In Star Wars the Millennium Falcon relied on concealed compartments and this is another option for small, high-value items. Most ships include small areas of 'dead space', especially where curved structures (e.g. ventilation trunking) meet straight edges (e.g. bulkheads), however customs will become aware of these over time or in standard ship designs, so they should be used carefully. These areas can still be useful to smugglers though: if customs find some low-value smuggled goods (e.g. extra duty free tobacco or alcohol), it may draw attention away from higher-value items elsewhere in the ship, or irregularities in the cargo listing.

Unless tipped off, customs will rely on random searches which are statistically unlikely to find smuggled goods if they are brought in at a busy period or mixed in with sufficient legal goods. Unless you are smuggling goods which customs routinely target - such as narcotics or explosives - sniffer dogs (or the Pentapod equivalent) will probably not be able to locate your cargo.

Small items can be carried in passenger or crew luggage, or concealed about (or in) their person. Again, the smuggler is relying on the fact that customs are

seek a revoking of X-mail's charter however due to X-mails enormous popularity amongst the citizenry now they are so widespread.

He knows that causing X-mail any problems or disruption will anger the subjects of the Emperor and Angeli can do without the trouble and attention this will bring to the Imperial Court.

Especially as he seeks further permissions from the French government to expand Targen Lines towards emerging markets on worlds which are seeing their service levels rising due to natural progression.

For now, he is content to watch and occasionally act covertly to stem X-mail's expansion.

The board of X-mail itself take a relaxed attitude to any corporate shenanigans as it grows accustomed to its new role as the leader in small size communications throughout the Human sphere. Its only worry is that there is an increasing amount of piracy in the entertainment business and is aware that any packages with X-mail and a media customer on the front can sometimes go missing. Not only do X-mail worry about content piracy but in some systems actual piracy can be a threat.



The new episodes of an award winning program can be worth more to a world than gems in some cases. Not all media can be delivered from orbit by broadcast and in the case of low tech worlds needing discs the media has to be delivered by hand which is where the thieves can strike, hold the content for a small ransom, and then leave.

A personal X-mail address would be used by the customer to send and receive content from the XM beacon on the edge of the system which would be picked up and relayed by the courier vessel as it arrives in-system.

In terms of x-address, they would also choose a geographic code to denote location and the recipient/sender consisting of:

(name)/@xmail/(country)/(system).

For example:

akirashinjiro@xmail.jp.sol (for a Japanese location) or indeed

arthurweiss@xmail.na.bc4 (for a resident of New Africa on Beta Canum).

T ~ German
Taler



unable to search everyone and, if their nerve and luck holds, they should be able to get away with it. Don't overlook the value of crew leaving the ship for a short time (for example, to visit the port gym) who are less likely to be searched and can hand small contraband to a planet-side accomplice.

In game terms, law level is the base number to roll against when determining how diligent customs will be. This will be modified by the type of goods being smuggled, the method and whether customs are suspicious or have been tipped off.

Smuggling On-Planet

Large-scale smuggling on-planet is likely to be similar to space-based smuggling, with only the types of vehicle changing. Cargo containers and passengers could be moved around planets by shuttles, ships, lorries or trains. Smaller-scale smuggling might be done using small boats, flyers, hovercraft or other means of crossing borders away from organised crossing-points. For one good example of how this might be achieved see the novel *Hardwired* by Walter John Williams, where smugglers use armoured hovercraft to run goods across a blockade.

In the colonies, many worlds have large amounts of open space not yet explored by an existing colony. Smugglers may use this open space to store and sort goods before onward transmission to their final destination if they can access it unobserved (for example, look at the map of Joi on page 56 of the *2300AD* rulebook).

Alternatively, smugglers might have storage facilities in one colony on a world – possibly legitimately if the goods are not restricted by that colony's

government. They could then concentrate on smuggling the goods across the border to another colony. For one example, look at *Heidelsheimat* (page 71 of the *2300AD* rulebook) where the Bavarians might overlook goods being transported to the Incans, but the Texans might have other ideas. Another example would be the Japanese and the Arabs on *Daikoku*.

Adventure Ideas

A search of almost any news site on the Internet should give you some ideas for smuggling adventures.

Player characters can experience smuggling adventures from either side: they may be local law enforcement or trouble shooters, either directly investigating smugglers or stumbling across a smuggling operation while they are investigating something else. Alternatively, your player characters may find themselves using smugglers, or even indulging in a little light contraband shifting themselves.

The following are two possible adventure ideas.

Alien Artifacts

After only half a century of contact with alien races, human fascination with aliens is unabated. Very few people in the core have even seen an alien in the flesh and any information about them attracts a good deal of attention. Information released to the core about each of the alien races varies. For example, a good deal more is published about the Pentapods and the Sung than some of the other races (and we won't go into the sensationalist reporting about the Kaefers). Public opinion about aliens varies wildly and, of course, there are the inevitable conspiracy theories.



STOP HERE FOR CUSTOMS CHECK

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO DECLARE?



THE D.Q.C.
KEEPING YOUR WORLD SAFE

UNION PRINTED IN THE NEW CITY

A rich collector on Tirane wants an obviously alien historical artifact for a private collection (and as a talking point at dinner parties...) and is prepared to pay good money for one. An obvious choice would be an artifact from the enigmatic Ebers, perhaps dating from the period of the Eber stellar empire.

The Ebers themselves live on Kormoran, but any ancient artifacts are likely to be long buried or unobtainable. Besides, dealing directly with the Eber would attract potentially unwanted attention from the Texans and/or the Arabs on Kormoran.

A less hazardous option would be the Eber ruins on either Daikoku or Heildelsheimat. In either case, archaeologists are currently studying the ruins and they might present a complication or hazard to someone trying to steal an

artifact. Alternatively, they might make things easier for the thieves who might prefer to sift through artifacts already found and extracted rather than digging around in the ruins for previously unknown artifacts.

Health Benefits

Chinese 'herbal' medicine has long used ingredients from plants and animals, regardless of the rarity of the source. Rhino horn was believed to be an aphrodisiac and various parts of tigers were long held to have medicinal properties. When both species became endangered, poaching and smuggling flourished in spite of the attempts of environmentalists to have it stopped.

With new worlds to explore, exponents of Chinese medicine began searching for new sources of medicinal components. Over time, they have identified many animals and plants on the new worlds which might replace traditional components now unavailable to them.

A Manchurian corporation requires an animal (or even only a specific part of an animal – fresh, of course) for experimentation and requires people to hunt the creature and then transport it off-planet. Examples could include the Hummers on Adlerhorst or the Hellsharks of Haifeng (only really cruel referees would consider sending players to capture or kill one of the Demons on Cold Mountain...).

The capture of the animal could easily be an adventure on its own, but the harvesting of the body parts and getting them off-planet and back to the corporation undetected could be equally difficult. If the players are having too easy a time of it, they may also find themselves up against environmentalists trying to stop them.

While X-mail has made significant in-roads to the messaging and media sector it is still dwarfed by the private cargo courier system and the navy. The French Imperial Navy will always carry official Imperial documents, governmental edicts, sensitive information, bureaux and military communique. The Emperor and his government simply do not trust those types of messages to a civilian contractor unless there is no other way.

Private couriers will move large parcels, packages & cargo.

The navy is also likely to be a carrier of military despatches via the fleet auxiliary.

Not to outlying colony worlds or delivering run of the mill orders to far away units but to the Kafer Front.

Warships will need the extra space or will have other priorities than mail runs. Sometimes, smaller X-Mail vessels may be 'adopted' and required to sneak past picket lines to broadcast vital intelligence to resistance units on occupied worlds. As you can imagine, these vessels will never be armed and will rely on speed and guile to avoid Kafer ships.

X-Mail in other settings

Traveller

X-mail is likely to be a sector wide provider with a Duke given license and probably owned by a larger company. Tukera Lines would fit the mould and it may be through them that players find work or a new patron. Given the way they transport media, X-Mail is likely to be out on fringe worlds operating in the grey area between law and convenience. X-Mail may have been chosen as a name to cash in on the cache of the X-Boat system.

Twilight:2000

Things are necessarily treated differently for Twilight:2000.

There is no central authority or overarching structure than can organise databases and service or maintain satellites needed for e-mail. While there will still be computers somewhere they will be likely in a poor state of repair, guarded jealously, and almost certainly not linked.



Advertisement

CHARLES E. GANNON FIRE WITH FIRE



The first book in a hard-sf interstellar
military/intrigue epic.

Fire With Fire...sometimes, it's the
only way to fight.

Advertisement

2105, September: Intelligence Analyst Caine Riordan uncovers a conspiracy on Earth's Moon—a history-making clandestine project—and ends up involuntarily cryocelled for his troubles. Twelve years later, Riordan awakens to a changed world. Humanity has achieved faster-than-light travel and is pioneering nearby star systems. And now, Riordan is compelled to become an inadvertent agent of conspiracy himself. Riordan's mission: travel to a newly settled world and investigate whether a primitive local species was once sentient—enough so to have built a lost civilization.

However, arriving on site in the Delta Pavonis system, Caine discovers that the job he's been given is anything but secret or safe. With assassins and saboteurs dogging his every step, it's clear that someone doesn't want his mission to succeed. In the end, it takes the broad-based insights of an intelligence analyst and a matching instinct for intrigue to ferret out the truth: that humanity is neither alone in the cosmos nor safe. Earth is revealed to be the lynchpin planet in an impending struggle for interstellar dominance, a struggle into which it is being irresistibly dragged. Discovering new dangers at every turn, Riordan must now convince the powers-that-be that the only way for humanity to survive as a free species is to face the perils directly—and to fight fire with fire.

Come visit the 22nd Century: touring the universe of Fire With Fire.

Fire With Fire is the first book in a hard-sf interstellar military/intrigue epic (three already bought by Baen) which also introduces readers to the world of 2118 AD—a world that is very different from our present, yet distinctly recognizable as an outgrowth of it. With a novel's worth of fiction already in print from this universe, author Charles E. Gannon invites you to take a tour of this brave new world in which humanity is just starting to reach out for the stars...and finds more than it bargained for.

Go to www.charlesegannon.com to see current and upcoming “news reports” and photo-realistic graphics of the 22nd Century setting of Fire With Fire, a novel which has elicited comments from readers such as:

“Entertaining old-style sf with modern sensibilities. It does things very well with great promise for more and I am really looking forward to the next installment.”
LIVIU SUCIU, [fantasybookcritic](http://fantasybookcritic.com).

“What a great science fiction book. Leave it to Baen to introduce us to a new series with a great plot and intriguing main character in a sci-fi thriller.”
ANTHONY PACHECU, [goodreads](http://goodreads.com) reviewer

Get your copy from Amazon here: <http://amzn.com/1451638833>

With one exception.

In an effort to co-ordinate the withdrawal from Europe, Mil-Gov has been working with the French Govt to set up a series of electronic ‘watchtowers’ in the form of hidden computers patched into satellites still working in orbit.

These outposts might be an old disused garage in Poland, a farm house in Germany, or the ruins of a castle in northern Italy. Staffed by dedicated Mil-Gov officers these soldiers are on the look out for US troops so they can let them send information to the US via Mil-Gov's X-net, or X-mail.

The army think this will encourage troops to try harder to get home so that Mil-Gov can solidify its position in a crumbling America. Its ultimate aim is to round up as many US stragglers as possible, log their location and a brief message on the system, and get them the hell out of Europe so they can go home and start to rebuild the country.





Already throughout East Germany there are whispers of a secret comms network working hard to get the boys and girls home. It's being seen as a kind of 'underground railroad' to get out of the war zone.

One general likened X-mail to Orpheus' trial into the Underworld to rescue Eurydice.

"Remember, if you find it and manage to walk out of this hell, just don't look back."

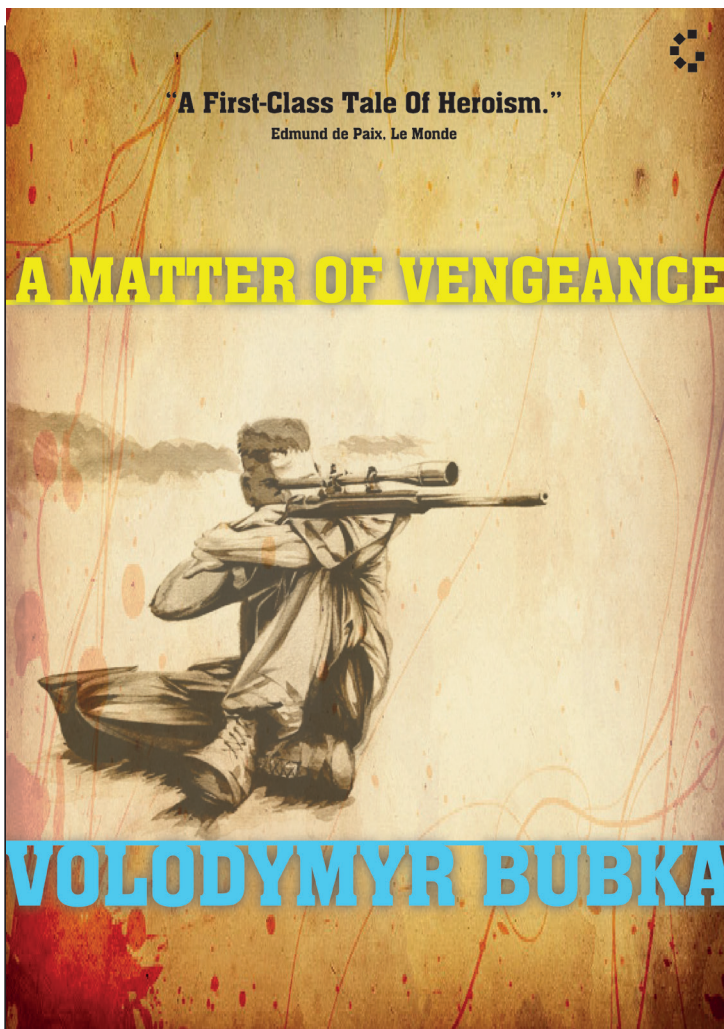
There are 20 such X-mail outposts hidden throughout central Europe at the referees discretion.



Titan Holdings

"Let Titan Carry The Load"

When Titan Holdings started to appear in the summer to winter of 2265 it was as a disparate and wide ranging collection of



"A First-Class Tale Of Heroism."

Edmund de Paix, Le Monde

A MATTER OF VENGEANCE

VOLODYMYR BUBKA

"An astonishing tale, full of sadness.."

Elizabeth Mason, NY Times

"A First-Class Tale Of Heroism."

Edmund de Paix, Le Monde

"Harrowing to the last."

Alexi Terutsoy, Pravda

"A blueprint of resistance.."

Gebhard Lugern, Dunkelheim Freitag

The Interstellar Bestseller

THE AMAZING TRUE OF HOW UKRAINIAN SPECIALIST 1STCLASS VOLODYMYR BUBKA WAS STUCK BEHIND ENEMY LINES FOR EIGHT MONTHS AFTER THE KAEFER INVASION OF AURORE.

AFTER ESCAPING THE INITIAL ASSAULT, BUBKA WAGES A ONE-MAN WAR AGAINST THE ALIEN MENACE.

KNOWN BY US AT HOME AS 'THE UKRANIAN BULLET' HE BUILT UP A SCORE OF KILLS WITH HIS RIFLE UNRIVALED BY ANYONE.

LEARN OF HIS LOSS, ANGER, ISOLATION, & RESCUE IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

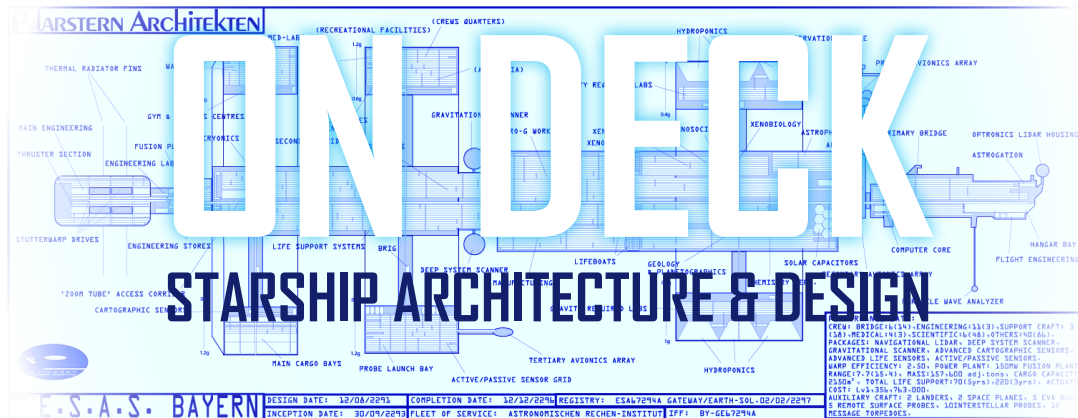
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L₃ 3/5

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GUERLAIN





The Petrel Class Courier by Gavin Dady & Ian Stead

The Stamping-Beech Petrel is a British design of a small courier used for fleet communications and military liaison. It has found numerous uses throughout the armed forces of Great Britain and serves with all branches of the military. It is also produced under license in Australia as the Cormorant.

The design is a streamlined, advanced lifting body with STOL capability. An air-breathing bypass thruster provides modest acceleration and sufficient fuel is provided for 7 hours of atmospheric flight, usually sufficient for several glide landings and lift offs, or one powered descent and STOL lift-off. The ship also has a reasonable efficiency stutterwarp drive with 14 days endurance on the power plant fuel. This can be extended by a further week if the thruster fuel is instead used to run the power plant.

The Petrel is a cramped ship with no spin. Space is set aside for crew recreation space, but even so, the ship is somewhat uncomfortable to be aboard for any length of time. However, it's streamlining, reasonable stutterwarp speed and modest cargo space make it useful in its intended role.

A small number of ex military Petrels are available on the open market.

The lower restrictions on civilian crewing levels mean these ships are often able to convert more internal areas into cargo storage or passenger accommodation, and there are a few vessels which are able to make a modest profit transporting high-value or urgent cargo and passengers.

The Petrel Class Courier

Data

Original date of design:
November 2275

First Example Laid down:
December 2280

First Example Completed:
May 2281

Fleets of Service:
Great Britain, Australia

Position Crew

Bridge	15
Engineering	3
Steward	1
Passengers	2/4
Total:	21/23

asset finance and realtor businesses along the Pacific North-West coast.

It expanded rapidly after a legacy from a relative left the owner, Ms Marie Bayfield, a portfolio of properties that was so large she had to overhaul her business to cope with the unexpected but lucrative inheritance.

Since those very early days Titan Holdings Interstellar, or Titan, or THI for short, has expanded into finance management, commercial real estate, planetary land claim confirmation, space port facilities, and mineral exploration.

There are bigger players out there for each sphere Titan has its interests in such as Baustoffe, Niyazawa, and Polarstern Architekten but if someone prefers the personal touch or likes to keep things low key then Titan is a company that can help. Titan is also particularly good at arranging long term self-catering accommodation on some of the worlds along the American Arm and, to a lesser extent, the French Arm. Need an overpriced suite for a week in New Falmouth (Joi, 61 Ursae Maj) overlooking Penvenen Square?

Call Room & Vu.

Need an apartment on a quiet street in Hogan (Kingsland, Zeta Herculis) for three months plus?

Then Titan can help.

The company's realtor sphere is still going strong in the Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia areas although now the share of the housing market has diminished a little for them when they decided to diversify into other areas.

It is thought that 27% of all houses in the Pacific North-West sold in 2299 were Titan homes.

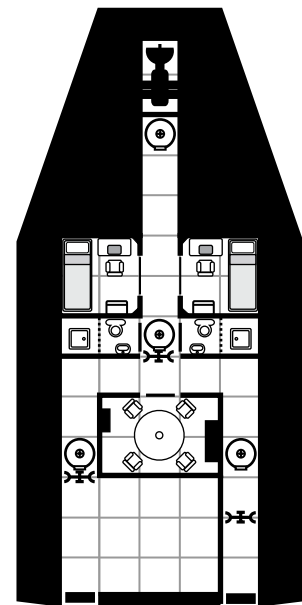
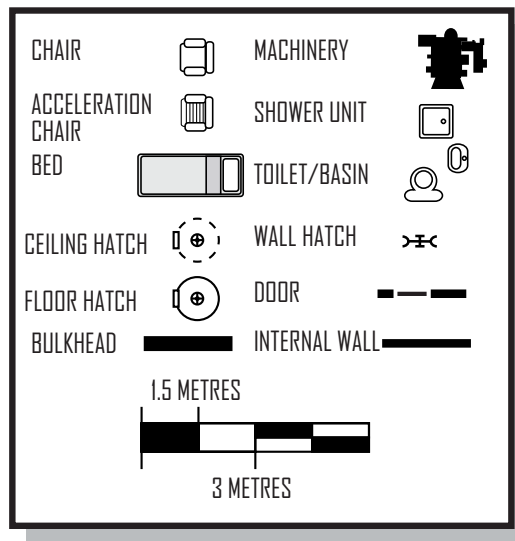
The wiley investor living in the Core has been noticing Titan buying up tracts of empty land on some of the less inhabited frontier worlds. What do they hope to gain?

LEVIATHAN
SHIPBUILDING & SALVAGE

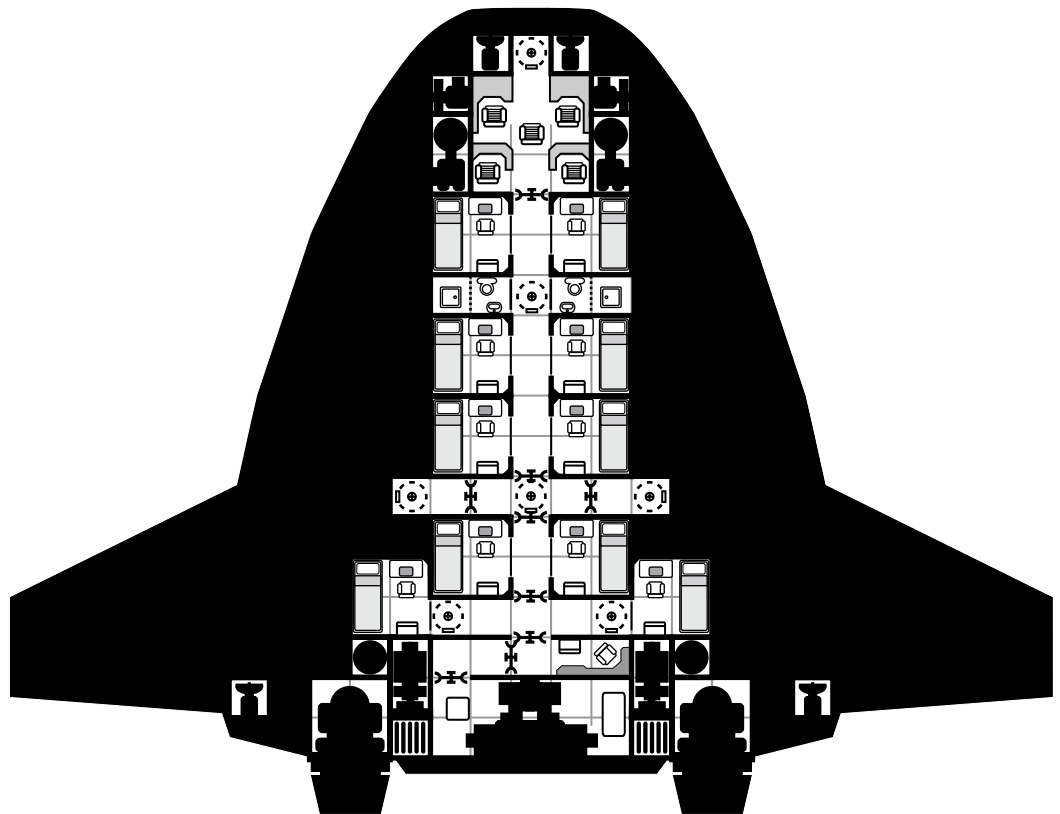
Leviathan

"Engineering You Can Trust"

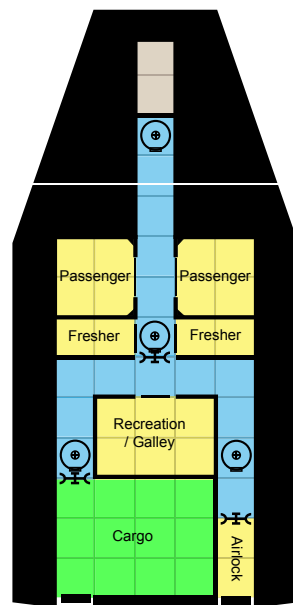
Leviathan has spent nearly 40 years steadily growing its market share of the utilitarian starship market.



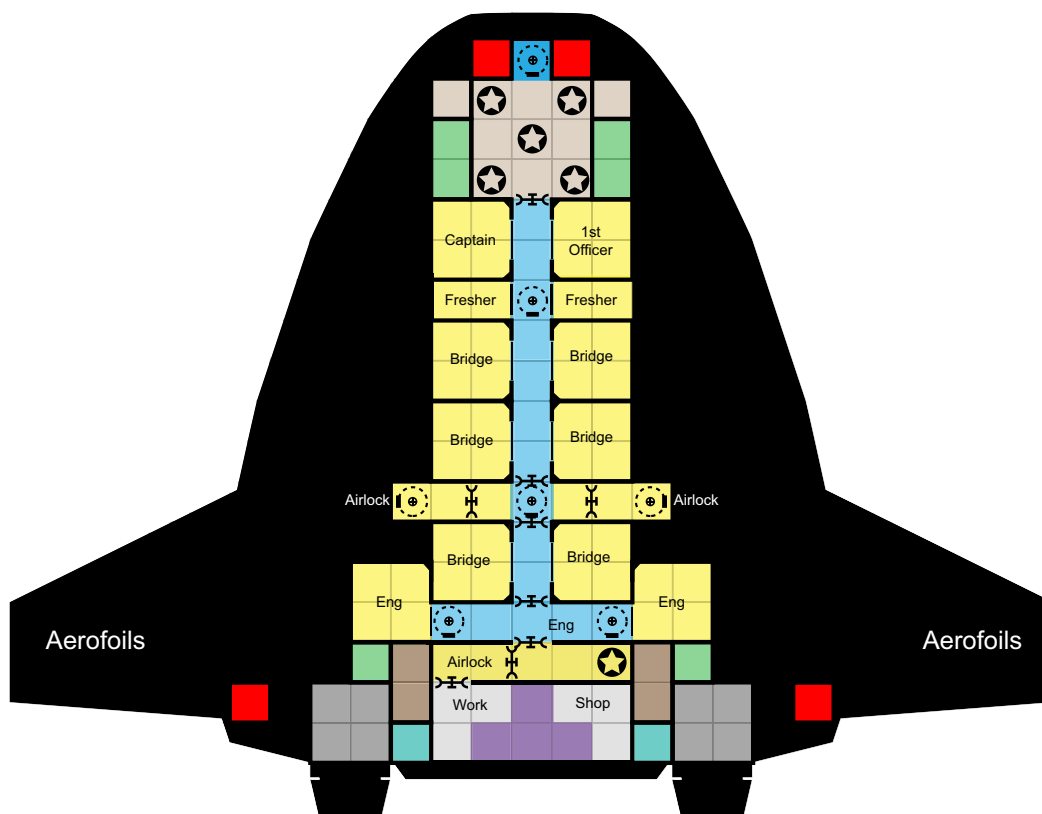
UPPER DECK



LOWER DECK



UPPER DECK



LOWER DECK

Since 2271 relatively cheap cargo vessels and modular transports have been its stock in trade and although it is still way behind companies like Hyde Dynamics, it fields an impressive array of vessels of varying quality. Critics among their rivals may consider the Wellon based ship-builder to be a by-word for 'tramp steamer' or 'rusting hulk', but many admirers point out this is because their ships never give up.

Many are flying way past their original planned obsolescence date and show no signs of stopping.

In fact, ask a decent, experienced captain and he'll choose Hyde & Quinn tech abroad a Leviathan chassis.

Some Leviathan vessels can be deceptive and are often used by smugglers for this very reason. They can look like rusting hulks but move like system patrol boats.

Since moving into salvage 15 years ago, Leviathan has gained a sordid reputation. Time and again its salvage vessel captains have been in court on violations. Sometimes moving salvage and claiming it elsewhere to avoid duty, knocking out satellites and claiming them as 'junk', and ignoring distress

calls as they were deemed not-profitable until the crew died (expressly against article 12-subsection 2 of the OQC code of operations).

Despite rumours and hearsay to the contrary, Leviathan have yet to be investigated for Piracy. If 2300AD players want to hire a ship with few questions asked then a captain contracted to Leviathan salvage may be the solution. Just be careful to keep your sidearm handy.

Leviathan in other eras/settings

Traveller

In Traveller the same business thrives but again it's just a matter of enlarging the scale.

Twilight:2000

In Twilight:2000 Leviathan would consist of improvised cargo vessels delivering to ports in a shattered and needy N. Europe operating out of Hull in NE England. "No, mate. We just deliver, we don't pick up. Don't try and board Yank... We have a very well armed crew. Unless... you have any gold?"



VESSEL DATA SHEET

HULL			SIZE	COST
150 Ton Hybrid LB SL	150			
Hull	3	Structure	3	2.6
		Hybrid LB	1.5	1.5
		STOL	3	0.4
		Heat Shielding		1.5
Armour	Composite	3	3.75	0.625
Stutterwarp Drive	Unloaded	2.32	1.78	5.34
New Military G	Loaded	2.02		
	Tactical	4		
Reaction Drive	Air Breathing Thruster B	2g	3.6	9.6
Power Plant	MHD Turbine G		1.43	0.5
Radiators	Radiators G		0.1	0.01
Weapons				
Bridge	Hardened, Holo		8	1.125
Computer	Mod 2			0.16
Software	Stutterwarp/B			0.2
	Library			0
	Maneuver/0			0
	FC/1			2
	Evade/1			1
Electronics/Sensors	Basic Military		2	1
Fuel	Thrusters	7 hours	21	
	Power Plant	14 days	47.04	
Cargo			6.8	
Staterooms	12		48	2
Other Fixtures	Recreation		2	0.0014
SpinHabitat				
Comfort	-1			
Maintenance Cost				0.025
Life Support Cost				0.036
Total Cost				29.5614

150



A LOOK AT THE NOTARIES OF 2300AD & GDW

A WORD OR TWO
WITH...

CHARLES GANNON

OPERATION: BACK DOOR, FIRE WITH FIRE, & HARD TIMES

Tell us about: you

I'm 52, father of five (one having died of SIDS in 2004), and am still a Distinguished Professor of English at St. Bonaventure University. But I haven't been in a classroom for almost 6 years now. I gave up my tenure and became an "at-large" member of the faculty in order to pursue writing fiction full-time. Which is working out very well: I had a Wall Street Journal Best-Seller last year, and my next novel—"Fire With Fire" (Baen, April 2004)—is the first in a hard sf military/thriller series of which three have been bought already.

So if I were to start in on anything like a complete biography, I'd have a lot of info...too much for here. And besides, that's not what your readers came to learn about, anyway!

Tell us about your work in 2300AD

As I'm sure all your readers know, I was responsible for only one "product" in the 2300 AD milieu, Operation Back Door. But I saw it as an opportunity to take a whirlwind trip through several different domains of the universe. A journey to the homeworld of a new alien race, the shadowy world of Earth's intelligence services, Earth's own struggles to maintain unity in the face of clear

international conflicts over both the war and humanity's destiny, and a number of other features. I guess you could say I tried to create an adventure that blended several important, and under-utilized, elements of the setting in the hope of stimulating a constant sense of novelty and discovery. Whether I succeeded at that, is of course, for you to determine. But I suspect a lot of folks feel I did a passable job because my name recognition in connection with that adventure among the 2300 enthusiasts that I meet never ceases to startle me (and so far, this has involved expressions of appreciation, rather than umbrage...)

I would have enjoyed doing more work in the 2300 AD universe, but a number of factors worked against that. Firstly, I had a ton of Megatraveller contracts I was working on, with rolling deadlines stacked right up to the metaphorical ceiling.

Secondly, the push was to have me focus more on product lines that were using, or slated to use, the "House system" based on the TW2K2 rules. That included novels, one for Traveller, one for Dark Conspiracy. However, my time at GDW ended pretty soon after Marc Miller left, so none of those novels came to fruition. (That was actually a very rough patch for me, because I had—on



Greenwing Beer

"Putting your thirst to flight!"

Being one of the most trusted and popular brands of beer in Human Space has made 'Greenwing' a household name. The brewery started on Beta Canum over 40 years ago but has since moved much of its operations to Austrovenia for commercial reasons. The marketing tells us that there is someone drinking a Greenwing every second of every day and it is thought that, when not drinking wine, the U.S. Presidential Family enjoys a bottle or two. Although this remains yet unconfirmed. The Greenwing logo is based on an ancient wall art image of a bird that once flew in the skies of Stark but has, sadly, long since become extinct. With this in mind Alliance Foods Inc donates a portion of its profits to various conservation projects throughout the Core & colonies. It was the rescue, and subsequent

35

repopulation, of the 'Lancing Toad' on Vega that saw the entire board knighted by King Christian of Britain

Greenwing and many other beers, wines, and spirits from the Brewery are available almost anywhere in the core and in many places outside of it. There are some places however that don't permit it on religious, cultural, biological, or commerce grounds and Alliance Foods work with the local communities to replace ingredients, remove alcohol, and otherwise alter a recipe in order for the beer to sold there with one proviso. If A.F. inc are asked or forced to change the flavour of a product they simply refuse and don't supply that area with their beverages. They're more than happy to source local ingredients or substitute taboo food-stuffs if possible but their beverages must taste the same wherever they are bought.

\$ ~ American Dollar



the strength of my many contracts with GDW—given up a nearly FT freelance gig as a TV writer/producer. All of a sudden, I was left high and dry.) However, I don't think there were any 2300 AD products in the mix, which was a damn shame, because I really liked the game. So much so, that I had LOTS of novel ideas for it—more than a few of which ultimately find re-expression in my own Tales of the Terran Republic series that is launching with book 1, Fire With Fire, in April, 2013. Indeed, for reasons I'll expand upon later, I think fans of 2300 AD are going to find a lot to like—even adapt for their games—in my series, because it is set in a similar historical moment for humanity (albeit earlier on the calendar, due to the absence of anything vaguely like the Twilight War).

Thirdly, I do not think 2300 AD had a personal champion (not that I could discern, anyhow) in-house at GDW in its final years. And while I never had any access to sales figures or any other market data, I came away with the impression that the “upper sales threshold” anticipated for the game was just not up to that envisioned for the other RPGs.

Why you like 2300AD as a sci-fi milieu

My fondness...no, passion...for the 2300 AD milieu has a lot of reasons and roots, but probably the foundation is in its accountability: to physics, to history, to planetology, to human nature. I actually think that one of the reasons that 2300 AD did not soar like some other SFRPG's was, in part, linked to these very reasons that I so liked it: it was exacting and, in many particulars, gritty and even dark.

I actually never had the pleasure of *playing* the game—but I almost didn't care.

That may sound like heresy, on the surface, but actually it is the most profound compliment I can give the game. The concept and vision was so expansive, and yet so convincing and so immersively engaging, that I simply reveled in the magnificence of the achievement in world-building and narrative construction. It was like an epic novel that was only lacking one thing: a core story-arc. I do not cite that as a failure: all RPG's must have a “hollow center” to be filled by the players action and the story that unfolds through it. However, in the case of 2300 AD, if was arguably true that its incredible detail and accountability actually had the seemingly contradictory effect of creating a larger “hollow place” than in other SF games. And I think that this was, in large measure, inevitable given the Earth-centric nature of the campaign.

Let me better articulate what I mean by way of a comparison. For those of you (all?) who are familiar with Traveller, you know that, from the first product, that game had a strong foundational presumption that the PC's were going to be part of a diverse group of adventurers in the Spinward Marches. And at first, more narrowly, they would spend a lot of time in or around the Regina subsector. The game spiraled out from there fairly rapidly, but that origin point was always resonating somewhere in the background, no matter how far removed the foreground action might be. The heart of the game had a kind of “expanded version” of the classical unities of time, place, and action. The time were the years before and during the Fifth Frontier War, the place was the Spinward Marches and the surrounding subsectors, and the action was ultimately (if by great remove) usually tied into the deeds and plots of the various regional forces involved in the struggles during that war-determined epoch.

Sure, there was the Grand Tour to the Imperial Core, and coverage of the Rim and Extents and etc., but we all knew where the heart of the story was located—and where it would probably, ultimately, resolve.

Now let's compare that to 2300 AD. The stage is smaller in terms of light years, but much more sprawling in terms of the relation of the part to the whole. The field of action encompasses the entirety of human space—and that is only feasible because humanity has not spread so far, just yet.

However, it has bumped into a proximal and extraordinary threat in the shape of the Kafers—a much greater threat than any faced by the Third Imperium. Unchecked, the Kafers could exterminate the entirety of the human race. Furthermore, this risk is exacerbated by internal problems. There are serious reasons to doubt that humanity's terrestrial house—which begins the war divided against itself—will ultimately continue to stand. Consequently, the possibilities for action are thoroughly and equally distributed throughout human space, and although everyone can agree that the Kafers must be defeated, debates regarding how, where, when, and by whom rear up to problematize almost every plan. There are, so to speak, enemies within and without, and there is no easy identification of them: there is no group wearing white hats or black hats.

I played heavily to this latter theme in Operation Back Door. Although many of the villains were French, the problem was not France itself. The problem was a human dynamic: a tendency to clutch after one's fading power and/or preeminence with white-knuckled fanaticism. And in the course of doing so, to begin to believe your own nervous rhetoric

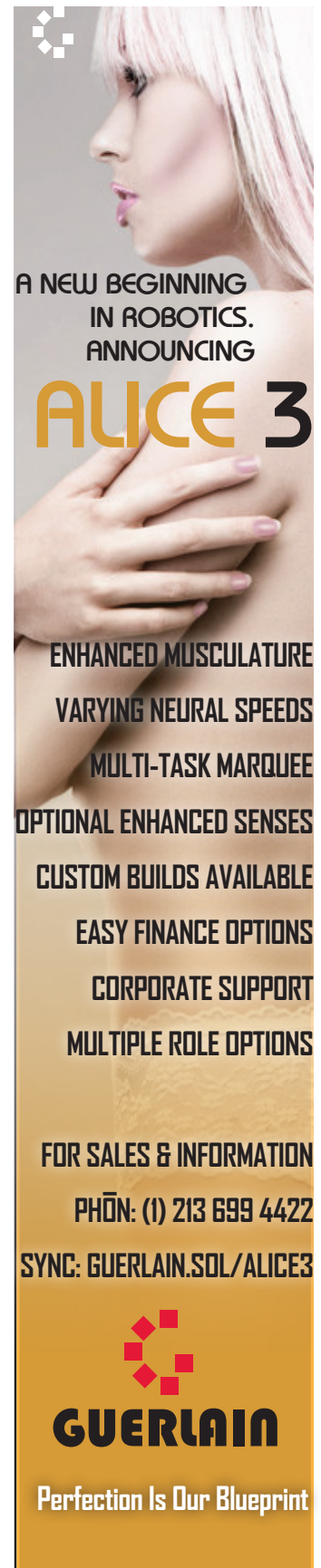
about knowing “what's best for humanity” as the justification for murdering members of your own species because, alas, they are tragically and irremediably “misguided.”

As I trust was obvious, this was not a comment about France: it was a comment on human nature. A comment on what happens when great powers long dominant begin to see their margins of leadership narrowing, even disappearing. They, and the people who have invested in that superiority deeply, do not go gentle into that good night.

So, now that we've set forth the dramatic stage of both games, let's zoom back. What stands revealed is that Traveller and 2300 AD are not just different in the scope and advancement of technology; they are different in the kind of stories they are telling. Both are sweeping, but one has affinities with the broad sweep and dominant archetypes (of both character and action) that we associate with myth: that is Traveller. The other has affinities with the historical specifics and self-critique that are the narrative hallmarks of the modern epic.

Which means that they both became exactly what they were supposed to become. Traveller was the perfect space opera; 2300 AD was the ultimate hard sf setting.

And that explains my affinity. I like both. But here's the catch. Frankly, I think that a lot of authors and game-designers do space opera very well: the sweep and majesty and classic allusions and echoes of mythic action and tragedy are all there in plenty of books and games. I like to think I can hold my own in that domain, but I have always felt that hard sf with species-embracing sweep—combined with an overarching sense of an epic grounded in gritty




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accountability—was in comparatively short supply. And that implicit opportunity—in fusion with my own creative and historical sensibilities—just makes me a sucker for 2300 AD.

And maybe the reason for that kind of affinity is connected to why Traveller fared so much better than 2300 AD as a game: the opening ante to thoroughly enjoy a space opera is a great deal less steep than the corresponding ante for really getting the full value out of what I will call a “hard(-bitten) sf” epic. Here’s what I mean:

When most people sit down to play a game—to derive fast and high levels of enjoyment from collective, imaginary action—they don’t want to spend a lot of time with preliminaries. They want something they can sit down to and run with almost immediately. It helps, therefore, to have a game that is based upon recognizable myths in an open-ended universe that does not in any important way carry the baggage of this, our real world, forward into its temporal setting. That is the beauty of the space opera. So, it is perhaps not surprising that the implicit learning curve of not only the exacting rules but the world of 2300 AD had a chilling effect upon “majority” audiences.

OTOH, I suspect that the depth of enjoyment and investment may be greater in 2300 AD games (again, haven’t played so I’m just guessing). And that’s only a guess, although it’s true that usually, what you get out of a pass-time is proportionate to what you put into it. But I do know this: 2300 AD is an incredibly unique and distinctive narrative environment, and its features were so eerily similar to the universe *I* was working on, that encountering it felt simultaneously like a homecoming and the discovery of plagiarism.

For instance, I had been hammering my way through a 3-D plot of the nearby stars using the Gliese catalog—and all of a sudden, I see 2300 AD, and its maps in particular, and I realize that my activity is not unique. Rather, I learned that I was on a pathway of SFnal convergent evolution: I was not alone!

I am, of course, overstating my reaction for the purposes of impact. However, poetic license aside, although the details, stories, and challenges of my universe (Tales of the Terran Republic) and 2300 AD are wholly different, I think it not unfair to say that they sprang from the same kind of genre impulse: to render a future that felt as solid and as real as our own. The technology of my world is quite different, as are the historical precursors that give rise to the global situation in the first book, *Fire With Fire*, and the aliens that humanity ultimately encounters in it. But I conceive of their commonalities this way: you recognize brothers as distinct persons—but at the same time, you may also see powerful family similarities. So it is with 2300 AD and *Tales of the Terran Republic*/*Fire with Fire*.

So small wonder I embraced 2300 AD as quickly and enthusiastically as I did—and still do.

Your feelings over Operation: Back Door’s lack of publication

I must say that although I’d have been delighted for *Operation Back Door* to be its own module (I think there would have been some really cool artwork!), I wasn’t too disappointed because it just wasn’t ever realistically in the cards. As I wrote before, as a free-lance designer working for GDW in 1990, the path of least resistance was in pitching *Traveller* and *Dark Conspiracy* modules: there was a ready market for those.

I also think that, by the time I was working a heavy schedule for GDW (1990-91), there was some sense that if 2300 AD was really going to take off as a product line as big as Traveller, it would already have done so. I won't say people didn't care about it, but when there were conversations about which RPGs could be revived or expanded or grown, those discussions centered around Traveller and Dark Conspiracy. After that came Twilight 2000—although having the end of the Cold War occur in exactly that time frame (1990-1) did necessitate that the game be given a little “re-contextualizing” in a second edition—since history had inconveniently caught up with and overtaken the game's originating conceits!

So, although I had suggested that Back Door had the potential to be a product, GDW just didn't feel the need for one. And let's not lose sight of practicalities: a stand-alone module would have meant paying me more money, as well as allotting art and production and distribution budgets (now we're talking lots, lots, and LOTS more money). And that's the way it is when you are involved in game design not merely for the love of it, but as part of your living income. You have to become somewhat philosophical about what gets a four-color covert of its own...and what doesn't. I'd like to think that there is art involved in game design, but ultimately, that profession is simply one more dimension of the most utterly commerce-driven of all enterprises: the entertainment industry. If you go into the design process with an attitude of absolute expectations regarding the end product of your labors, you probably don't have the necessary flexibility to be a full-time game designer. In fact, there aren't many jobs in the entertainment industry which allow any artists or creators that kind of thoroughgoing control over their final product.

However, this is one of the reasons why I am delighted at the parallels between 2300 AD and Fire With Fire. Because when writing a novel, you do have a lot more control over the final product—and there are a lot of dramatic catalysts and larger story arcs which I just happen to reprise in the book. It took a lot of waiting and sacrifice along the way, but I am finally working in a medium where the canvas upon which I paint is truly a personal, rather than collective, display of my interests and stories. And since my personal states cleave very close to the world and dynamics of 2300 AD, I think folks who like the game are going to find the book a little bit like a homecoming.

What about parallels between ‘Hard Times’ and the current economic woes? And also, are there any lessons learned from ‘Hard Times’ that could be utilised for life on Kafer occupied Beta Canum?

About parallels between the Megatraveller “Hard Times” and the contemporary “hard times”—well, sure. All retrenchments have parallels, I suppose. They vary in scope and intensity, and the more severe they are, the more profound and deranged the actions/reactions of the people caught in them.

However, on the whole, I would have to say that the World Depression of the Thirties is still a walk in the park compared to the widespread war destruction—and die-off due to consequent logistics breakdowns—of the collapse of the Third Imperium that I portrayed in Hard Times.

I actually caught a noticeable measure of flak for the “grim” outcomes I depicted in Hard Times. About which I can only say this: it wasn't supposed, or envisioned, to lead to The Virus and almost 2 centuries of collapse.



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The next contracted product—Surveyor—was set only a few years later, and was the beginning of the rebirth of a more balanced and just Imperium. The Surveyors were the retasked Scouts whose mission was this: to reenter the post-war Barrens and No-Man's Land, survive, survey, seek out remaining communities, and support their return to civilization. Hard Times was supposed to be a transitional work, not a coffin in which to dispose of the Imperium and the wonderful milieu which had grown up around and through it. But when Marc Miller left GDW's management, various products were given very new directions—and this was “change of plan” was one such consequence.

However, Hard Times was also an attempt to be responsible with the way the game handled the tragedy—and costs—of true, widespread strategic war. Consider the forces involved; consider the populations caught between them. Consider the duration of the conflict and the canonical destruction. Then just run the numbers. That's what I did. And I sat down with Marc Miller and we looked at it and both said: “Can we do this?” And we had more or less the same response: “Can we not?”

Admittedly, it was a grim “reset” of the game. But if interstellar transport was no longer routine and dependable, a simple look at the biosphere data (where a biosphere was even present, that is) told a pretty definitive tale. The same factors that would cause economic collapse and tech loss on a shirtsleeves world was a death-knell for most barren worlds or belts—which often had populations in the millions or billions.

Yes, grim. But I felt there is something like a duty incumbent upon those of us in the entertainment business not to sugarcoat disaster—particularly man-

made disaster. Because make no mistake about it: the die-off in Hard Times was doubly a human-caused disaster. Obviously, it was a product of human internecine war. But more profoundly, it was the result of human willingness to embrace ungoverned expansion to worlds where there were no innate resources

capable of sustaining an indigenous population permanently. All those vulnerable billions of humans were out there, on the end of a fragile branch of sustenance, because there was no attempt to encourage expansion to conform to local carrying/sustainability factors.

Now, before anyone thinks I'm about to go uber-green and starting hugging trees, that's not where I'm coming from. This is simple foresight in policy—but a foresight that is anathema to most officials and their PR flacks, because they do not want to be the ones caught saying: yes, breakdowns will happen. Indeed, they are inevitable. Nothing is perfect, and by definitions, only perfect systems are proof from problems and ultimately, total system failure.

But the majority of our leadership (both elected and de facto) know that their constituents (which is to say, our neighbors) don't want to hear that. And that is an interesting reaction, since the only reason a person can know in ADVANCE that they wouldn't want to hear about the inevitability of failure is if that person already has a sneaking suspicion that it is, in fact, the true state of affairs. So, they would rather live awash in a comforting matrix of reassuring falsehoods, rather than being compelled to live with the persistent sense of tentativeness and uncertainty that a realistic view of the ups and downs of human events incul-



cates. How pleasant it is to live one's life thinking that all is well, and that nothing can threaten the basic parameters and expectations of your existence. How blissful is that ignorance.

I guess that's one of the ways Hard Times relates to these, our own hard times. People don't seem willing to learn the lessons of history (or cyclic rise and fall, boom and bust) because it means becoming—and remaining—mindful of just how fragile our familiar conventions of existence really are. Drop the economy by 10 %, deprive a city of power for 72 hours—minor perturbations, as history measures such things—and behold the panic, the outrage, the chaos that ensues. And the constant underlying theme in all these upsets or re-trenchments, both real and imaginary? That the desperate, panicked throngs are only desperate and panicked because they willingly—gladly, greedily—drank deep of the opiated kool-aid ladled out by politicians of all stripe: that stability is eternally attainable, and well in hand. What utter tripe.

So, as I looked at the Traveller universe—caught in the throes of a titanic war that, quite literally, laid waste to whole worlds—I was struck not so much by those immense destructive forces, but by the mystifying optimism that allowed trillions upon trillions of human beings to live suspended by such a fragile logistical thread suspended beneath a damoclesian sword of ever uncertain politico-social steadiness. It was the triumph of hope over history, of dreams over experience, writ astronomically large. And the price of that passive, well-meaning “why worry?” attitude were an infinitude of dead innocents and noncombatants.

Now this is where someone will likely say, “But this is space opera! You could

have ignored all that! (Unless you're writing Warhammer 40K, in which case you have to incessantly depict it.) In Traveller, you don't have to worry about that kind of stuff!” or recognition is big enough. That is not the definition of a hero: a hero acts even when s/he stands to gain NOTHING from the deed.

So why do we see less of it today? I think others have written enough about the potential soul-rotting, dark side of the force we call “material culture.” The mantra for which is, “yeah, but what's in it for me?” Sure, it's a factor, but complaining about that variable once it's been identified is like bemoaning all the evil in the world without doing anything about it.

What game designers, authors, and even referees can do is create memorable worlds filled with believable, engaging, even endearing characters. If your players have really bought into an imaginary world and its virtual inhabitants, they will go on a perilous rescue not because of cash, but because they care. And those gaming sessions are the ones that everyone remembers. That's what I've tried to create in my work as a game-designer; that is what I've made the core value of my fiction: dramatic stages upon which readers/gamers can witness the birth of a hero. Either as a protagonist with whom we closely identify, or as our virtual self.

And as to Hard Times as a survival guide for Kafer-occupied Beta Canis Vanaticorum? I'll tell you what, Steffon: I want to toss that one back at you—and your readers. Do you guys see any worthwhile lessons that can be generalized from the former to aid in the latter? I'd be happy to continue this discussion in response to that feedback! (Thereby giving myself an excuse to come back for another of these very enjoyable chats!)



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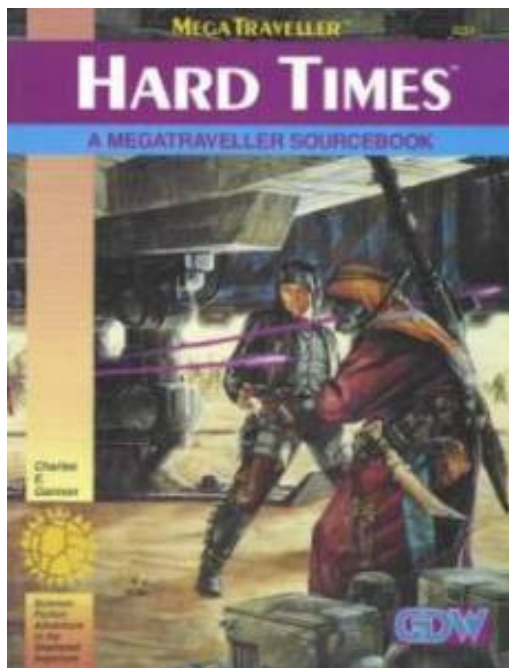
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(‘Hard Times’ is hands-down my all time favourite Traveller book - Ed.)

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Tell us about what you’re doing now and the differences between 2300AD and Fire With Fire (or more usefully, what links them), and what will make FWF of interest to 2300 AD fans

Actually, I’ve already touched on various points of strong similarity between the game and my novel/series over the course of my responses thus far. I’ve mentioned accountability and rigor; I’ve mentioned the qualities of the gritty and realistic epic vs. the conventions of space opera. And I’ve touched on history in general. But now I’d like to veer in that last direction a little more sharply, particularly with this concept in mind: historical continuity.

Think about how Star Wars begins: A long time ago, in a galaxy far away...

This is how fairy tales start. It is the opening disclaimer, which asserts in poesy: The world you will hear about is not this world; the time is not this time; the limits of possibility are not our limits.

There’s nothing wrong with that. And, for space opera to really work, it’s probably best that it has little (if any) historical continuity with our time, with our world. The first value of myth is freedom in storytelling, not accountability in story telling. And space opera ultimately tracks toward mythic values and figures, even if it chooses to cleave close to the bounds of the scientific rules and constraints of its imaginary epoch.

But for a hard sf epic, the accountability of science and event wants a matching accountability in history—at least, that’s how I’ve always felt. For me, this kind of narrative gathers a great deal of power by connecting itself to the moment in which we live. And so, when asked to help craft an intro radio spot for an interview about my newest book, I found I wrote this about Fire With Fire:

The year is 2118, and today’s international disputes and frictions have become meaningless. Or have they? Even as humanity masters faster-than-light travel, first contact with aggressive aliens reminds Earth that history is always prelude, and that a global house divided against itself cannot stand.

To reemphasize: “History is prelude.” Or to put it in the terms of our immediate existence: this present in which we live is the wellspring from which our future will come. And so, just as scientific issues in a hard sf story prompt me to ask, “how would that work?,” the same rigor in the social dimension has me asking, “how did we get to that point?” If a reader is to be fully immersed in a

world, it must not merely be plausible as a self-contained virtual reality; it must be a plausible outcome of events that are a legacy of our own, actual historical moment.

This quality of historical continuity was central to the shape and power of the world of 2300 AD. This quality of historical continuity is equally central to the shape and power of the world of *Fire With Fire*, and the series it is launching, *Tales of the Terran Republic*. In fact, of the 65,000 words of fiction already in

print that are set in this universe, almost all of them are precursor tales: events that, like sequential pearls on a timeline-strand, ultimately lead to the action of *Fire With Fire* and its associated narratives. One of these novellas, “To Spec”, will be appearing as free on-line fiction on the Baen website starting in March and will remain there for about a month.

I actually started developing the background for the universe of 2120 about 30 years ago, and ultimately graduated to the CIA World Fact book and Global Almanac for the hard numbers from which I ran decade-by-decade basic growth predictions up to 2110. These were not straight-line growth scenarios; in terms of economics, I cranked in a modified Kondratiev Wave, and several events which had acute and unpredictable effects upon the populations and GDPs of the affected nations.

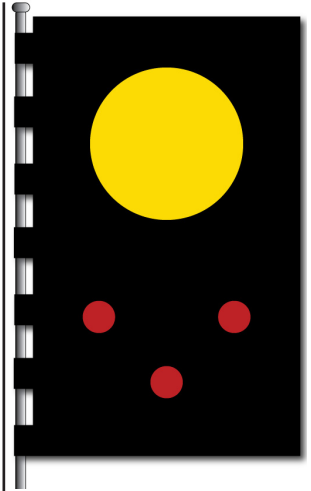
And while there was no Twilight War, there was a major catastrophic event just before the mid mark of the 21st century. You will hear, in the marginalia of the series, of an interval of about half a decade referred to as the MegaDeath. It was not the hey-day of a rock-band; it was global disaster resulting from—wait for it—uncritiqued expansion practices

(think *Hard Times* writ very small). For about three years, the average “over-actuarial projection” die off rate in the globe’s population was 1,000,000 per day. The cause: a combined economic and resource implosion that devastated what is now called “the last sixth”.

This concept of the “bottom sixth” is an outgrowth of the old UN notion of the “lower third”. Very briefly, at the end of WW 2, the UN promulgated a number of key objectives. One was to raise the status of the “lower third” of the world’s countries (a.k.a. the Third World or Underdeveloped World) into Developing World status (i.e.; what was then the “Middle Third”) and half of the Middle Third into the Upper Third. There was some success, but in the case of the Lower Third, there was an unforeseen effect.

Very broadly, the notion of a “generalized advance” was revealed to be simplistic and unrealistic. What wound up happening (and is still going on) is that differences in each nation’s cultural affinity to the required changes in commerce, organization, and social adaptation determined the success of their upward mobility. Half of the countries of the old “Lower Third” met or outperformed the growth goals encouraged by the UN. But because they were also best suited to this growth, they also managed to aggressively accumulate and lock-in a disproportionate share of the aid and restructuring assets. (Which, by the way, were not even primarily distributed by the UN, and not stipends, but more commonly policy and trade and currency massaging effected by other organizations, such as the G-7, the G-20, etc.)

The result: the lower half of the Lower Third became the Bottom Sixth. The outcome in these countries is essentially



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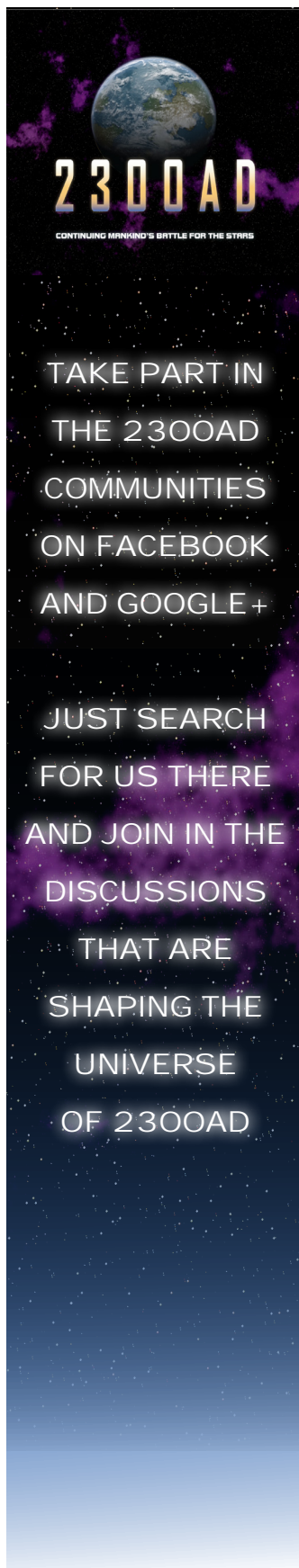
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a self-amplifying downward spiral into ever greater poverty, greater dependence, greater vulnerability. They are eternally poised on the brink of near-disaster. Logically, then, if there WAS a disaster...

And this is what occurs—for a variety of reasons—just before the middle of the 21st Century. Right now, I hope it all remains just fiction—but actually, my projections of 30 years ago are distressingly on track and on target. Take a look at this map:

<http://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/Country>

--and see the at-risk regions that would be devastated if an imploding global economy suddenly drove up the price of food, leading to a consolidation of trade amongst stable partners, with decreased provision for those poor nations that can barely afford to feed themselves now.

Then get any decent population overlay map. I keep hoping the numbers will no longer ring clear as a death knell, but the dire implications of the population distribution side of the equation has also been intensifying. Small farming has, in many of the countries, actually been withering away as the population contracts upon the cities (for a variety of reasons). This accelerates their trend away from even marginal self-sufficiency. And if you want to see a final depressing map, find any that indicates current, and projected, fresh water crises.

Arguably, the greatest problem with all this is that, when these impacts begin to trigger each other (and they almost always will), these are also nations with (again, get any relevant map) repressive and/or unstable governments. The stage is set, if you will, for what I will call an

interregnum in global order outside of the Developed (or secure Developing) World. Actually, I think we see can see the bow-wave of this trend now. Think about where you would be unwilling to travel today, fearing for your safety or for the availability of basic services. Now think back 20 years. Yeah, lots more locales have improved communications technology—but most of them, and even more, have become desperate and dangerous places.

So, long before there was a Twilight 2000 to create the history that became the prelude for the world of 2300 AD, I was running the projections of the Megadeath that was, in many ways, one of the two key prelude events that led to the world of 2120 in Fire With Fire.

The other event was the interception of a Near Earth Approaching Object—the so-called Doomsday Rock—in 2083. Although the name was overly dramatic, estimates put its total primary and secondary effects as reducing global population by 50 % over the first 10 years, post impact, with technology stabilizing somewhere between the Bronze and Napoleonic Ages. The primary effect was to reenergize what had become somewhat unevenly funded space programs and accelerate the push beyond cislunar and Martian space dramatically. And it gave real teeth to the concept of Project Prometheus: humanity's first serious (secret) attempt to achieve supraluminal travel.

So, just as in 2300 AD, history—both the threads we see twining through our world today and select future events—are very much what shape the milieu of the Tales of the Terran Republic. And they have a similar effect as the Twilight War: they lead to a resurgence in various disciplines, but also perpetuate a tense state of international suspicion and ri-

valry—a tendency towards divisiveness that could be humanity’s downfall.

To see a brief overview of how these various rivalries begin diminishing in a drift toward what is called “bloc politics”, I encourage you to visit my pages that offer a look at various elements of the world of Fire With Fire on the eve of the events depicted in the story. If the state of affairs in the international community is where you’d like to start, then follow this link:

<http://www.charlesegannon.com/22Feature.html>

Wander at will.

Now, to make sure we have something left to talk about in a subsequent chat, here’s a teaser I’m going to throw out.

In the world of Fire with Fire, gravity manipulation is pretty much unheard of. And you know what that means: spin modules for human habitation. You can therefore guess how much I hope your various artists will agree to allow me to feature their spaceship renderings on my website—because actually, they are rarities in the representation of SF spacecraft. But if I am invited back, I’d be happy to answer questions about why I made this decision about gravity as a non-duplicatable force—a decision just happened to match what 2300 AD committed itself to a few years later. And at that time, I’ll give some explanation of the underlying problems of any other form of “gravity substitute” that has been proposed.

In closing, I’d like to thank Steffon for his invitation to chat with you all, for his great questions, and for your continuing interest in a game that is not only near and dear to my heart, but eerily reminiscent of the world you will find

explored here—and in increasing detail (Baen has already bought the first three books in the much longer series):

<http://www.amazon.com/Fire-Charles-E-Gannon/dp/1451638833>



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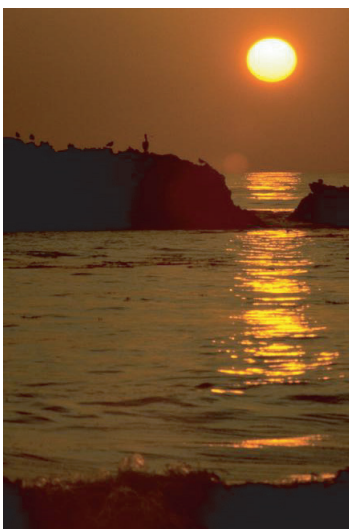


The Green Death

"I accept it's from off-world but it's only a little piece." Such is the ignorance of some travellers found by our reporter Michel R. Abilard. A traveller from Ellis thought a small artichoke (pictured left) would be harmless on a big planet like Earth, but the OQC didn't agree. He was fined L 6,000 (US\$7,000) for breaking the law regarding sanctioned items. The danger posed by alien bacteria is very real. Read more about the smuggling trade in David Elrick's article on page 23.

More Food For Thought

Consider the humble corn cob. Packed with vitamins and goodness, but is it the same all over? Despite some claims that corn here is better than there or vice-versa scientists at Beta Canum's La Sorbonne department de Premiere reveal corn has a unique collection of enzymes and proteins that enable it to stay, and indeed taste, the same wherever it's grown. All this despite varying environmental aspects to the worlds they're grown on. Besides, as long as it tastes as good as it always has done, what does it matter?



Calm Seas on Montana (Omicr. 2 Erid. A3)

"Unlike most of Argentina & Mexico's other colonies, Montana is making serious leaps toward being self sufficient" reports the water worlds respected leader Snr. Rodrigo Soliz de Garcia. Montana has a very progressive government and plentiful food resources but suffered from a lack of colonial influx by women early on leading to the custom of polygamy (something which the catholic church is vehemently against). Readers may also remember the self-imposed embargo of ships from Earth in 2278 which was designed to show that the Montano's can survive without humanity's homeworld.

The scene pictured on the left shows a beautiful sunset over the Smoking Sea from the edge of Chimborazo, a mere 6 miles from the city of Rio Oro, so called due to the heavy gold and iron deposits in the nearby mountain range.



YOUR WORLD



City Planning with Vision

“They’re becoming a real hazard to the locals.” said Administrator Jean-Louis Rainford on the matter of glass covered skyscrapers in the Canadian enclave on the Sung homeworld of Stark. There have been 3 deaths and numerous major injuries when local Sung have either thought they could just ‘drop-in’ on the 40th floor or have failed to notice the buildings altogether. “It’s starting to incur severe stress reactions in the humans working in the blocks.” said Mr. Rainford “You just don’t know when you’re gonna be dive bombed next.” The deaths have caused alarm among the local Sung population and calls to the Administrator have tripled in the last month calling for humanity to take more notice of native behaviour.

The Canadian government, in partnership with Baustoffe gmbh, are initiating a program of ‘Lanell’ painting of the windows to make them more reflective. A process that hasn’t been used since the mid 2180’s. Several inquiries from local Sung engineering firms regarding the process are already being looked into.

Never Say Die

He has described his four years hosting our ‘PLANETARY’ television series as a “dream job”, taking him on distant adventures; he once ran a 140-mile footrace through the Sahara. But Andrei Canaskoy just missed a nightmare last June... crashing his hoverbike soon after filming began for a show on environmental villains on Tirane. The PLANETARY team, which included actress Tara MacKenzie, continued without him. Canaskoy spent the night in hospital with a dislocated elbow but soon rallied; ten days later he was back at work, sharing screen time with some of Wellon’s finest chasing illegal exporters of protected bird eggs. Judge for yourself if Andrei has lost his taste for speed as he dashes along King Christian Avenue in a police issue Bridgeport Swift ‘Jailbird’ (right). Andrei says his next goal is to surf La Gouffre on Aurore! (only joking).



Baby Boom Is Over

“We were hoping it could last longer, King needs new citizens.” says the medical chief of King highport Dr. Samuel Waters.

“We’re not even sure why it started, just that it began about 2 years ago.” Sociologists point to the fact that as colonial efforts usually move in waves it

might be about time for the last ‘wave’ to pair off and settle down to raise their families and therefore leave the surface for the highport in order to have children away from the restrictive 3G’s of gravitational pull.



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YOUR WORLD



Picket Line Protests

Tensions increased this week as Azanian mine workers agreed by a 2/3rds majority in favour of strike action over better pay and conditions. Both sides are taking pains to avoid any flashpoints similar to the strikes of '92 where 3 workers were shot by police. Azania has been encouraged by other ESA nations to find a solution before the Tantalum price raises high enough to affect jobs and defence contracts.

Hacks for Habitation

It's one thing leaving your childhood home and moving across country, but what if you're moving to another world? In this months issue we partner with 'Planetary' to reveal the ten most useful hints, pitfalls, and benefits that colonists encounter in their search for a new start on their new homeworld including timed UV devices to help new arrivals aclimatise to new circadian rhythms, tricking cats and dogs into thinking they're back home, and how to form co-operatives to make 'paydirt' cheaper.



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A Hidden Crime

"We expected to find bodies but not like this."

Snr Geraldo Ruis is a rescue worker and firefighter in the town of Rectenna, a town mostly destroyed by Kaefer bombardment 74km east of Tanstaaf.

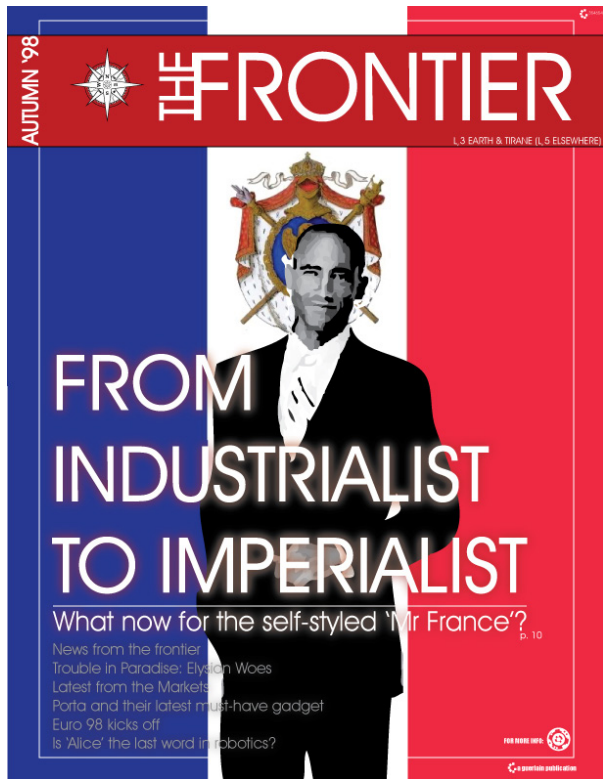
On the morning of June 23rd his team were checking a recently partially collapsed building when they made a grim discovery. In the cellar lay 27 bodies, all showing signs of foul play, stacked up in a crude tableaux depicting a family at thanksgiving dinner. The TRP were immediately called and the hunt is on for Tanstaaf's first serial killer. No-one from the TRP was available for comment at this time. The latest body was a year old and it is quite possible the killer may have been killed in the bombardment.



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Fit To Print

YOUR
MONTHLY
MAGAZINE
REVIEW



On the face of it, 'The Frontier' magazine may appear to be a progressive conservative political organ that seeks to enlighten its readership with cutting insight into the stab & thrust of daily politics. Sadly, this is far from the truth as this weeks lead shows.

Almost from the Editorial we see an overtly left-wing agenda with Rudolf Dannenbra's critique of humanity's space exploration.

"It is precisely because our reckless expansion that we have run into our biggest threat (the Kaefers) and we should take care of problems at home first."

Which for Mr Dannenbra is a luxury 3 level penthouse in the middle of Berlin on MacLeanstrasse. His ignorance of our enemy is as glaring as his hipocrisy. As we venture further into the magazine we see the rhetoric let up with fair to decent articles on the new Obradovic 997SE sportscar, life on Dunkelheim for a Ranger,

and a look at the lack of success for Americola, but as we start the feature piece we see a thinly veiled attack upon the French Emperor, Nicolas I.

Let's be clear here, this is a man who dragged himself up from the slums of east Paris, became a succesful businessman on his own merit, and then stepped in and saved from France from a weak and ineffectual government. However, Claude Foudaine has conveniently forgotten that and seems determined to lay the blame of recent local administration failures at the feet of a man running an interstellar empire.

While it's true that certain parts of metropolitan France need investment, their is an unemployment issue for those between 21-30, and some departments are still paying off the debt their accrued for the construction of the beanstalk, most of these problems can be squarely placed at the tomb of the previous administration. It's frankly absurd that Foudaine thinks the readership will swallow this.

His over-use of the phrase 'Mr France' reveals his petty grievance of someone who supported the lame duck previous government and has lost his right to vote for his party of choice. He has forgotten that the parties still meet, still vote, and still instruct the Emperor. The only real difference is that representation is smaller and that there is a monarch instead of a President in charge. It's a 'hit-piece' and nothing more.

The magazine finishes with arguably the best section of the whole magazine, the 'What's On' guide. The Frontier is known for its extensive network of diarists and reporters attached to bureaux and ministries and they maintain a wonderfully detailed list of political events, protest marches, and 3-V spots for their readership to enjoy, and no doubt be better informed by.

~Hitaro Handa





STYGIAN FOX



COLONIAL TIMES