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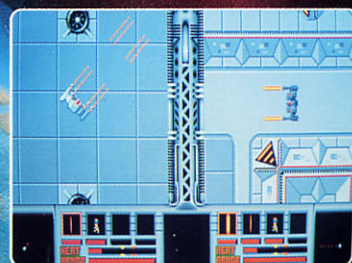
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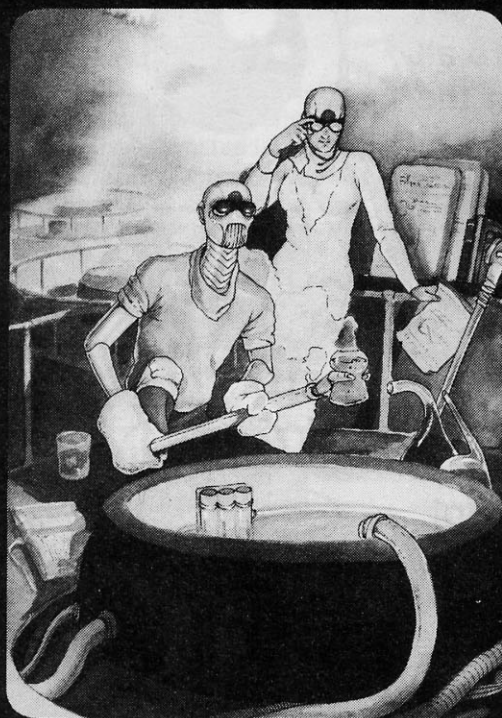
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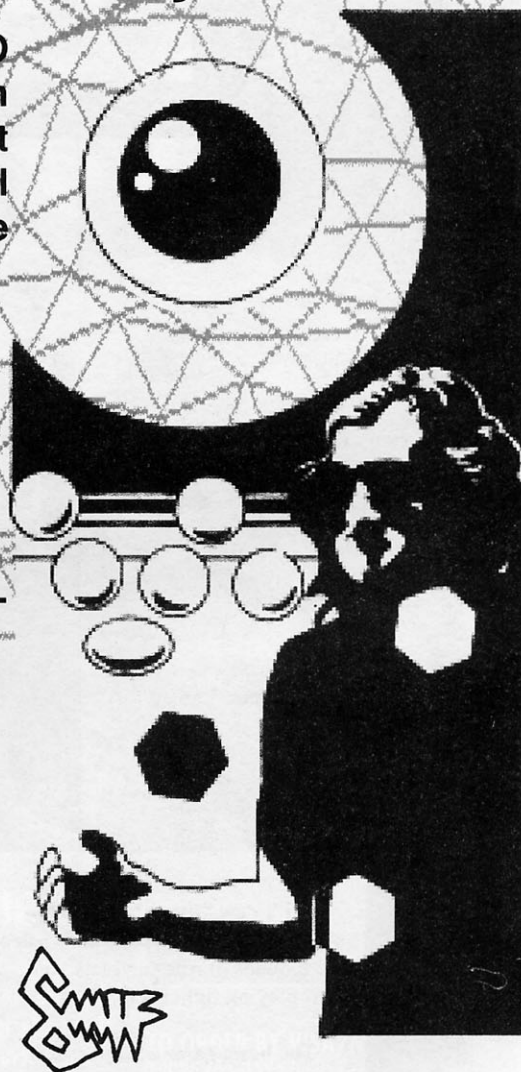
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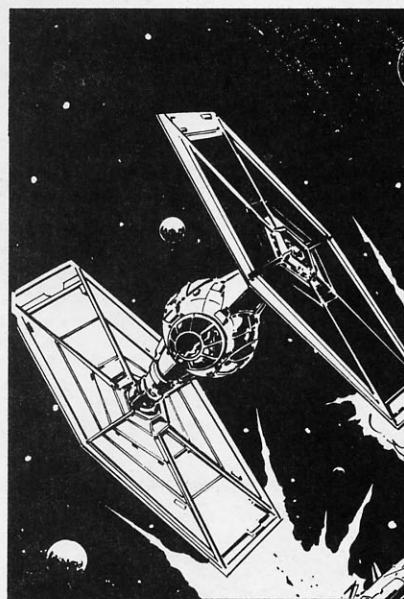
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Challenge

Issue 67, December 1992

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ABOUT THE COVER

This month, artist Tim Conrad imparts to us the necessity of being well-protected when dealing with down-sized trolls in the *Shadowrun* universe. Our guess is that our troll friend inhaled just a bit too much tar & nicotine as a tyke.

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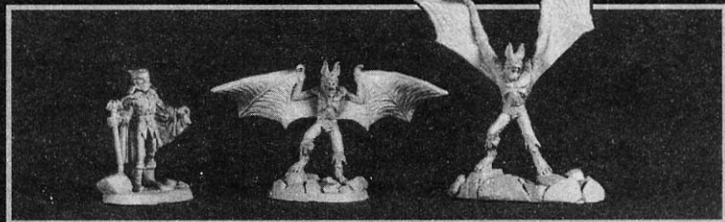
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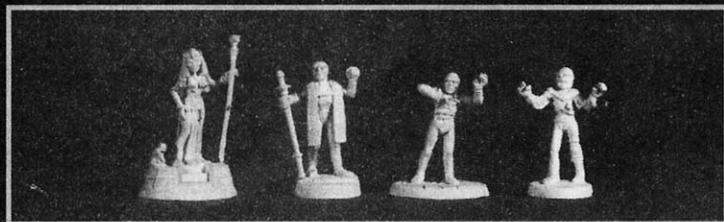
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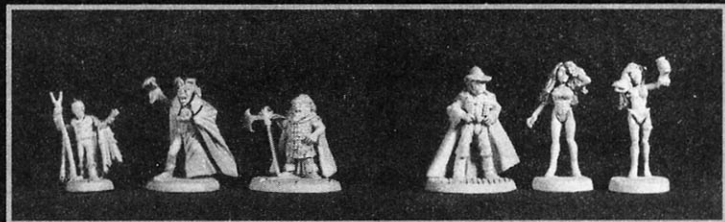
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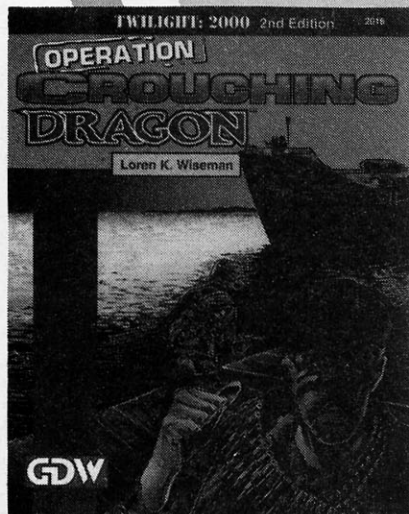
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TOUGH TIMES

Demand Tough People

TWILIGHT: 2000™ GDW: 2016—\$7.00



OPERATION CROUCHING DRAGON™

I thought I was through with surprises. We've been sent to a lot of strange places, and done some pretty mysterious stuff. It's not unusual for us to be hired by people we never see. And it's par for the course to be sent places we've never been before. But I've never been sent on a mission to an island that doesn't have the decency to exist. I was under the impression that an island had to be above water...

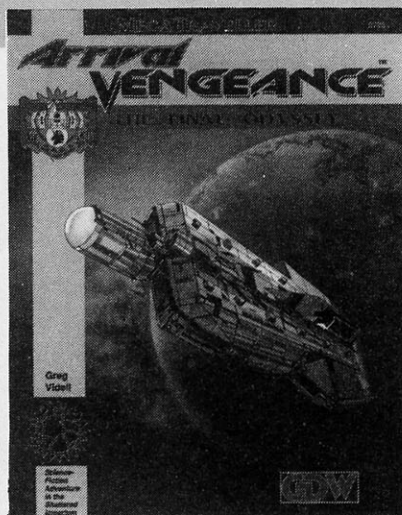
In the South China Sea lie a group of very tiny islands, some of which are under water at high tide. The British call them the Spratlys and marked them on charts only because they were a hazard to navigation. They were never of much use to anyone until oil was discovered underneath them.

In A.D. 2000, five nations claim the islands, five nations have assigned them names, five nations have sent survey parties and military units to secure their claims, five nations have made arrangements with oil companies for their exploitation.

The team is hired by one oil giant to spy out what the competition is up to. Easy as pie, right? In the middle of their mission, however, they make a discovery that is infinitely more important to their long-term survival...they discover what their patron is up to.

Operation Crouching Dragon takes the players to a minute island in the middle of the South China Sea, where forces from five nations claim the region's oil reserves. It's a situation so tense, the slightest spark could touch off a war, and the team is dropped right in the middle.

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ARRIVAL VENGEANCE™ The Final Odyssey

The ship: *ISS Arrival Vengeance*: a 60,000-ton Azhanti High Lightning-class cruiser.

The course: Cross the Great Rift to Daibei, run trailward to Delphi, then coreward to Core and Gushemege. Contact Craig, Margaret, Lucan, and Strephon.

The mission: Penetrate the war-torn shattered Imperium in search of some hope of a re-unified Imperium.

Join the crew of *Arrival Vengeance* and negotiate with Aslan nobles, witness the slave trade in the depths of Massilia, meet with the Hand of Varian, and have a showdown with Lucan's forces. You will also meet with Duke Craig, Duchess Margaret, and learn the truth about Strephon.

The mission is ambitious, but surely it must succeed. The Imperium can't really be dead, can it? Can the dream really be over?

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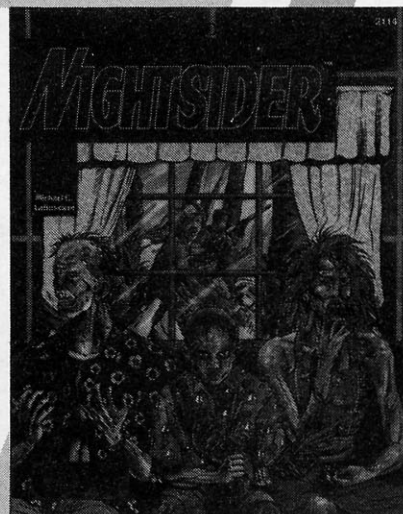
- Six full-color deckplans for *Arrival Vengeance* and other *Lightning*-class cruisers.

- Map of *Arrival Vengeance's* final odyssey through the shattered Imperium.

- UCP stats for the 60,000-ton *Arrival Vengeance*.

- UPP stats for Norris and Seldrian Aledon, Duke Craig, Margaret, and Strephon.

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Meanwhile, on the coast, people are disappearing in the woods. But locals insist that there's no reason to be alarmed. People do get lost in the wilderness, and rural regions have even been known to attract wandering axe murderers on occasion. No need to propose some great "conspiracy" theory to explain a few missing persons, or even several grisly deaths.

It's a little harder to explain whole cars disappearing—with everyone inside—as they travel down a busy highway. But it isn't impossible. Perhaps these people don't want to be found.

Or maybe there really is something dark and sinister going on. Some otherworldly evil that ties these events all together. If there is, you had better discover what it is and defeat it...before you join the ranks of its prey.





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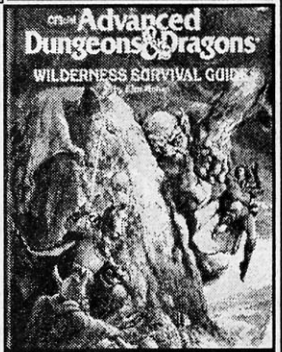
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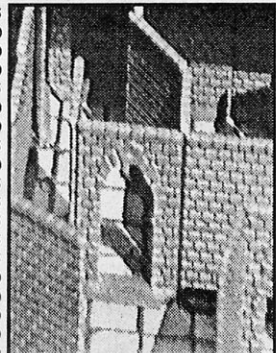
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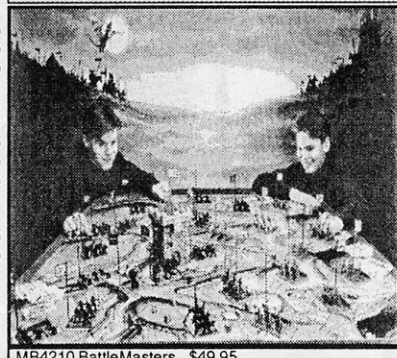
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OPERATION BOOMERANG

Everyone who's anyone in the merc business has heard of Martin Glain. Glain is the type who seems to have been born a spy, and he spent the first 20 years of his career in the field. Since then, he has spent 15 years as one of the chief coordinators of CIA operations in southeast Europe.

Glain has heard of the PCs by contact or reputation, and he has them in mind for a mission. He sends them a priority message and first-class airline tickets to Zurich, Switzerland.

When they arrive, Glain picks them up at the airport. He explains his situation:

Glain's protégé, Devon Masterson, was betrayed and captured by a rouge CIA agent. Franz Kohl, the rouge, has set up a temporary base in the Swiss village of Freundorf, about 30 kilometers southwest of Zurich. Glain needs the PCs to get to Freundorf, eliminate Kohl, and rescue Masterson. Upon Masterson's rescue, they are to return to Zurich and meet Glain.

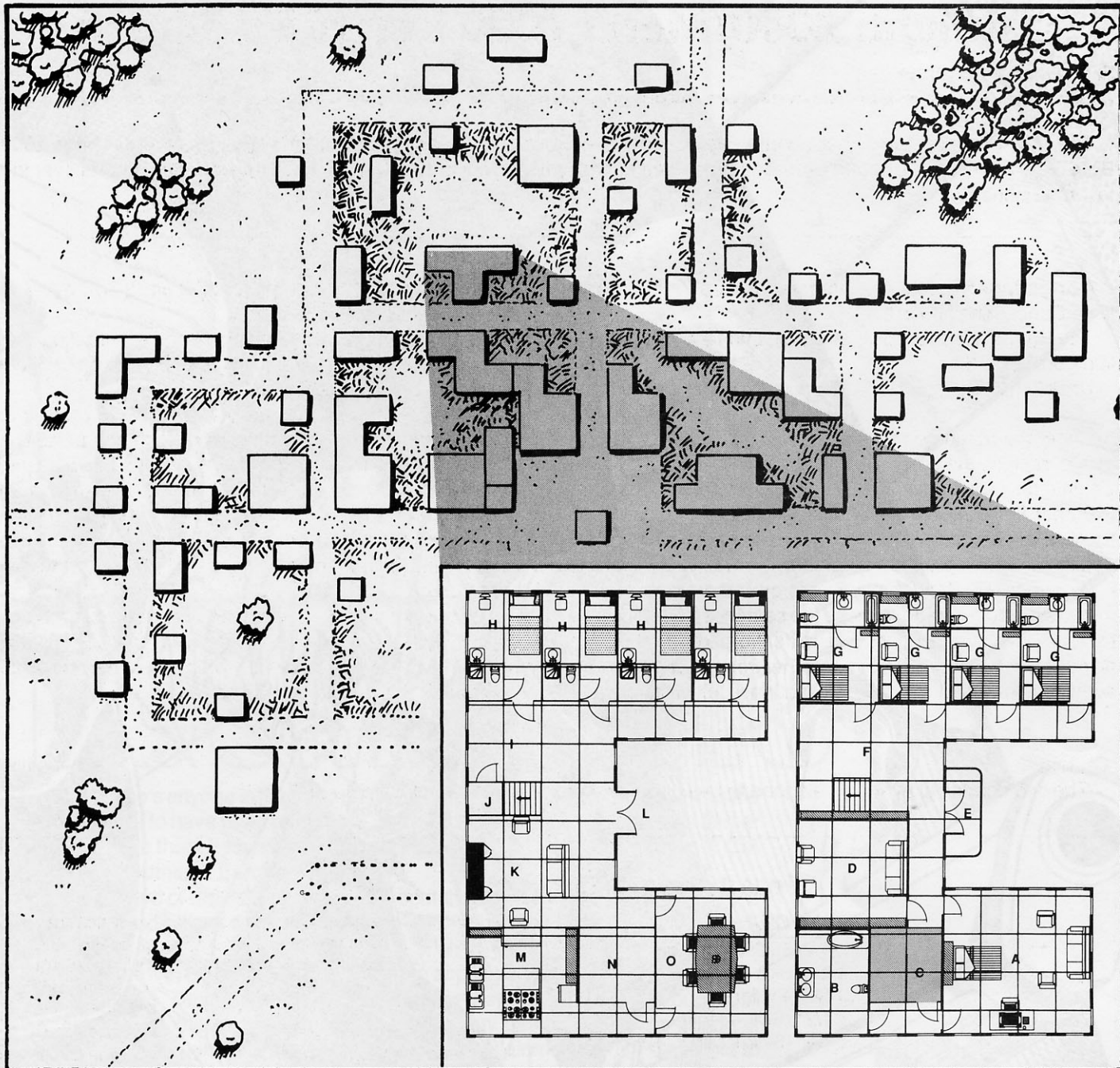
He offers the PCs \$40,000 each and passage out of Switzerland for successful completion of the task.

APPROACH

The PCs should be as subtle as possible. Switzerland has a death penalty for murderers, so it is imperative they don't get caught. If the PCs do make excessive noise, the police will show up in short order.

BY JOHN T. SWANN





MAP DESCRIPTIONS

Freundorf: Use the Flesh Peddlers map in *Twilight Encounters* for Freundorf (reproduced here for your convenience). None of the buildings are demolished. Kohl is holding Masterson in the northernmost "G" building.

Building: For the building, use the mansion map on page 76 of *Merc: 2000*. Masterson is in Room C.

NPCs

Devon Masterson: Although he is a top field agent, Masterson has been starved and beaten. He is in no condition to help the PCs with the

rescue. He can only trot, not run, and even then only for short periods of time.

Franz Kohl: Kohl is a Swiss man who worked for the CIA until he joined with a European terrorist group. He captured Masterson and is holding him until he can turn him over to his terrorist cohorts. Kohl is a Veteran NPC. He has a full complement of espionage-related skills. He carries a knife and an M92S with three extra clips, and wears a Kevlar vest.

Agents: Kohl is helped by a cadre of six European terrorist agents. These terrorists are more than will-

ing to die if it will mean that Kohl escapes with Masterson. The agents are Experienced NPCs. They are equipped with PM Makarovs with two extra clips. Two of them also have Uzi SMGs.

AFTERMATH

Glain will pay the PCs as promised. He will then provide them fake passports to allow them to get out of Switzerland. If the PCs are wanted by police, Glain will get them out even quicker than normal using his underground transport. Both Glain and Masterson, when he recovers, can be powerful allies. Ω

Twilight: 2000/Merc: 2000 Referee's Screen

Errata & Clarifications

28 October 1992

The following are items that should supersede the corresponding sections in GDW's **Twilight: 2000/Merc: 2000 Referee's Screen**. The charts section is presented so that you can cut out and paste down the corrected charts over the incorrect ones.

Corrections: Delete the paragraph headed "Additional Note Concerning NPCs."

The HS Derringer's recoil values are unchanged; delete its line from page 6.

Unskilled tests are clarified on the replacement charts below.

Under the paragraph headed "Radio Detonation of Explosives," replace the sentence "The task is Average: (Combat Engineering/Electronics) given proper equipment, Difficult (Combat Engineering/Electronics) given improvised equipment" with "The task is Difficult: (Combat Engineering+Electronics)+2 given proper equipment, Formidable: (Combat Engineering+Electronics) given improvised equipment."

In the next paragraph, replace the sentence "Improvising a radio detonation receiver or transmitter from a normal radio is an Average: (Combat Engineering/Electronics) task" with the sentence "Improvising a radio detonation receiver or transmit-

ter from a normal radio is a Difficult: (Combat Engineering+Electronics)+2 task."

Under the bold, in-text heading "Radio-Detonation Receiver Unit," replace the phrase "(Average: Electronics)" with the phrase "(Difficult: Electronics)."

D20 Clarification: To convert old task difficulty levels to new ones, examine the old modification of the Skill Level and apply the same modification to the new system. For example, placing an explosive charge under the old system was an Easy task (roll versus 2xCombat Engineering skill). Under the D20 system, a 2x roll is an Average difficulty level, therefore placing a demolitions charge under the D20 system is an Average task.

Please note that combat-related tasks are a special case, and are discussed in the paragraph with the bold, in-text heading "Common Task Levels," which is under the "D20 System: Task Difficulty Levels" major heading.

Charts

The two charts below were designed to be cut out and pasted over the relevant page 5 charts.

Cut Here

D20 SYSTEM: TASK DIFFICULTY LEVELS

Level	Roll (1D20)
Easy	$\leq 4 \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Average	$\leq 2 \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Difficult	$\leq \text{Skill} + \text{Attribute}$
Formidable	$\leq 1/2^* (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Impossible	$\leq 1/4^* (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$

* Round fractions down.

Auto Success/Auto Failure: A 1D20 roll of 1 always succeeds, and a roll of 20 always fails, regardless of skill level (except in fire combat, where 17-20 always fails).

Outstanding Success/Outstanding Failure: A 1D20 roll of 10 points or more below the target number results in an Outstanding Success. A 1D20 roll of 10 points or more above the target number results in an Outstanding Failure. Effects of these are decided by the referee.

Unskilled Defaults: Characters may attempt tasks for which they lack relevant skill, at one difficulty level higher, rolling against the Controlling Attribute alone. Unskilled attempts at Impossible tasks are rolled against one-eighth the Controlling Attribute of the missing skill (round fractions down). Referees should feel free to allow automatic success (no die roll required) for everyday tasks in which a character has any relevant skill. There is no such thing as automatic success in a task for which a PC has no relevant skill.

Paste the following table over the relevant chart under the "D20 System: Common Task Summary" section on page 5.

Cut Here

Demolitions:

Task Type	Task Difficulty	Skill	Effect
Set Charge	Average	Combat Engineering	Charge Readied
Set Radio Charge	Difficult	(Combat Engineering+Electronics)+2	Charge Readied
Improvise Radio Detonator	Difficult*	(Combat Engineering+Electronics)+2	Detonator Improvised

*Becomes Formidable without electronics tool set.

All that Glitters

By Andrew Borelli

During the German counterattack into Poland in 1997, the retreating 132nd Armored Task Force abandoned the town of Kartuzy. It left behind roughly \$750,000 in gold, plundered from the surrounding area and from a German tank division it had recently defeated. The gold was hidden under the town and, despite occupation by the Germans, Poles and then Americans, it was never discovered.

The Soviet tank unit that left the gold behind in 1997 is now a battered cavalry unit in 2000—and it wants the gold back. During recent antimarauder duties, the original CO was killed, but before he died, he revealed the story of the gold to a young officer. That officer has decided an attack on Kartuzy would serve a double purpose—the 132nd's sagging morale would be temporarily improved by defeating the Americans, and once the gold was found, every man in the unit would be rich, certainly making the morale problem moot.

The 41st has been encamped here since Thanksgiving of 1999, and it feels reasonably secure. But the attack comes at night during a storm, when the PCs are in Kartuzy.

The PCs are members of the 41st Light Mechanized Infantry, either by conscription or enlistment. The Soviets have been lightly shelling the town with mortars for two days. Now, on day three, they plan to attack. It has been also been raining for the past four days.

In addition to the 41st, the town is populated by 250 civilians, mostly farmers and their families.

SURPRISE ATTACK

The first wave of the attack comes when at least two of the PCs are on guard duty. In addition to the PCs, 10 other guards patrol the perimeter. Seven Veteran NPCs are armed with M16 rifles, and three Elite NPCs are armed with belt-fed M249 SAWs.

The shelling suddenly gets heavier at 1 a.m. Five minutes later, the guards encounter two patrols of 10 Soviet troops each, armed with AK-74 rifles and grenades. The troops are Veteran NPCs.

Two minutes into the battle, the alarm sounds, and the 41st begins to assemble, which takes five to seven minutes. There are 135 men armed with rifles, grenades and fighting knives.

The second wave of the attack hits two minutes after the alarm is sounded. The town is attacked by 150 Soviet troops, 90 of whom are on horseback. The Soviets attack all at the same time, but are broken up into groups of 10. They are supported by two BMP-2s each containing 20 rounds for the 30mm cannon and 200 rounds for the PK MGs. The AT-5s have not functioned in over a year.

One group of Soviets is a sapper platoon. It will take this group five minutes to destroy the eastern wall. Until the wall goes down, the platoons must send men over one at a time, covering them by firing over the wall.

Combat will be affected by night and rain as per the normal rules. Naturally, mass combat is hard to run in an adventure. Let the PCs get in a few good licks, but in the end, the 41st is destined to be defeated. The unit CO, Captain Sutherling, will order a retreat when the battle begins to go bad. The 41st will then escape to the south, via the main road. In the motor pool are three five-ton cargo trucks the unit can use to escape. There is also an LAV-75 which doesn't have any fuel, an LWB Land Rover with no tires and one operable "throw to-

gether" M94 five-ton gun truck (M901 version, as seen in **Challenge 55**). Even if no one thinks to use the trucks, Sutherling will order the last men out to destroy the motor pool, to deny the building and equipment left behind in it to the Soviets.

RETREAT

The remnants of the 41st will scatter into the woods about a mile from Kartuzy and remain there the rest of the night (roughly 75 men survived). Sutherling will order the men to encamp and ask some of the PCs with medical background to assist the wounded. He may also ask some of the outdoors experts (trackers, etc.) to help set up a temporary camp. At this time, the PCs will probably want to lick their wounds and work out what to do next. The survivors are pretty tattered and beaten. They are low on ammo to boot.

The Soviets, meanwhile, have marched back into Kartuzy and are scouring the town for the gold. They're also throwing one hell of a celebration at the same time. The sounds coming from the town are rowdy, drunken, and wild. The 41st can smell something roasting as well. The civilians who live here are staying indoors.

At 2200 hours that same evening, the Soviets send a patrol out to make sure the 41st is long gone. The encamped 41st will be attacked by 30 Veteran troops (who don't realize they're outnumbered) at 2220. The patrol is well armed and fed, but slightly drunk. Unless the dice rolls are incredibly unlucky, the angered men of the 41st will mop this bunch up pretty quickly. At the referee's discretion, patrol members who survive may tell the story of the gold.

BURIED TREASURE

Ironically, the gold is hidden under the ruins of the motor pool. It's packed into five large chests which were placed in an empty aviation fuel tank under the building. Some "renovations" done by the Germans when they occupied Kartuzy cut the tank off from surface access, but the explosion and fire caused when the motor pool was destroyed has blown open the sheets of metal that were blocking the tank hatch in the floor. It would require a Difficult: Observation roll to find the opening and an Average: Intelligence roll to identify it.

They've been shelling us with mortar fire for two days now. I don't know why mortar fire still rattles me. After four years, you'd think I'd get used to it.

We're the remnants of the 41st Light Mechanized Infantry, all packed into a small town near Gdansk. That's all this "base" really is—a small farming town we "acquired." Rumor is it's named after Captain Sutherling's favorite actor, but I don't care. Between the nonstop rain and the sudden interest Ivan's taken in this town, all I can think about lately is going home.

**Firebase Nicholson,
Poland, Fall 2000**



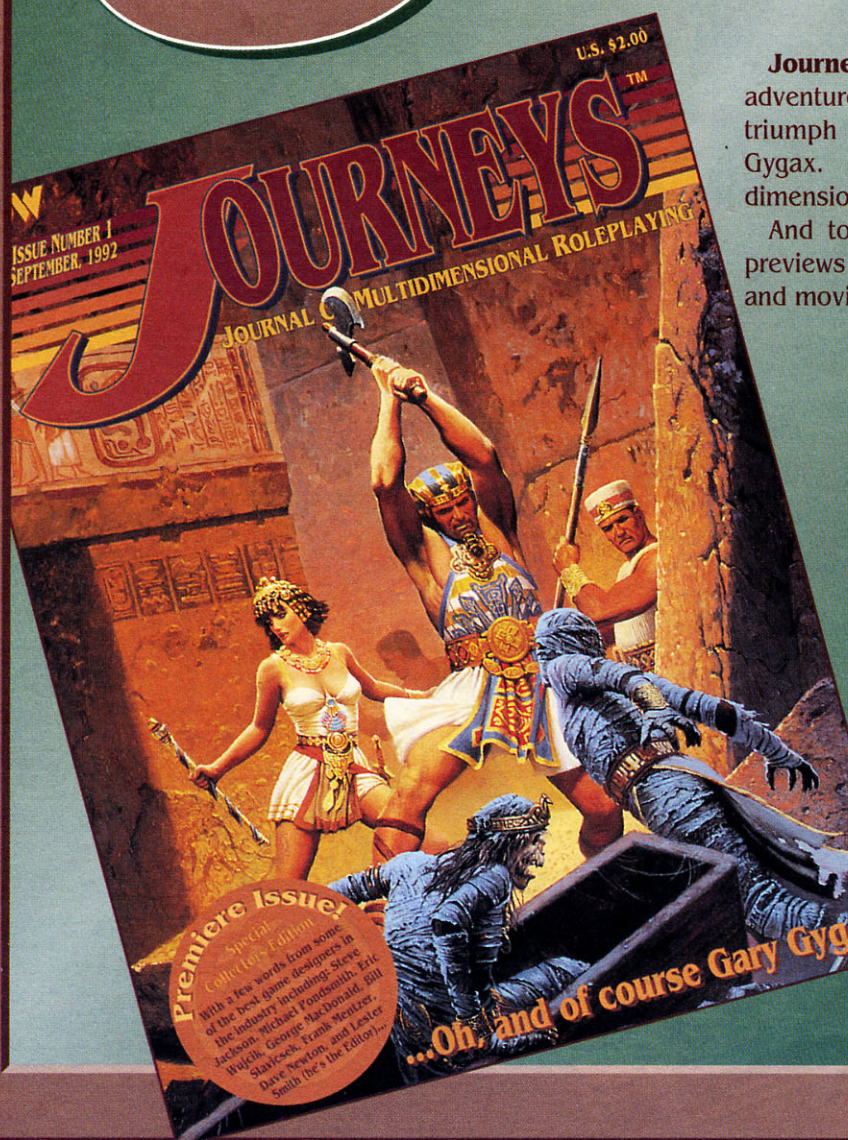
RICK
HARRIS
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RECON

At 2300 the town becomes quiet, and Sutherling decides it's time to move (if a prisoner spills the story about the gold, Sutherling decides to move immediately after the battle, and the 41st is greatly motivated). The PCs are "asked" to join five other men to recon the town. Some of the PCs may opt to steal Soviet uniforms and patrol around, which requires a Difficult: Disguise roll (and a working knowledge of Russian).

Of the 150-man Soviet unit, 90 survived the battle. Twenty are with the 132nd's commander searching for the gold, and 65 are sleeping.

There are also civilians here, although none remain outdoors, but if the characters startle any civilians, some Easy: Persuasion rolls are in order to keep them quiet. All in all, civilians are friendly and probably remember a few faces from the 41st (since that unit spent nearly a year in Kartuzy).

The five Russian sentries, all Veteran NPCs, roam around at random. Avoiding detection by a sentry requires an Average: Stealth or Difficult: Agility roll. If a PC is forced to kill or knock out a sentry, the disabled soldier will be discovered within 10 minutes (unless well hidden), and the alarm will be sounded. If any weapons are fired, the alert is sounded immediately.

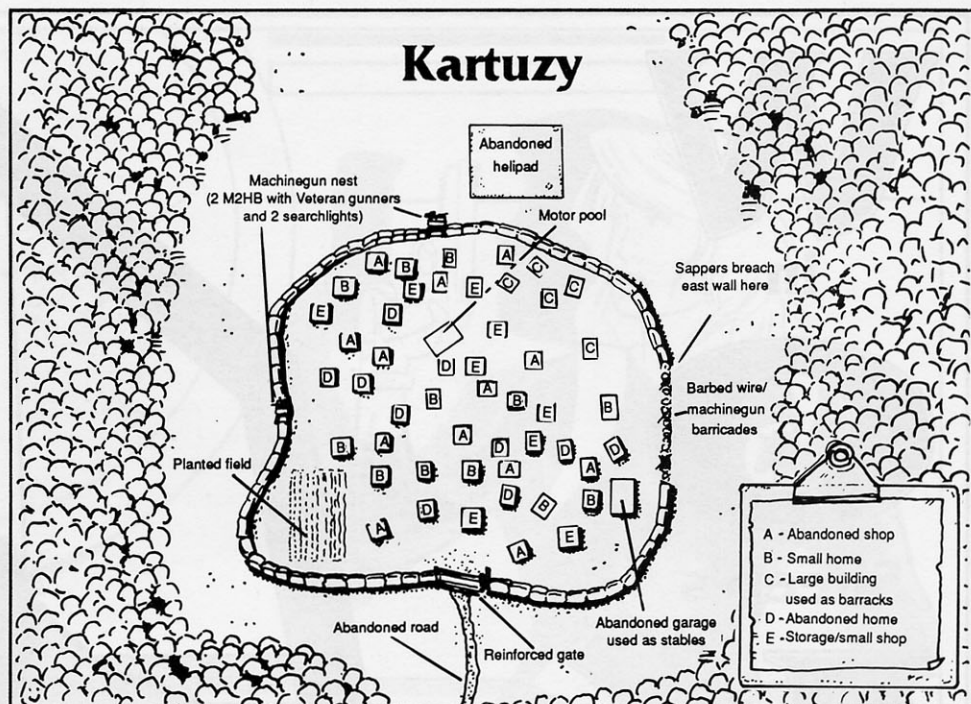
The Russian team looking for the gold breaks into building after building, searching everything thoroughly but finding nothing. The CO is getting impatient, and the team members haven't slept since before the attack, so they're in an evil mood. They are all Elite NPCs.

The recon group should select a point outside the town to regroup after the recon is complete. When everyone is assembled, the team reports back to camp. If the recon team is followed, a battle will take place with the Soviets in hot pursuit, and the camp will be destroyed.

COUNTERATTACK

Assuming the recon team is able to report back to Sutherling without a hitch, Sutherling will ponder the information for a bit before deciding that the time is right for a counterattack. If the gold has been found, it's his first objective. The 41st will mount up and move out at 0300 hours. At 0345, the group reaches Kartuzy, now silent and still. The rain is still pouring heavily.

Sutherling's plan is this: First, any vehicles with working weapons will open fire on the town. Exactly 10 seconds later, elements of the 41st (about 45 men) will attack the hole in the southern



wall and punch through the flimsy repairs the 132nd made. The remainder of the unit will go over the western wall and start doing damage. A major objective will be to destroy the buildings being used as barracks and eliminate as many bad guys as possible before they can assemble. A secondary objective is to stampede the horses, negating the 132nd's cavalry advantage.

At this point, some civilians armed with hunting rifles and shotguns may help the 41st. Although they're Poles and would prefer a Polish Army to occupy the town, Sutherling has been a good commander, and the men have always kept things in line.

If the alarm has been sounded previously, the Soviets are on the alert and awaiting the 41st's attack. This will make the battle much more difficult, because the unit is already assembled.

RESOLUTION

Without some heroics on the part of the PCs, the 41st is eventually defeated, and the survivors scatter without gaining a penny.

If the 41st wins, the 132nd scatters into the night, and the civilian population turns out to celebrate (unless Kartuzy is totally destroyed in the process). If the 41st already knows about the gold, then a massive scavenger hunt begins. If not, a Soviet prisoner tells the tale with an Average: Interrogation roll. It will take some cleverness on the part of the PCs to find the gold, but if they're stuck, some men of the 41st can help out.

The gold will be divided as follows: Captain Sutherling retains 30%, the PCs

(or whoever finds the gold) retain 10%, and the men of the 41st collectively retain 30%. The remaining 30% goes to the people of Kartuzy.

CAPTAIN RICHARD SUTHERLING

Sutherling is the CO of the 41st. He graduated from Penn State in 1994 and entered OCS. He opted for artillery, spending two years learning how to effectively lead an artillery battery. He served in heavy combat, shoring up the German lines in 1996, and was present at the siege of Warsaw in 1997. Being a competent leader, Sutherling was transferred to the 41st when the CO was killed while the unit was trapped in a pocket near Gdansk. The pocket was smashed, and Sutherling has served as the CO since.

Initiative: 3
Strength: 6
Heavy Weapons: 4
Melee (Armed): 1
Melee (Unarmed): 3
Small Arms (Pistol): 2
Small Arms (Rifle): 2
Thrown Weapon: 2
Education: 8
Constitution: 5
Horsemanship: 2
Swimming: 1
Leadership: 3
Agility: 4
Small Boat: 2
Warhead: 2
Fishing: 2
Intelligence: 7
Forward Observer: 1
Navigate: 1 Ω

W in O Sheep's L Clothing F

By James Mallszewski

Humanity and the Vargr have long had a tempestuous interstellar relationship. After centuries of bitter race wars, however, inter-species cooperation appeared to be at an all-time high. Governments like the Julian Protectorate and, more recently, the League of Antares, capitalized on the newfound friendship between humans and Vargr. For a brief moment in interstellar history, it seemed as if ignorance and racism had been defeated. Unfortunately, the Hard Times have changed all that. Economic collapse and technological decline have reignited old hatreds. As agents of the Antarean intelligence





agency Trasilon, the player characters learn that more than a few groups within Antarean space are taking advantage of this resurgence of xenophobia for their own self-serving ends.

REFEREE CONSIDERATIONS

This scenario takes place on Ansenz (Antares 2425B547BB-D), a world just within the safe area of the League of Antares. Ansenz is the capital of the League of Antares semi-autonomous region, which today is known unofficially as the "Federation of Antares" since the name League of Antares is also used to indicate all worlds under the rule of Brzk. Roughly 5% of Ansenz's 40 billion inhabitants are Ovaghoun Vargr.

OLD HATREDS DIE HARD

The PCs begin when they are called into a local Trasilon agency safe house to be debriefed. Their superior, Captain Matlin Gies, will inform them that Trasilon has learned, through its contacts at the Ministry of Sophont Affairs, that racial violence against Vargr within league space is on the rise. Numerous incidents have been reported on many worlds within the last six months. Organized hate groups have sprung up throughout the sector.

The minister of sophont affairs cites the recession of the Imperial economy as a major factor behind these incidents. The severing of all ties with the Imperium and the alliances with Vargr corsairs are unpopular with some citizens. Finally, Brzk's renunciation of the archducal title and the adoption of the Julian-style title of regent is seen as final "proof" of where Brzk's true loyalties lie.

The high-population world of Ansenz seems to have the largest and most well organized hate groups. A number of prominent Vargr business people have been harassed. An attempt has even been made on the life of one. Trasilon wants the PCs to go to Ansenz and look into these incidents carefully. Perhaps they might learn something which Trasilon and other law enforcement bureaus can use to shut them down and prevent their stirring up more racial unrest.

ANSENZ

Ansenz is a pleasant world with a warm sun and a breathable atmosphere tainted by pollutants from the world's industries. Thus, a filter mask must be worn when outside. The world's largest arcology, Balaanishad, has over 8 billion inhabitants, and its starport is the main one on Ansenz. The PCs will begin

their investigation in Balaanishad. Trasilon has supplied the PCs with a list of names and addresses of the Vargr business people harassed by the hate groups. In addition, the PCs have a dossier on the corporations they represent and the types of business they do. Maybe this information could give the PCs an edge in understanding the particular motivations behind singling out of these Vargr instead of others.

VARGR BUSINESSES

In all, five prominent Vargr business executives have been harassed. One of these has even been physically attacked. The Vargr and their businesses are:

- Aekhoeghour, who works for Kedu-zak Trading, a firm active in shipping to worlds controlled by the Antares Pact corsair bands.

- Dhouluksue, who operates the local branch office of the Julian Menderes Corporation. Menderes is known to be very active within the Vargr Extents and is now welcome within league space by Regent Brzk.

- Ghaghzoe Thaerrgh, who runs Gvaekakuz Lines, a star travel corporation dedicated to settling more Vargr from the Vargr Extents in league space.

- Ksaenaekthadh, an executive at Khaeloellsaeth ("Red Sun Trading" in an Ovaghoun Vargr dialect), the largest interface corporation between the League of Antares and the Julian Protectorate.

- Rroursaets, who owns and runs a small computer software company. This company, Crim-sun Designs, specializes in personal accounting and other home-use software programs.

The first four business people listed are the ones the hate groups merely harassed. Rroursaets is the one they physically attacked and tried to murder. Luckily, he was able to defend himself and escaped from his attacker unscathed.

FOLLOWING LEADS

Naturally, the PCs may wish to follow up on these incidents. The first four Vargr are all highly placed with their respective corporations, and it may take some time before they are readily available for questioning, even by agents of Trasilon. When they are available, they will explain that they were simply harassed. They received threatening vidphone calls, found racist graffiti on their vehicles and the like. Never were they physically attacked, nor did they feel as if their lives were really in danger. As high-level executives, this sort of

harassment comes with the territory. If it is not human racists, then it is environmentalists or consumer advocacy groups. Everyone has some complaint against big business, and each finds a different way of venting his anger.

In general, these Vargr are very nonchalant about the incidents. They understandably dislike the inconveniences caused by them, but they are not especially worried about them either. Fringe organizations and crackpots are a common occurrence in Antares sector, and the Rebellion and resultant Hard Times have only exacerbated the problem. Given time, these hate groups will die out like so many others before them. The league government should not be concerned.

RROURSSETS

The PCs may also want to visit Rroursaets. This middle-aged Vargr lives not far from his place of business in the not-very-fashionable Vargr quarter of Balaanishad. The Vargr quarter is basically a ghetto where lower-income Vargr live together in their own neighborhoods. (The other Vargr business people the PCs met lived in posh areas as befitted someone of their standing.)

Rroursaets is initially reluctant to speak with the PCs. He fears the hate groups and worries that he might incur further reprisals if he talks with authorities. He has never sought a police investigation of the incident, and he sees no reason to change that now. He would prefer that the PCs leave him alone and not ask any questions.

If the PCs are persistent, however, or let him know that they work for Trasilon, he will talk with them for a while. Rroursaets looks tired and battle-scarred; he has several scars on various parts of his body. He explains that he received these while serving a stint in the Imperial Marines fighting against corsairs and pirates. He later settled on Ansenz after travelling for a few years and decided to open a small business. Computer programming had always been a hobby of his, and he thought it wise to put his interest to good use.

Rroursaets does not understand why he was attacked a few weeks ago in an alley by a gun-wielding human. His company is small and does no business with either the Vargr Extents or the Julians. He keeps to himself and does not get involved in politics. All in all, he just wishes to be left alone in his retirement and run his business in peace.

Rroursaets explains that he defeated the gunman with the brawling skill he acquired in the marines. The gunman

dropped his weapon, a body pistol, and fled. Rroursaets left the weapon in the alley. The only thing he did recover from the fight was a pamphlet which the attacker dropped during the brawl. Rroursaets still has this pamphlet and shows it to the PCs.

The pamphlet is from Superioriti, one of the largest hate groups. Superioriti has chapters on many league worlds and even fields political candidates on several. The pamphlet announces an upcoming rally to be held near the Julian war memorial. The high point of the rally is to be a speech by Leonhard Deirdin, founder of Superioriti and a descendant of Glazdon Deirdin, the archduke of Antares whom Brzk's ancestor replaced after the civil war. Deirdin is well known as a paranoid racist who questions Regent Brzk's legitimacy to rule the predominantly human League of Antares. Deirdin also advocates reunification with Lucan's Imperium.

Rroursaets never showed this pamphlet to the police because he did not want trouble. He thinks that maybe his judgment was incorrect. He just wants to be left alone, and if, by revealing this information, he can achieve that goal, he would be happy. That is all Rroursaets knows, and he refuses to answer any more questions. He advises the PCs to do what they must, but to leave him out of their investigations.

Should the PCs return to Rroursaets' home after their initial meeting, they will find that he is not there. Neither is he at his workplace. No one knows where he may have gone, although they do say that he is given to disappearing unexpectedly for short periods of time. His actions are nothing unusual.

AID FROM TRASILON

The PCs may at some point seek information from the local Trasilon safe house in their investigation. Trasilon's library data network can provide them with some information, but not immediately. The PCs will have to put in a request for the desired information and return to the safe house within a few hours—other assignments have a higher priority than the PCs' investigation.

Of course, even Trasilon's aid has limits. The referee should use common sense in dispensing information to the PCs. As far as this adventure is concerned, however, there is one piece of information to which even Trasilon has no access and which the PCs, therefore, cannot gain. This is any but the most recent information about Rroursaets. Except for the basic information which the PCs already possess,

Rroursaets is an unknown quantity whose date or place of birth is a mystery, let alone anything else. He is "zeroed," as computer experts say. No records exist of him on any computer network.

LAW ENFORCEMENT BUREAU

The PCs might also check with local law enforcers to find out a few things. Concerning Superioriti, the police will state that they keep a close eye on them. The organization officially disavows violence and tries hard to appear clean. The police do not buy this line, but they have no proof of wrong-doing as of yet. None of the recent rash of incidents can be linked to Superioriti, and the one reported attack (against Rroursaets) has not been formally filed as a complaint against them. The police can direct the PCs to the local chapter of Superioriti, though.

If the PCs remember to ask about the body pistol used by the gunman who attacked Rroursaets, they will gain a surprising piece of information. The police did indeed find a body pistol in the Vargr quarter recently. It was found in an alley and turned in by the residents of the area. No crime or owner can be definitely attached to it. Nonetheless, an interesting fact about the pistol is that it is not made from a recognized Imperial standard design package. Rather, the pistol is of Julian manufacture.

SUPERIORITI

The PCs will find the local chapter of Superioriti in an industrialized section of Balaanishad. The organization appeals to working-class humans who feel that the Hard Times which have befallen the sector are due to Vargr influences on the government. They nostalgically wish to return to the days of Imperial rule, and some even wish to reunify with Lucan's Imperium.

The offices are clean and well-kept. A number of secretaries and assistants answer vidphone calls and send out mailings to citizens of Ansenz. Posters of Leonhard Deirdin are everywhere, as are pamphlets like the one Rroursaets showed the PCs.

A young man named Euclid Ozgood will approach the PCs once they enter and ask if they want to be enlightened about Superioriti and its crusade to save Antares. If they say yes, he will launch into a tirade against the Vargr and Brzk, blaming them for all of humanity's ills. If the PCs ask to see someone in authority, Ozgood will state that his boss, Sir Zigmunt Phidias, cannot be seen right now. He has much planning to do for the upcoming rally. Anything the PCs need,

he can provide.

If the PCs question Ozgood about Superioriti's connection to the recent harassment or even Rroursaets' attack, he will deny everything. Ozgood will state the party line that violence is never advocated. He will say the PCs are just as prejudiced against Superioriti as he supposedly is against the Vargr. If the PCs want to know the truth, not the lies that "Regent" Brzk tells, they should come to the rally tomorrow. Leonhard Deirdin will set the record straight once and for all. Ozgood then asks them to leave.

RALLY

Superioriti's rally takes place at midday near the Julian war memorial. The memorial honors both Imperial and Julian dead from that war and has an inscription wishing that "never again will such a terrible war result from such terrible misunderstandings." The memorial offers hope that the Antareans and Julians may live together in peace. Superioriti sees any admission of Imperial error in the war to be a sign of just how far Brzk has drifted from all that is right and true.

The rally is small by Rebellion standards, only a few hundred humans. Eventually, Deirdin makes his appearance. He is a handsome and charismatic figure, and he speaks eloquently. He repeats much of the same rhetoric as did Ozgood at the chapter offices, but he says it with much greater vigor and oratorical skill. The PCs can see how easy it would be for even an educated human to be caught up in his paranoid delusions. Deirdin makes racism seem almost reasonable.

As Deirdin's polemic reaches a crescendo, the PCs will realize that they are surrounded by a half-dozen humans dressed as security guards. They have their laser pistols drawn and will silently motion the PCs into a small tent set up on the memorial grounds. Inside, one of them, a red-haired woman, will explain quietly that the PCs are meddling in things best left alone. Since they obviously will not desist, they must be eliminated.

The six humans all wear cloth armor and carry TL13 laser pistols. They mean to kill the PCs and will fight to the death. The small tent the PCs are in does not afford much space for combat, so it is likely that the battle will move out into the rally. This will cause much chaos, and the rally will be disrupted. Within minutes, local police keeping an eye on the rally will come in and restore order. As agents of Trasilon, the PCs are out-

side of local jurisdiction and cannot be arrested. Besides, the police know the PCs are involved in an official investigation for the League of Antares government.

AFTERMATH

With their attackers defeated, the PCs will now gain some new information. If the red-haired woman is killed in the fight, they will find on her body a scrap of paper with Rroursaets' address on it. Also, even more startling is the tattoo on the body of one of the attackers. The tattoo is in the shape of a stylized black lightning bolt, the recognized sigil of the Black Lightning terrorist organization which violently opposes the Antarean/Julian alliance.

Black Lightning is connected to numerous acts of terrorism in league and Julian space.

Superioriti is extremely upset about the disruption of its rally. They deny any knowledge of the attackers and claim instead that the whole incident was engineered by Trasilon to make them look bad. Deirdin even begins to claim that Regent Brzk hired assassins to have him killed.

THE TRUTH COMES OUT

With all of this new information, the PCs must return to Rroursaets' home eventually. This time, he is home. When the PCs arrive, he will willingly let them in and ask them to sit down.

He knows about what happened at the the rally and is ready to tell the PCs everything.

Rroursaets admits that he once was a member of the Black Lightning terrorist group. He and his fellows operated out of Julian space and wrought havoc against Antarean and Julian alike. In time, though, he grew tired of killing and destruction. He came to respect Brzk and to believe that peaceful coexistence was possible. So he fled his band and set up shop in the league's safe area.

Black Lightning could not allow one of its own to defect alive. They followed him to Ansenz and have been trying to kill him. Most likely, they have been using Superioriti and other hate groups as a cover.

Rroursaets agrees that what he did was wrong. He should have come clean. He should have trusted in Antarean officials. He will now turn himself in and tell all he knows about Black Lightning and its operations. In return, he only wants protection. Trasilon will gladly do this, but first it needs to track down the remaining terrorists on Ansenz.

LIGHTNING STRIKES

At this point, a gunshot bursts through Rroursaets' window. Eight Black Lightning terrorists, armed with autorifles, are converging on his house, hoping to kill Rroursaets and the PCs.

Waiting outside is a wheeled ATV containing a driver. The terrorists want to kill their prey quickly and escape in the ATV.

As is usual for the Black Lightning members, these thugs will fight to the death rather than surrender to Trasilon. Rroursaets will help the PCs fight off the attackers, using a laser pistol he kept hidden in a desk.

The terrorists are excellent fighters, but they lack organization and are often at cross-purposes. The PCs and Rroursaets should have little difficulty in defeating them.

Once the driver of the ATV realizes that the terrorists have been defeated, he drives off. If the PCs cannot follow the vehicle, Rroursaets can offer guidance based on his previous experience with Black Lightning. In order to simplify operations, they were always looking for local front organizations, and he is sure they are trying to cut a deal with Superioriti. Rroursaets suggests that the PCs head back to the offices if they are to stop Black Lightning's operations on Ansenz. Rroursaets offers to come with the PCs to their showdown.

SHOWDOWN

When the PCs return to the branch offices of Superioriti, they will see the wheeled ATV in front. The office seems to be empty. The front door is locked, but it takes hardly any effort by the PCs to break in. Besides, Rroursaets is an accomplished lock-picker.

If the PCs enter, they will be immediately confronted by Euclid Ozgood, who asks them to leave now. He scowls visibly at Rroursaets. If told about Black Lightning's attack, he will deny everything. In truth, he knows nothing about it. Sir Zigmunt Phidias has been meeting with some off-world supporters of Superioriti, but they are not terrorists, he claims. He is meeting with them now in the back of the office.

Should the PCs burst into the back room, they will surprise Sir Zigmunt and five other humans. Rroursaets immediately recognizes them as former colleagues in a Black Lightning terrorist cell. Ozgood is shocked by this. He never knew that Superioriti had any connections to Black Lightning.

If the PCs try to apprehend the terrorists or Phidias, a gun battle will ensue.

All six enemies possess autopistols, and the terrorists wear cloth armor. All but Phidias will fight to the death. He will surrender as soon as he is wounded or the battle appears to be going against the terrorists.

ENDGAME

With the the terrorists defeated, the PCs have completed their mission. The rash of harassment stops, at least temporarily, and Rroursaets has been saved from Black Lightning's clutches. Sir Zigmunt Phidias is charged with conspiracy and treason against the league government. He is sent to a penal colony for many years. Superioriti suffers a minor set-back due to the bad publicity of being associated with Black Lightning. Of course, hate springs eternal, and they are soon back in business, with Euclid Ozgood as their new local leader. He wishes to return to the "pure beliefs of Deirdin" and not to consort with terrorists and the like. As he rightly claims, only Phidias, in his bid for greater power, associated with Black Lightning. They used his organization for their own ends. Deirdin and Superioriti had nothing to do with them.

Rroursaets' knowledge of Black Lightning is invaluable to Trasilon. Several new plots are foiled. While things are far from stable in the League of Antares during these Hard Times, the PCs can be content to know that they contributed in some small way to the prevention of any further instability. Thanks to them, the League of Antares will continue for at least a little while longer.

NPCs

Rroursaets: 797885, age 46, ex-corsair. *Skills:* Infighting-2, Computer-3, Intrusion-2, Handgun-1, Ship's Boat-1, VaccSuit-1, Scrounging-2, Gambling-1, Brawling-2.

Euclid Ozgood: 565877, age 30, bureaucrat. *Skills:* Admin-3, Computer-2, Liaison-2, Persuasion-1.

Sir Zigmunt Phidias: 88997B, age 42, ex-naval officer. *Skills:* Admin-2, Computer-1, Handgun-2, Liaison-2, Ship's Boat-1, Pilot-1, VaccSuit-1, Zero-G, Ops-2, Persuasion-2.

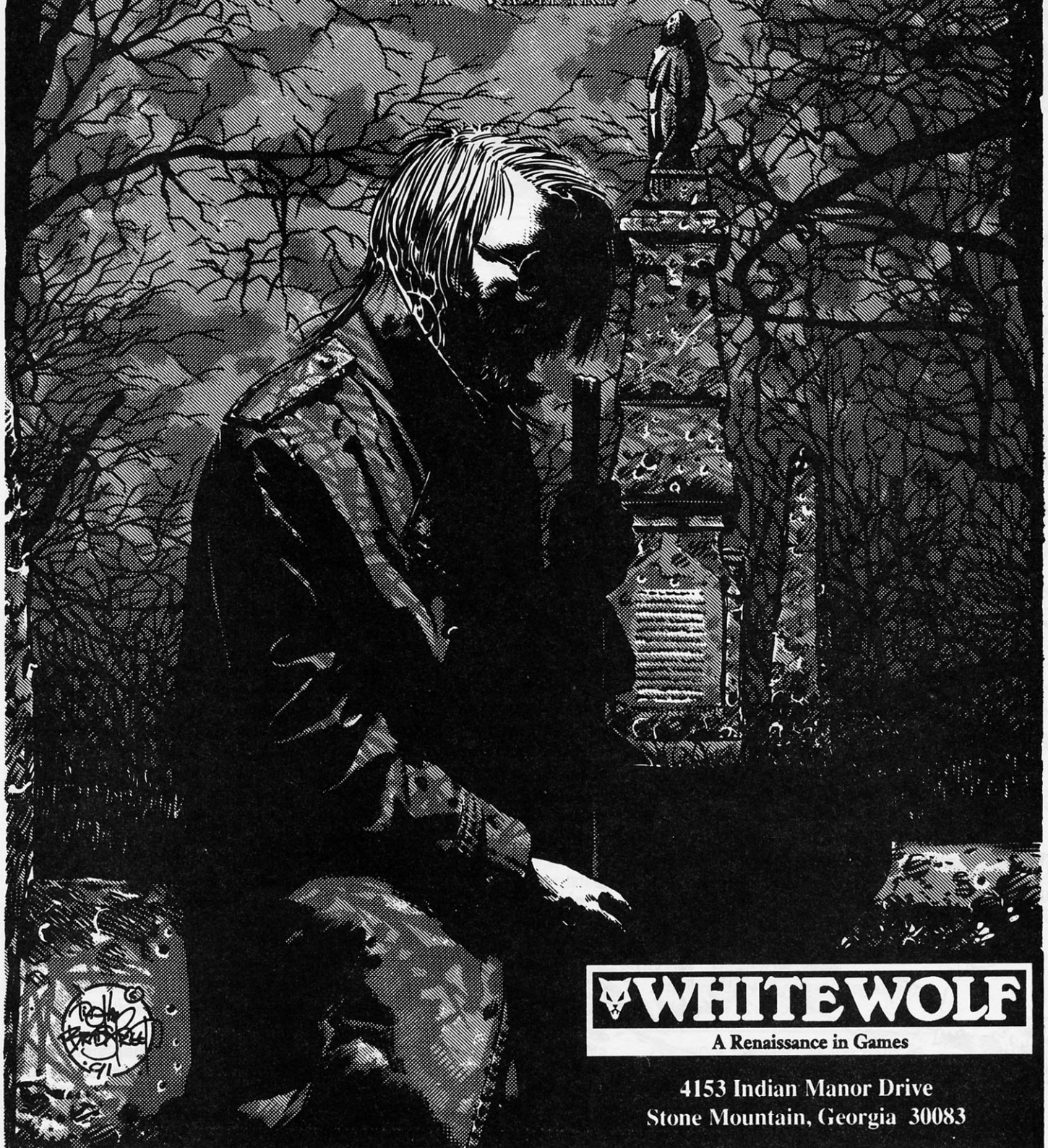
Leonhard Deirdin: 778BBA, age 42, paranoid racist. *Skills:* Linguistics-2, Admin-1, Liaison-3, Persuasion-3, Interrogation-2.

Black Lightning Terrorists: 879777. *Skills:* Brawling-2, Handgun-1, Combat Rifleman-2, Wheeled Vehicle-1. Ω

Special thanks to Charles Kimball and the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG).

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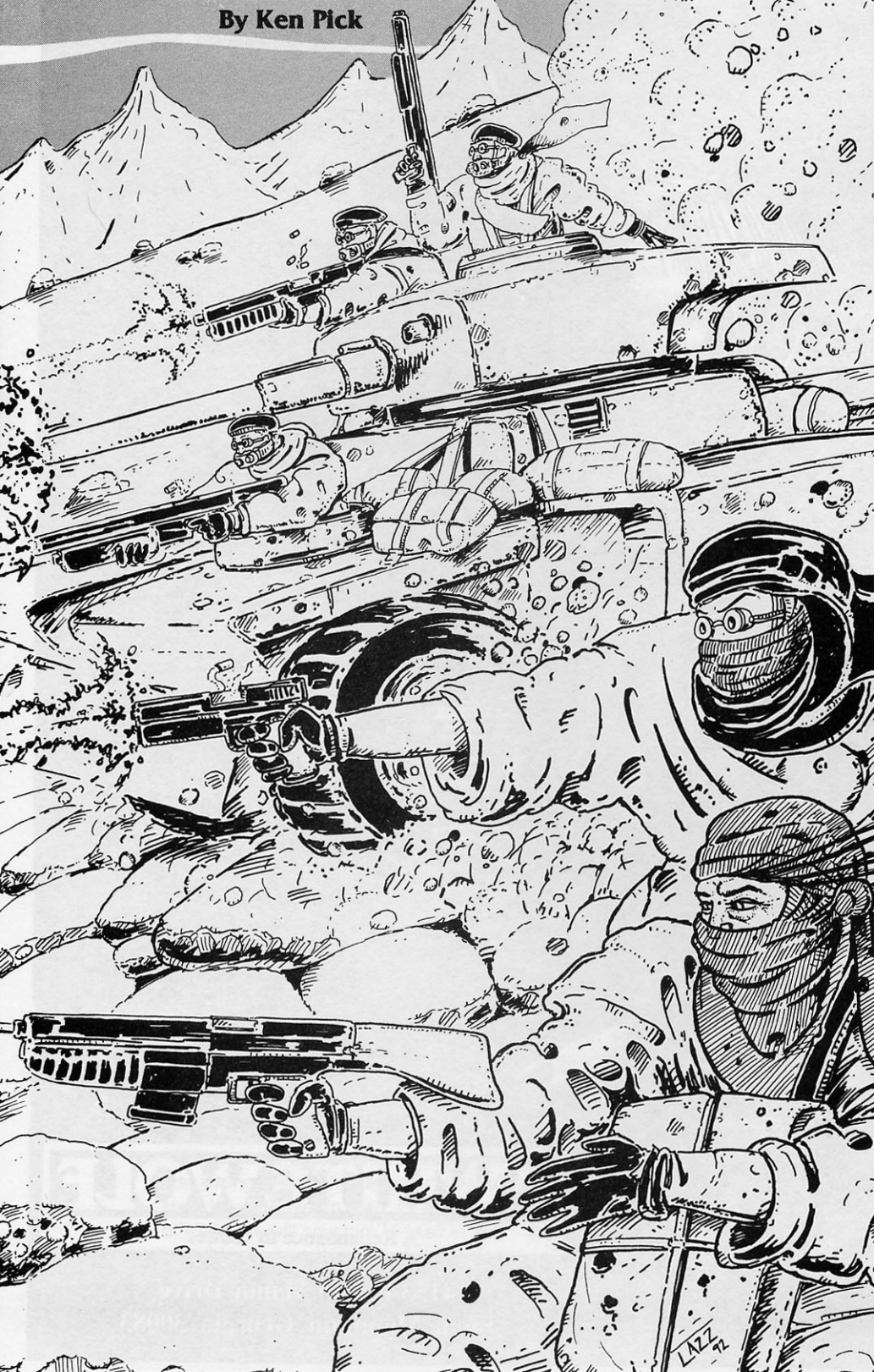
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PERSONAL WEAPONS

By Ken Pick



The firearms lists in **MegaTraveller** show a distinct evolution of the basic service rifle by tech level, from the TL5 bolt-action rifle to the TL6 semiautomatic rifle to the TL7 assault rifle to the TL10ACR

and TL12 gauss rifle. Pistols also show a clear evolutionary path from the TL4 revolver through the TL6 autopistol and the TL10 snub pistols to the TL13 gauss pistol. So do grenade launchers, from the original TL7 "blooper" through the various tech levels of RAM grenades.

The evolution of other types of small arms, however, is spotty at best. Some types of weapons are known only from single examples, with no data about any precursors or descendants, such as the TL6 submachinegun and shotgun and the TL8 light assault gun. Also, the introduction of battle dress at TL13 allows individuals to carry heavier loads, including weapons able to penetrate other suits of battle dress. Under the existing firearms lists, only expensive high-energy weapons (PGMP and FGMP series) are available for issue to such troops.

Another under-represented type is that of civilian firearms with no exact military or paramilitary equivalent. Inexpensive light firearms (equivalent to the .22) are widely used for general recreational shooting ("plinking") or small-game "pot hunting." These civilian-only weapons are often found on higher law-level worlds which interpret Law Level 3 (banning "weapons of a strictly military nature") to include civilian firearms which are based on, converted from or resemble military designs.

The following weapons provide the "missing links" in the evolution of slugthrowers up through TL13, allowing a natural upgrade of military small arms from TL6-13 and an additional selection of civilian firearms to "beat the law level."

On all these weapons, volume in liters equals weight in kilograms.

5mm Pocket Pistol: A very light civilian autopistol chambered for a minimal-power practice round; primarily for inexpensive recreational shooting ("plinking") and hunting very small game. Based on a typical .22 autopistol, such as the Browning Buckmark.

TL6, 0.1 meter, 0.5 kilogram, Cr150.
Magazine (12 rounds): 0.1 kilogram, Cr5.

9mm Magnum Autopistol: A heavy autopistol chambered for the more powerful 9mm round used in the Magnum revolver. Also known as an "automag," it is primarily a police sidearm intended to

Slugthrower Personal Weapons

Weapon	Ammo Notes	Rds	Pen/Atten	Dmg	Max Range	Autofire Targets	Danger Space	Signature	Recoil
5mm pocket autopistol	—	12	0/—	3	Medium	—	—	Low	Low
9mm Magnum autopistol	—	8	3/2	3	Long	—	—	Med	Med/R
10mm snubmachinegun	HE	40	1/—	4	Long	2	1.5	Med	Med/R
	HEAP		6/2	4	Long	2	1.5	Med	Med/R
	Tranq		1/2	1	Long	2	1.5	Med	Med/R
	Gas		—	1	Long	2	1.5	Med	Med/R
5mm light "plinker" rifle	—	10	1/2	2	Long	—	—	Low	Low/R
5mm light automatic rifle	—	100	1/2	2	Long	2	—	Med	Low/R
13mm antitank rifle	—	5	6/3	3	VLong	—	—	Hi	Hi
20mm light assault gun-10	HE	10	4/—	4	VLong	—	1.5	Med	Hi
	KEAP		10/3	4	VLong	—	1.5	Med	Hi
	Flech		3/3	2	Long	—	30	Med	Hi
4mm gauss light assault gun-13	—	40	14/4	4	Dist	3	—	Low	Med/R

The autopistols and snubmachinegun use Handgun skill and difficulty; the light rifles and antitank rifle use Rifle skill and difficulty; the light assault guns use Rifle skill and difficulty and are gyro stabilized.

penetrate ballistic cloth armor. Based on the IMI Desert Eagle pistol.

TL7, 0.3 meter, 1.0 kilogram, Cr400.

Magazine (8 rounds): 0.4 kilogram, Cr15.

10mm Snubmachinegun: A sub-machinegun companion to the combat snub pistol, combining automatic fire with the versatility and nonlethal (tranq) capability of the snub pistol. Replaces the SMG at TL10. Often used as a "heavy weapon" by shipboard security and a "bailout" personal defense weapon by vehicle crews. A pistol-styled SMG, the SnMG may mount a silencer and can "tank up" from 20-round snub pistol magazines as well as its own 40-round magazines; both the ammunition and magazines are interchangeable with those of the combat snub pistol. In all other ways, the SnMG is functionally identical with the TL6 SMG.

TL10, 0.4 meter, 2.0 kilograms, Cr800.

Magazine (40 rounds): 1 kilogram, Cr40 HE/HEAP.

5mm "Plinker" Light Rifle: Very light civilian rifle for recreational shooting and very small game. The basic version is TL6 and is based on a typical .22 rifle such as the Ruger 10-22.

TL6, 0.8 meter, 2.5 kilograms, Cr150.

5mm Ammunition (10-round magazine): 0.08 kilograms, Cr5.

5mm Light Automatic Rifle: A higher-tech (TL8) version of the "plinker," incorporating a special high-capacity, helical-feed magazine fitted into the top of the weapon. This rifle is based on the Calico M-100 .22 carbine. Where law level allows light assault weapons, a selective-fire model can be obtained which fires a 10-round burst for each pull of the trigger; these light automatic rifles are often used by TL8-9 urban

police and shipboard security forces.

TL8, 0.7 meter, 2.5 kilograms, Cr300.

5mm Ammunition (100-round magazine): 1 kilogram, Cr50.

13mm Antitank Rifle: The TL6 predecessor of the TL8 light assault gun, the antitank rifle fires the same ammunition as the TL6 heavy machinegun. Its primary use was as a support weapon (fired from its integral bipod) against lightly armored vehicles or as a heavy sniper rifle; in civilian hands, it made a good (if heavy) big-game rifle.

TL6, 1.6 meters, 7.5 kilograms, Cr1000.

13mm Ammunition (5-round magazine): 0.4 kilogram, Cr15.

Light Assault Gun-10: Progressive improvement of the TL8 light assault gun, incorporating the electronic sights and stabilization systems of the ACR. Replaces the LAG at TL10; also a good big-game rifle in civilian hands. Normally fired from its bipod.

TL10, 0.9 meter, 4.5 kilograms, Cr1200.

20mm Ammunition (10-round magazine): 1.0 kilogram, Cr40 HE/KEAP, Cr80 flechette.

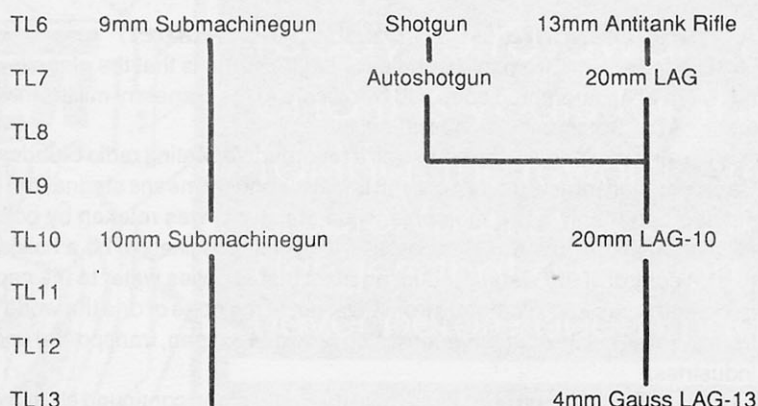
4mm Gauss Light Assault Gun-13: An enlarged gauss rifle intended to be carried by troops in battle dress, with twice the muzzle velocity and four times the weight. Primarily used at TL13-14 as an inexpensive rifle for battle dress. Also used by nonpowered troops as a replacement for the LAG-10, normally fired from its bipod.

TL13, 1.2 meters, 14 kilograms, Cr6000.

Ammunition (40-round magazine): 1.5 kilograms, Cr150. Ω

For more on filling in the gaps in *MegaTraveller*, see "Missing Links" in *Challenge 64* and "Advanced Weapons" in *Challenge 66*, both by Ken Pick.

Evolutionary Cladogram



Ansenz/Antares (2425 B547ABB-D/Green)**Date: 337-1128**

¶The disturbing trend of what appears to be racially motivated hate crimes against Vargr citizens continues on Ansenz. Vargr-owned businesses and homes are increasingly disfigured by broken windows or graffiti, insulting remarks are shouted in the streets, and now prominent Vargr business executives are being harassed.

¶These developments are being called by some sociologists as "an inevitable by-product of difficult economic times." A faculty member at a prominent Ansenz university explained, "It happens all the time. When things are bad, the masses want to find someone to blame. It's a sad characteristic of the lower classes, but ultimately it's harmless."

¶One of the chief actors in this movement is the group "Superioriti," whose members hasten to point out that they are *not* a hate group. Spokesman Euclid Ozgood explains, "We don't hate anyone, we don't preach that anyone should hate anyone. But the simple fact is that some groups are not intended to live with other groups. That's no call to arms, it's a simple fact. It's natural that social, religious, spiritual, or biological groups will be more comfortable with those of their own kind. When two groups are forced to live together, it doesn't work. They have different beliefs, different values, and these come into conflict and destroy the common atmosphere for both sides. The Vargr would be happier if they could live someplace by themselves, and so would we in Superioriti."

¶Although it is not usual TAS policy to comment on pending changes in Travel Zone status, the TAS has announced that it is considering changing Ansenz's classification to Amber, due to the recent racial difficulties, and issued the following statement.

¶"There is a concept, known to some as "humanity"—distinct from humaniti, the race—that refers to those qualities of intelligent, sentient beings that lend them a certain ethical value. Among these qualities are decency, compassion, empathy, and a willingness to attribute value to the lives of other beings. Beings with those qualities have an innate, *a priori* value, apart from all other physical manifestations. Intelligent beings without those qualities are more easily equated with simple biological machines, merely consuming raw materials to survive or entertain themselves. However, it is another trait of "humanity" that one being cannot take it away from another; a being can only give up one's own. It is the attempt to take away the humanity of another that is the one sure sign of the loss of humanity in oneself."

Agiruur/Diaspora (3036 D9A3530-5/Amber)**Date: 351-1128**

¶The latest word from this world's capital, Pizarrur, is that the planet's civilian government still controls the city. This is in the wake of an attempted coup, led by officers of the planetary militia, intended to bring the world's policies more in line with those of the Solomani Confederation.

¶The first evidence of the coup was a recorded, repeating radio broadcast from the capital that proclaimed, "The Solomani Confederation means advancement! Local autonomy means stagnation! Rally to the cause of the future!" The message was cut short after only a few moments when the studio was retaken by police officers loyal to the civilian government.

¶Although the government controls Pizarrur, this is likely to be a hollow victory, because the coup forces have managed to gain control of the water production plant that supplies water to the capital and 90% of the world's inhabitants. This plant is located some 250 kilometers from Pizarrur, at the edge of one the world's fluid seas. Here it extracts hydrogen and oxygen from the sea, and produces water. It also provides oxygen, transported under pressure, which is used by many of the planet's industries.

¶So long as the coup organizers hold the water plant, continued civilian control of the capital, and the world, is only a matter of time.

Zukhimie/Delphi (0313 A427979-B/Green)**Date: 013-1129**

¶Inhabitants of Zukhimie might well wonder if they are a magnet for all manner of unusual travellers. Three and a half years ago, Zukhimie hosted the unexpected visit between Archduke Norris' embassy ship, *Arrival Vengeance*, and Duchess Margaret, also making an unusual interstellar voyage.

¶This time, the visitors were the itinerant Hivers of the Imperial History Club of Manchus, recent sightseers to the Old Expanses and Diaspora. While they did not have Margaret on hand for yet another singular summit, Zukhimie and Margaret's Domain officials did their best to satisfy the roving curiosity of the trailward aliens.

¶Souvenirs that the Hivers decided they simply must take with them included a Trepida type grav tank, belonging to the world's Domain garrison, and a set of mother-of-pearl colanders that the Hivers' lthklur guards thought made handsome helmets.

¶The state reception was an astounding success, attended by an estimated 200,000 ticket purchasers, none of whom touched the corn dogs.

Warinir/Daibei (0507 A889978-F/Green)**Date: 065-1129**

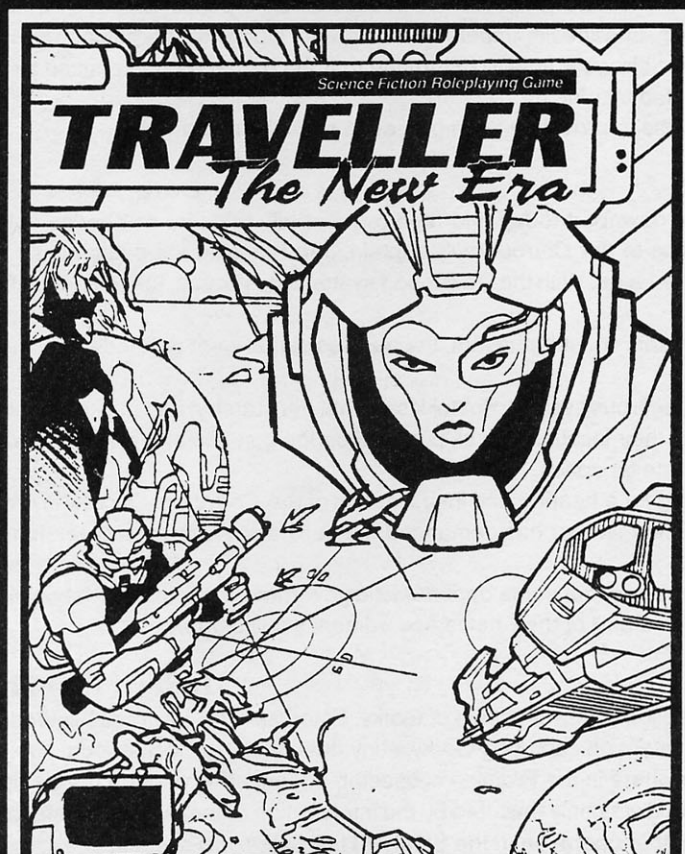
¶Effective today, the 65th day of the 1129th year of the former Third Imperium, suppression orders issued under the reign of the Empress Paula II, numbered SO 1 to SO 131, consecutively, are hereby declared repealed in Daibei, and in all other areas into which its power extends, by order of Craig, Duke of Daibei."

¶With these words, Duke Craig has officially abolished all laws regarding the suppression of psionics research in his territory. SO 1 to 131 are the various enabling orders proclaimed from 800 to 810 that revoked the charters of the 65 Psionics Institutes then operating under Imperial Charter. Only four of these were in the area currently controlled by Duke Craig.

¶Craig is the only faction leader to have publicly encouraged the resumption of psionic research, although public remarks by Archduke Norris have indicated that he is at least interested in the idea. There have been rumors for years that the Imperial

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Navy has conducted secret psionic research for defense purposes, and the common naval background of Craig and Norris may predispose them in this direction. It is unknown if this announcement is in any way connected to the meetings between Craig and representatives of the Domain of Deneb aboard *Arrival Vengeance* in early 1125 during the ship's diplomatic mission.

¶Explaining the reasoning behind the unexpected announcement, Craig said, "We are in a situation where we are surrounded by many challenges, many potential enemies, many uncertainties. In the midst of these, the only certainty is this: if we are to succeed, we can deny ourselves no potential tool, no potential source of safety. Only those who are afraid of life are afraid of exploration, of research. If we are to live in a free society, we can not be afraid of ideas."

Shudash/Ilelish (2817 A5269EK-C)

Date: 82-1129

¶While on a several-month-long tour through his frontier areas, Emperor Dulinor today spoke to a crowd and delivered an unscheduled, unexpected message of hope. The occasion was a visit to a naval shipyard, where several tens of thousands had gathered to get a glimpse of the Emperor. As he entered the room, the crowd spontaneously burst into chants of, "Long live the Emperor."

¶Dulinor, who was not there to deliver an address, but only to inspect the facility, was stunned and moved. As the demonstration continued on, he was seen to have tears in his eyes. Although there was no microphone or public address system, he climbed atop an incomplete spacecraft and gestured for quiet, then launched into a short oration.

¶"My people, you have suffered long; you have sacrificed much. Here, at the forward edge of our lines, you have stood like a rock, battered by waves, yet unyielding. You have defied Lucan's rage, and you have made us strong. You have not asked for it, nor would you, but I will grant you relief. Soon you will see my Coronation Fleet, and your sacrifices, your loyalty will be redeemed. This I promise you, your steadfastness will be remembered. When I stand at the throne, and place my foot on Lucan's head, you will be remembered!"

¶Dulinor observers report that they have not before seen the Emperor this possessed in a public appearance. The shipyard crowd cheered and surged to come closer to him, and lifted members of the crowd to touch his outstretched hands. Hours later, after the assembly hangar had cleared, officials were able to determine that the gathering had caused some Cr600,000 worth of damage to the facility, but no reported injuries.

¶The Emperor's communications minister was not able to provide any amplification of Dulinor's remarks.

Khavle/Diaspora (2605 C334965-B/Red)

Date: 101-1129

¶The Free Trader *Corroboree* landed at the Khavle downport today and reported that all residents of Khedas (3112 Diaspora; C7A4200-2 as of 1128) were dead. According to the *Corroboree's* captain, Jeri Bostokk, the settlement's life support systems were destroyed by a missile or energy weapon. With the life support systems destroyed, the residents died of suffocation.

¶Since Khedas is located in an area that most merchants consider unsafe, the distress signal went unheeded because there was no traffic passing through the system.

¶When asked why the *Corroboree* entered such a dangerous system, Bostokk said that her starship had misjumped into the system. While the navigator was trying to figure out their location, the ship picked up the distress signal from Khedas and decided to investigate because of the laws of interstellar space.

¶Several members of Khavle's government are asking for a hearing and investigation of the *Corroboree's* crew in order to ascertain if they were involved in any wrongdoing. One member has demanded that a Khavle Accordment warship be sent to Khedas to investigate the settlement.

¶Bostokk and her crew protested that their story is true and that some opportunistic government officials are fabricating charges so they can impound the *Corroboree* and make it part of the Khavle Accordment's military forces.

Gorky/Diaspora (2929 D200586-8/Red)

Date: 115-1129

¶Leston Smitts, formerly an out-of-work asteroid tug pilot, is now the toast of Gorky. Fêted as "The Savior of his World," Smitts single-handedly destroyed three pirate fighters intent on capturing Gorky's tiny fleet of *Roughneck* wildcat rigs.

¶Last year a group of raiders, apparently based elsewhere in the Promise subsector, attempted to capture the six rigs, presumably to re-sell them to another poor world. This raid was only thwarted by the intervention of the mercenary starship *Vigilante*, which had been tracking the pirates from another operation in the Sittahr (3129/Diaspora) system.

¶Because Gorky's citizens could not count on such good fortune on other occasions, they took matters into their own hands by creating a small escort force to protect the wildcatter convoys. Hidden within the hull of one of the craft, the Gorkis placed two small "fighters," actually converted ship's boats. When the pirate craft, three small Termagant fighters, appeared, Smitts and the other pilot launched and hid in the signature shadow of the *Roughneck* formation, which feigned surrender. When the Termagants were drawn in close and had slowed to match vectors with the slow *Roughnecks*, Smitts and his companion sprang on them by surprise. Although Smitt's fellow pilot was destroyed early in the engagement, Smitts, defying all odds, fought back, destroying all three of his assailants. His accurate fire actually blew two of the vastly superior, gaudily painted attacking fighters completely in half, undoubtedly appalling their pilots.

¶The third fighter, however, is repairable, and will be returned to service as Smitt's new spacecraft, vastly increasing Gorky's defensive capabilities.

¶At a press reception held in his honor, Smitts was reluctant to speak and left early, begging a previous commitment. "Ave atque vale," he called cryptically. Ω

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Winter Fantasy Convention, Jan. 8-10. Contact Winter Fantasy, RPGA Network, PO Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Arisia '93, Jan. 15-17 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers.

Warpcn III, Jan. 28-31 at the University College Cork, Ireland.

Warcon® '93, Feb. 5-7 in the Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. Contact MSC NOVA, Box J1, Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M, College Station, TX 77844.

Life, the Universe and Everything XI, Feb. 10-13 at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. Contact 1993 Symposium, 3163 JKHB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

Genghis Con XIV, Feb. 12-14 at the Marriott Southeast in Denver, CO. Contact the Denver Gamers Association, PO Box 440058, Aurora, CO 80044.

DunDraCon XVII, Feb. 12-15 at the San Ramon Marriott, just off I-680, at the Bollinger Canyon exit, three miles north of the I-580/I-680 interchange. Contact DunDraCon, 1125 Nielson St., Albany, CA 94706.

Orccon 16, Feb. 12-15 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact

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World Horror Convention No. 3, March 4-7 at the Sheraton Stamford Hotel in Stamford, CT.

CrackerCon 2, March 19-20 at the Holiday Inn Baymeadows, FL. Contact CrackerCon, Box 8356, Jacksonville, FL 32239-8356.

Pointcon XVI, April 23-25 at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY. Contact USMA Wargames Committee, Attn: Pointcon XVI, PO Box 62, West Point, NY 10997.

GameX '93, May 28-31 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

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OUTBACK

By Charles E. Gannon

Additional design by Robert Dean

Most **MegaTraveller** players eventually grow accustomed to the high-tech wizardry that pervades their environment, taking things like starships, laser weapons and fusion planets for granted. But in the Hard Times era following the end of the Rebellion, there's less to go around.

In some areas, known as the outback, advanced technology is rare or altogether unavailable, destroyed by the war or debilitated by insufficient maintenance. However, that doesn't stop the blighted worlds from continuing to plot amongst themselves or against occupiers. One such region is Khulam, subsector P of Diaspora sector. With increasingly divided Solomani forces on their doorstep and fierce competition for resources dominating every world, it's an area full of opportunities for adventure, profit and danger!

FOR THE REFEREE

The characters are travelling (as passengers) within the Diaspora sector when this two-scenario adventure takes place. These adventures will be too easy if the PCs have access to their own starship or grav vehicles; the focus in "Outback" is on rudimentary technologies. If your group has a starship, a good way to start might be to inform the players that their starship needs emergency repairs. This should be done when they are passing closest to the planet Dijon, which still has a class-A starport and is not occupied by one of the warring factions. While the PCs are waiting for their starship to be repaired, the local government will offer them the first job presented in this adventure. Feel free to increase the level of pay if necessary to entice the characters.

"Outback" may be set anytime after late 1124. The characters may hear of the adventure opportunities during their travel in this region of space, or they may be specifically contacted by any of Khulam's worlds that are in need of assistance.

The characters should not be fully

versed in the current state of affairs between the various worlds of the Khulam subsector and the Solomani invaders. They should have even less knowledge of the rifts developing within the Confederation's hierarchy.

The data presented in "Outback" is an extension of the material in **Hard Times**.

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

Of all the subsectors in the post-Rebellion Diaspora sector, Khulam best reflects the political consequences of that war. Most of the local conflicts are either directly or indirectly caused by these consequences. Accordingly, referees are provided with the following historical background, in order to better understand and portray the motivations of NPCs.

Diaspora sector was badly battered by the War of the Rebellion, mostly by clashes between the units of Lucan's Imperium and the Solomani Confederation. Although Solomani forces never managed to establish any major footholds in the sector, they sent long-range flanking forces as far as Sufren (C) subsector on several occasions. These maneuvers were designed to sever the Core-Rim supply lines that fueled the Imperial war machine. These Confederation efforts to create a "Rim Pocket" never succeeded, but the numerous attempts resulted in extensive damage throughout Diaspora.

The tempo of the Imperial-Solomani conflict began to wane after 1120. Too spent to sustain high-intensity naval actions at such a distance from their primary industrial centers, both Lucan and his Solomani adversaries began to rely on local resources to support their operations. This led to strategic strikes against A- and B-quality starports, local industrial centers, and high-technology nodes. By 1123, the rimward half of Diaspora lay in ruins.

As Solomani activity in the sector dwindled, support for Lucan dissolved. The largely Solomani population of

Diaspora might have taken this opportunity to join the Confederation, but SolSec's brutal treatment of Vegans and rumored "gulags" for Vilanis turned public sentiment against this option.

Instead, the various political aspirants of the sector rose to the fore, often as proxies for nearby factions. In the spinward extents, there was considerable support for Daibei, whereas the Core/Trailing quadrant leaned toward Margaret. Solomani sympathies were strongest in the Rim/Trailing quadrant, where Confederation commanders were known to support Joshua Dahvin's liberal Reformist movement.

RESTIVE NEIGHBORS

Soon after the Rebellion was over, political rifts began appearing in the Solomani Confederation. For years, confrontations between the pan-sophont Reformists and their radical Centrist adversaries had been growing in frequency and severity.

In 1124, these tensions were magnified when moderate Reformist leaders formally received a diplomatic delegation from Margaret's domain. Both sides agreed to an unofficial cease-fire in the Old Expanses sector. Subsequent rumors suggested that the Hivers volunteered to serve as liaisons between Margaret and the Reformists.

The Centrists were outraged at these independent diplomatic initiatives and ordered the Reformist leadership to renounce its activities and submit itself for disciplinary action. The Reformists ignored both decrees. Since then, the gap between these two political movements has become dangerously wide, threatening the very structure and future of the Confederation.

The Centrists, radical Solomani supremacists, draw most of their membership from the Confederation's military-industrial complex. They are eager to mount one last campaign against the shattered Imperium, demanding that the fleets press onward until they have reached the old borders of the Solomani Autonomous Region. They also demand that all non-Solomani sophonts be contained and controlled, particularly those that are not part of the greater family of Humaniti. The Centrists enjoy their greatest support along the Aslan border, where distrust of the Aslan persists as a legacy of the Dark Nebula wars and subsequent tensions.

The moderate Reformists, led by Dahvin and several close associates, espouse pan-sophontism (universal rights for all intelligent species) and the decentralization of the Confederation. A

tense stalemate exists between Dahvin and the SolSec leadership, which is divided over how to deal with the Reformist leader. Some call for his "removal," while others fear that by doing so, SolSec will make Dahvin a martyr.

They may be planning to do just that—attempted crackdowns on several pro-Reformists worlds have produced resistance, violence and more converts to the Reformist platform. SolSec and the military have begun retracting their assets into their own spinward sphere of influence. Such a move could be interpreted as a defensive precaution against Aslan adventurism—or as prelude to civil war.

Search and Rescue

Where: Boley D434642-4 (2539, Khulam subsector).

Contact: The PCs are most likely to learn about this mission via a planetary official from the world of Dijon or by researching rumors on the planets of the Khulam subsector.

During a trip into the Khulam subsector, representatives of the government of Dijon (A234540-A, 2838, Khulam subsector) approach the PCs with a business proposition. A trade team from their planet has disappeared in the outback region of Boley, a world within the frontiers of the Solomani Confederation.

Despite its precarious astrographic position, Boley has not joined the Confederation, nor have the Solomani put troops on the planet.

The five-person Dijoni trade team had been sent to Boley to develop a commercial relationship with the locals, since they cultivate a number of herbs and roots that are useful in the production of pharmaceuticals. The traders were supposed to have arrived back on Dijon over two months ago, but they never did.

The player characters' job is to find the traders or at least discover what became of them. The Dijoni representatives will offer the PCs Cr200 per day plus expenses while they are on the job.

ARRIVING ON BOLEY

Although Boley would appear to be a failing world based on its UWP string, this is not the case. Boley is a backward little planet, getting by at TL4 since the pre-Rebellion days. The onset of Hard Times did not cause a decrease in tech level, so its environmental systems remained status quo.

Boley did attract some attention during the latter stages of the Rebellion, when careless orbital bombardment by several Imperial units caused a large number of civilian deaths.

Since then, most Boleynes are not particularly receptive to off-worlders, regardless of the political alignment of the visitors.

Almost 25% of Boley's 9.3 million inhabitants live in small communities that dot the coasts of the polar seas or in the untamed outback regions. The planet's small, intense white star has created an arid equatorial belt, separated from the polar seas by wide bands of riotous, but fragile, growth. These green areas are known as the outback country.



Landbear Tank

CraftID: Landbear Tank, TL5, Cr58,650
Hull: 3/7, Disp=3, Config=4USL, Armor=15A, Unloaded=35.1t, Loaded=40.3t
Power: 1/2, IC=1.5MW, Dur=23hrs
Loco: 1/2, Tracks, P/w=37, Road=81kph, Offroad=32kph
Comm: Radio=Distant (5)
Sensors: None
Off: Hardpoints=1

	Ammo	Rds	Pen/ Attn	Dmg	Max Range	Auto Tgts	Dngr Spc	Sig	ROF
2x6cm How	HE	150	9	10	Dist(6km)	—	10	M	26
	KEAP	—	16/4	8	Dist(6km)	—	—	M	26
3xMed MG	—	3000	3/3	3	VLong	3	—	H	80

Def: —
Control: Mechx13
Accom: Crew=6 (Driver, 4 Gunners, Commander), Seats=Crampedx6
Other: Fuel=42001, Cargo=0, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Moderate

The Landbear is a typical tank from the lowest tech level at which such vehicles are commonly used. It mounts two low-velocity guns in side sponsons and three machineguns (bow, rear and commander's MGs).

The thinness of Boley's atmosphere has led to the evolution of large, thin, spatulate plants which collect as much sunlight and oxygen as possible during the day and then curl up with the approach of night. Most ground growth resembles mosses and lichens.

FOR THE REFEREE

The PCs can retrace the steps of the traders simply by starting at their last known location (the main metroplex of Anney) and by interviewing individuals who are likely to have seen or spoken to them (hotel clerks, equipment rental attendants, etc.). In this manner, the PCs can follow the trail of the ill-fated expedition to a small (300-person) community on the edge of the outback. All that's known by the locals of this town (or all they are willing to say) is that the trade team pressed on into the bush after a brief stay in town.

The referee may choose any of the following explanations to be the real story behind the disappearance of the trading team:

- The traders were killed by poisonous flora/fauna (attacked by a horde of small poisonous mammals). The locals

are mostly immune to the effects of these toxins from long years of living in proximity to the creatures. Off-worlders suffer severe anaphylaxis upon first exposure, unless they have been properly inoculated.

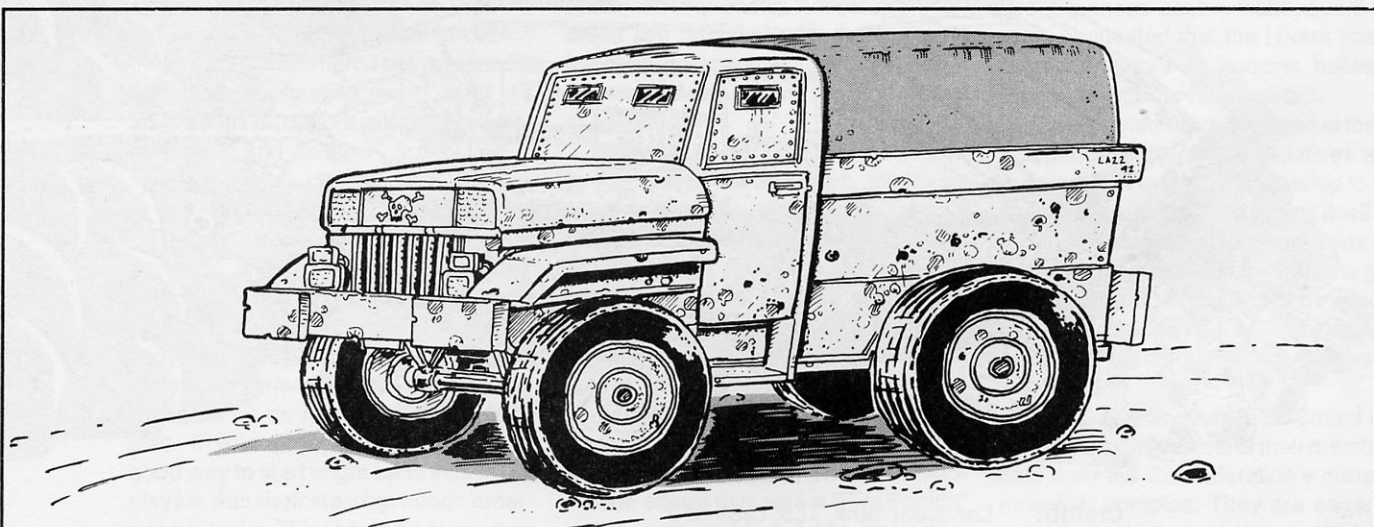
- The traders were waylaid by outbackers. Some of the more xenophobic (and larcenous) of the outback population decided to track the Dijonis into the bush, where they attempted to raid their camp one night. However, the traders turned out to be determined fighters, and before it was all over, the entire team and three locals had been killed.

The locals are now trying to cover up this incident. However, some persistent (and/or clever) questioning of the inhabitants of the last town visited by the trading team will reveal that the locals are trying to conceal something. Whether the townsfolk finally turn over the guilty parties, or attempt to cover up the whole affair by killing the PCs, is up to the referee.

- The traders blended into a pro-Solomani resistance movement. Three members of the trading team were actually SolSec agents who were hired by unsuspecting firms on Dijon. The agents

used the cover of the trade team to get deep into the outback where pro-Solomani Boleyene radicals are hiding out. The three SolSec agents murdered the other two teammates and are now behind a growing string of terrorist events in the outback (assassinations, bombing, disappearances). If the SolSec agents learn that the PCs are searching for them, they will attempt to do away with the group. The agents still have several accomplices in the last town visited by the trade team.

- The traders have begun conducting combat operations against outbackers—they are terrorists hand-picked by anti-Solomani radicals within the Dijoni government. These radicals want to incite the Boleyenes to actively hate the Confederation and, thereby, be willing to accept overtures from Dijon. The trading team was a cover for the professional terrorists, who are wreaking death and destruction in the name of the Solomani cause. In this way, the radical Dijoni cabal hopes to enrage the majority of Boley's population against the Confederation (despite the fact that the Solomani have adopted a very permissive, laissez-faire attitude toward Boley).



Oxwain Truck

CraftID:	Oxwain Truck, TL5, Cr980
Hull:	2/5, Disp=2, Config=4USL, Armor=1A, Loaded=15.8t, Unloaded=10.8t
Power:	1/2, InterCmbst=1MW, Dur=25hrs
Loco:	1/2, 4 wheels, P/W=63, Road=107kph, Offroad=32kph
Comm:	Radio=Regional (500)
Sensors:	Headlights×2
Off:	Hardpoints=1
Def:	—
Control:	Mech×3
Accom:	Seats=Cramped×4 (Driver, 3 passengers)
Other:	Fuel=3kl, Cargo=2kl, ObjSize=small, EmLevel=Moderate

The Oxwain is designed for general purpose work. This model includes an optional radio, useful for exploration parties and military units. Reduce the vehicle's cost by Cr500 if this option is removed. Designed for off-road travel, the vehicle is equipped with fairly large tires to avoid bogging down when traversing soft surfaces. The Oxwain is open-topped.



PinkerToro Armored Truck

CraftID: PinkerToro Armored Truck, TL5, Cr19,705
Hull: 3/6, Disp=2, Config=4USL+turret, Armor=5A, Loaded=17.8t, Unloaded=14.5t
Power: 1/2, InterCmbst=1MW, Dur=25hrs
Loco: 1/2, Wheels=4, P/W=56, Road=100kph, Offroad=30kph
Comm: None
Sensors: None
Off: Hardpoints=1

	Ammo	Pen/ Rds	Attn	Max Dmg	Auto Range	Dngr Tgts	Spc	Sig	ROF
4cm How	HE	120	5	8	VLong(2)	—	—	M	30
	KEAP	—	8/4	6	VLong(2)	—	—	M	30
Med MG	—	1500	3/3	3	VLong	3	—	H	80

Def:—

Control: Mechx5

Accom: Crew=4 (Driver, 2 Gunners, Commander), Seats=Crampedx4

Other: Fuel=3kl, Cargo=0, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Moderate

The PinkerToro is a limited-use armored vehicle produced on the Oxwain truck chassis. Its fairly large turret (5.4 kiloliters) allows ample room for the gunner and commander's seats. Off-road performance is comparable to that of the unmodified cargo version.

Alternatives: If the PCs seem to be particularly interested in this kind of adventure, referees should feel free to restructure the situation as follows: Dijon sent out five trading teams, and only two came back. The other three are missing. The referee is then free to use any combination of these scenarios.

The referee might also want to send a fire team of Dijoni "plainclothes" mercenaries along as NPC escorts and "muscle." This will trigger a more profound and militaristic response from any guilty parties. The end of the scenario might be a desperate shoot-out in Boley's outback, far away from help.

The natives of Boley are dogged but amateurish fighters, usually with level-0 weapons skills. Most any type of TL3-4 armament is likely to be encountered in their hands. Professional terrorists (of either side) will have access to TL6-9 gear and have skill levels of 1 and 2. They are tough, dedicated and ruthless. Adjust numbers and equipment to roughly match the PC group's capabilities.

A Few Drops More

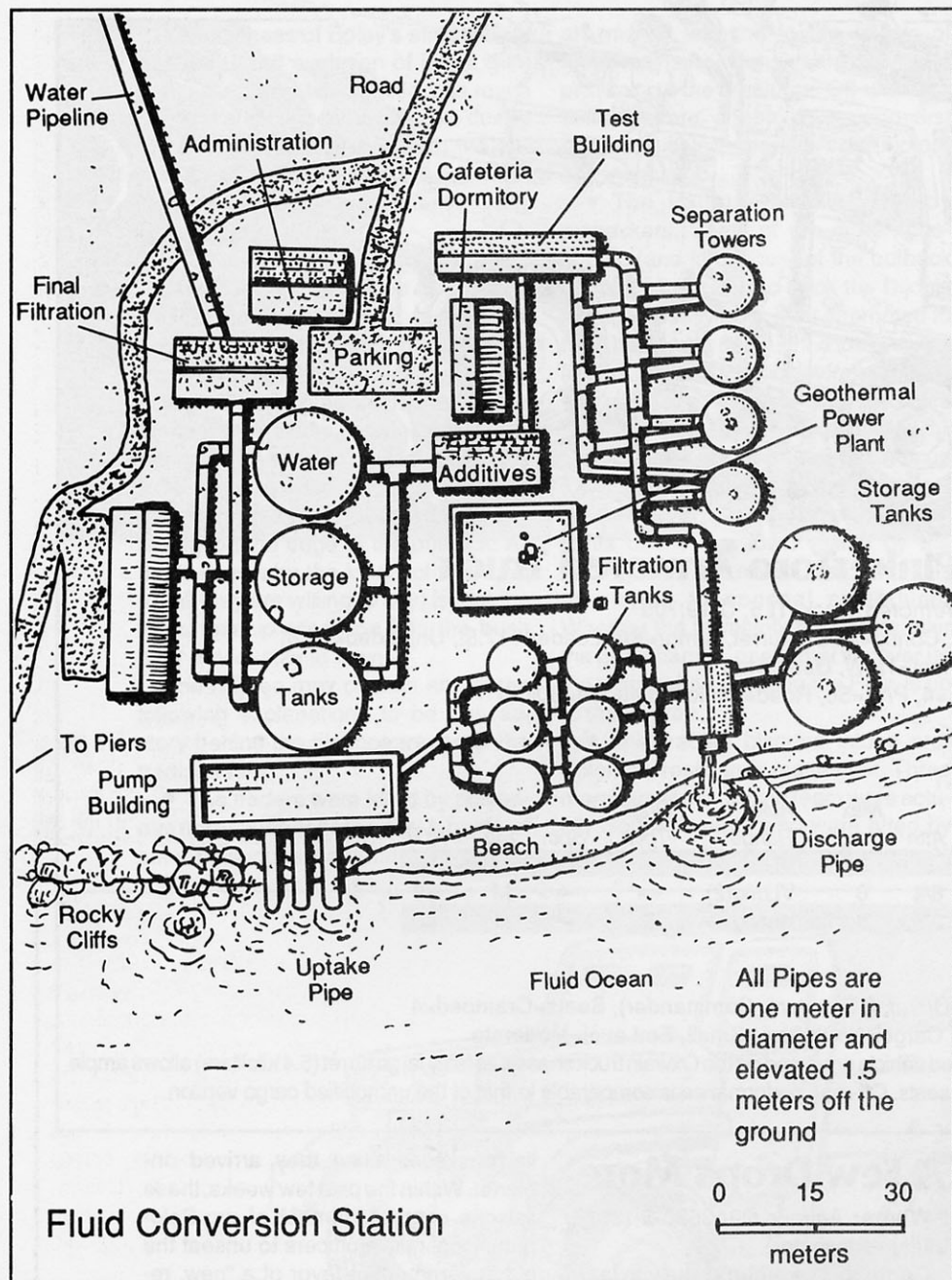
Where: Agiruur D9A3530-5 (3036, Khulam subsector).

Contact: The group is likely to learn about this scenario from any number of sources. Some of the more likely are: any stop at Agiruur itself, or any search for news of paramilitary/mercenary opportunities within the subsector; local pro-Imperial elements (such as the group's pleased employers on Dijon), who will urge the PCs to help the group as the Civilian Board (the Civs); local SolSec agents, who would like to see the Mils win—the current Civ government has not been particularly happy about "membership" in the Confederation.

Through any one of these sources, the PC group will learn that interesting events are afoot on Solomani-controlled Agiruur. The local government, an uncooperative body of old, retired Imperial officers know as the Civs, has made life difficult for the Solomani administrative

liaisons ever since they arrived on-planet. Within the past few weeks, these liaisons urged a number of pro-Solomani local militia officers to unseat the old government in favor of a "new, responsible, indigenous government"—namely, the militia officers themselves. The leaders of the coup—the Mils—have failed to take control of Pizarrur, the world's major city, but did manage to seize Agiruur's all-important environmental processing complex. If the Mils can hold on to the complex, the Civs will have to back down. If the Civs can wrest control of the complex back from the Mils, the coup will be broken.

This scenario will not work if the PCs have an operational starship at their disposal. In the event that the PC group does have a ship, their maneuver drive must break down before they get wind of the situation. Similarly, any auxiliary craft should be disabled or sabotaged by local opposition. This will compel the PCs to rely on the local (primitive) technology.



Fluid Conversion Station

ARRIVING AT AGIRUUR

When the characters debark at Agiruur, it seems hard to imagine why anyone is bothering to fight for domination of the planet. Wreathed in an exotic, vaguely bluish atmosphere, Agiruur is a failing world that stabilized its post-war situation by taking advantage of every scrap of technology spared by the Rebellion. By consolidating living quarters and slowly adapting their environmental systems to simpler, low-tech designs, the Aggies (as inhabitants of Agiruur call themselves) have managed to prevent catastrophic life support failures. Water production is still a problem, though. Tremendous amounts of energy are required to convert the local fluids (a peroxide and polymer soup) into potable H_2O . A large, geothermal-

powered fluid conversion station provides 90% of the planet's water needs.

Being essential to the community, this large complex was a natural target of the Mils. So when the junta tried to take over, its first move was an attempt to seize the water conversion facility. The first force sent against the facility failed. But a few weeks ago, a follow-up force comprised of the local army's commando unit (22 troopers, in all) took the conversion plant after suffering heavy losses. The surviving commandos have shut the water pumps off, spurring the civilian government to regain control of the site in a few days, lest dehydration force their capitulation.

The surviving commandos will not be able to hold the water conversion plant without reinforcement, however. Con-

sequently, the Mil leadership and the Civ oligarchs are in a race to reach the facility and gain control of it.

THE JOB

The PCs could wind up on either side of this civil war, depending upon their initial contacts and personal ethics. If the PCs attempt to discover which side is in the right, they'll find no clear answers but plenty of conflicting attitudes.

The leaders of the Mil junta claim the local bureaucrats are ineffectual and lethargic leaders. In turn, the Civs claim that the Mil junta is comprised of fanatics and madmen who will stop at nothing to gain control of the planet. Both descriptions are biased. The Mil leaders want to restore technological capabilities and the starport in order to attract more off-world (which is to say, "Solomani") commerce and reduce Agiruur's general level of vulnerability. The Civs are motivated by their Imperial leanings and believe in a more conservative approach to changing the fragile but functional status quo; they want to make sure the community does not over-extend itself and meet with environmental disaster.

The job is the same, regardless of which side the PCs join—command the unit that will be sent to take control of the water conversion complex. Personnel must remain in oxygen masks the whole time. Note that the necessity of wearing air-tanks will also reduce the load any individual can carry. Each vehicle is equipped with an atmospheric oxygen extractor/compressor unit for refilling the tanks.

Both sides offer modest pay—Cr300 per day, plus a Cr500 bonus for success.

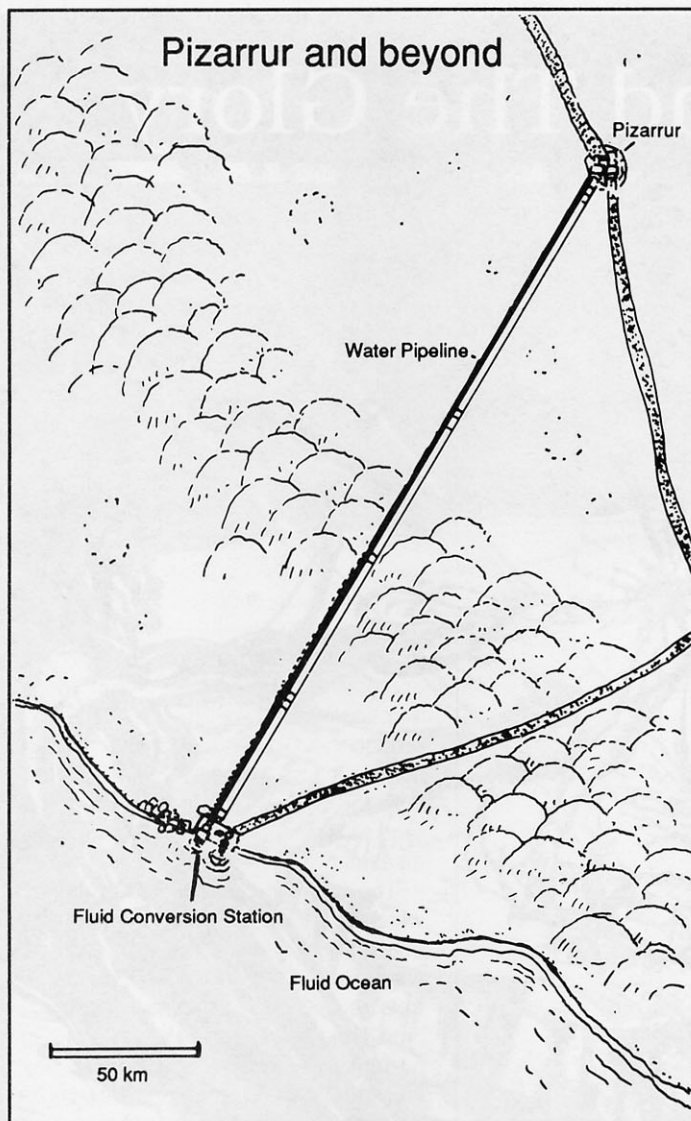
FOR THE REFEREE

Civs: The Civs have up to 12 troops and three trucks to spare for this operation (reduce the troop numbers accordingly if the PCs are working for the Civs). The Civs are also sending four repair technicians in a fourth truck, just in case key components of the facility are damaged in the fighting. The vehicles include two Oxwain trucks and two Pinkertoro armored trucks.

Mils: The Mils have only six men for this operation; the rest of their troops are committed to maintaining the junta's tenuous toehold within Pizarrurcity. They have one Landbear tank at their disposal.

In addition to the force being sent, four commandos are at the facility, two of whom are badly wounded.

Troops: The troops of both sides are



armored in mesh and armed with a mix of 7mm carbines, 7mm rifles and revolvers of various bore sizes. Filter masks are standard issue. Both sides will have to cover 250 kilometers of open country or 340 kilometers of road to get to the facility. The terrain is a long repetition of rolling slopes and barren, lifeless ground, with one band of low hills.

If both sides select the same path (e.g., both opt to take the only road leading to the water conversion facility), they are almost sure to come into contact with each other before they arrive. If one side gets to the facility first, the other faction will attack them when they finally arrive. But remember—the facility itself must *not* sustain major damage. This gives the defenders a tremendous advantage.

Alternatives: Should the PCs be interested in scenarios with plenty of military action, referees should feel free to double or even triple the size of the contingents above. It is also possible to bring in units from interested city-states.

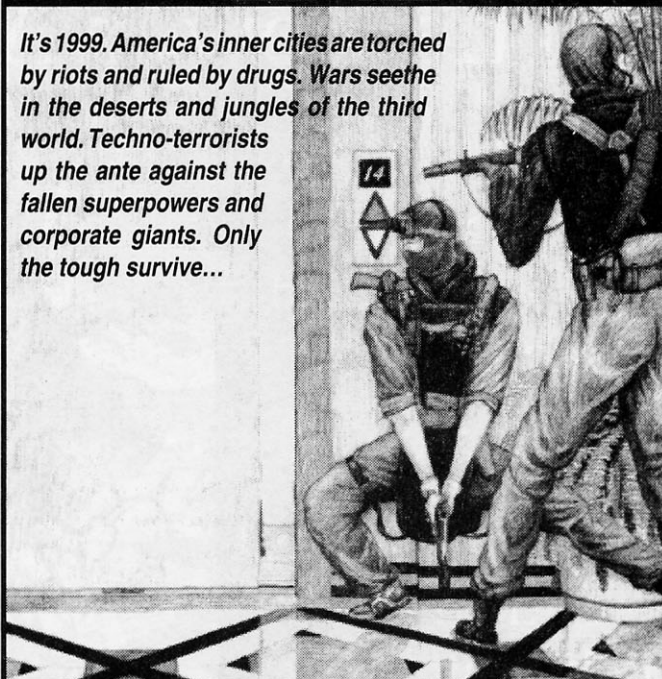
For instance, SolSec wants to see the Mills win and would be quite willing to send a platoon of mercenaries or common thugs. On the other hand, both Dijon and the anti-Solomani radicals on Boley would like to see the Civs prevail. They might each send a few squads of infantry to help out. Agiruur's internal squabbles could easily escalate into a major international event. This, of course, would attract corsairs, star vikings and merc units, all of which would further intensify the conflict. Ω

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OLD ENEMIES



**Michael C.
La Bossiere**

Mayday. This is the Forty Niner. We are under attack from the second moon of Apollo. We have suffered severe power plant damage and have internal fires. Mayday. This is the Forty Niner.... (transmission ceases)

A mayday was received from a prospecting vessel of American registry in the Mu Herculis system. The vessel reported being under attack from one of Apollo's moons. An American military vessel was sent to investigate and encountered an unexpected adversary.

Setup: Place a planet counter in the center of the map. This counter represents Apollo. The American vessel enters from the fire side of the map. The alien weapons are set up within four hexes of the planet.

Victory: The American wins if he destroys all the alien weapons. The alien wins if he destroys the American vessel.

Intruder: America: Concord-class system defense boat (use the statistics for the British *Exeter*) (CQ+1).

Native: Alien: Four Sphere "missiles"
Combat Performance Data: Movement: 8 Radiated Signature: 1 Radial Reflected Signature: 1 Radial Target Profile: -5 Lateral Target Profile: -5 Hull Hits: 1/1/1 Power Plant Hits: 1/1 Armament: One unlimited shot 1x1 laser or one detonation attack as a 5x2 detonation laser Active Sensors: 10 Passive Sensors: 5 Screens: 3

These alien weapons consist primarily of energy bound within a magnetic containment field. At the center of the weapon is the power plant and field generator. The weapon forms its components by rearranging the energy within its field. Fortunately for the American vessel, the weapons have been severely weakened by the ravages of time.

The military quarantined the area of space immediately around Apollo after the Forty Niner incident. I hear they brought in some experts on xeno-archaeology. Rumor has it they found

something old and alien on the moon that the Niner mentioned in her last transmission.

This adventure deals with a mission into the asteroid belt that rings Mu Herculis at 4.5 AU distance. The purpose of the mission is to locate an alien base in the belt. This adventure is intended for a group of experienced characters.

The PCs have heard about the destruction of the prospecting ship *Forty Niner* near Apollo. They have also heard about the encounter between the *Wheston* (the SDB) and an unknown force. (the exact details depend on the outcome of the above encounter). The PCs are aware that the American government has closed off the area of space around Apollo.

PCs with friends in the military or government (or PCs who are in the military or government themselves) are aware that the *Forty Niner* was destroyed by alien weapons and that the

SDB *Wheston* engaged the same alien weapons. According to the reports, the weapons were not the product of any known races' technology. Because of the potential danger, the area has been sealed off. PCs with access to high-level information know that an alien base of great age has been located on one of Apollo's moons. No one is sure why the base launched an attack on the *Forty Niner*, since other ships have been through the area without being attacked. Naturally, there will be speculation that the base was somehow involved with the disappearance of the *Carolina Dream*.

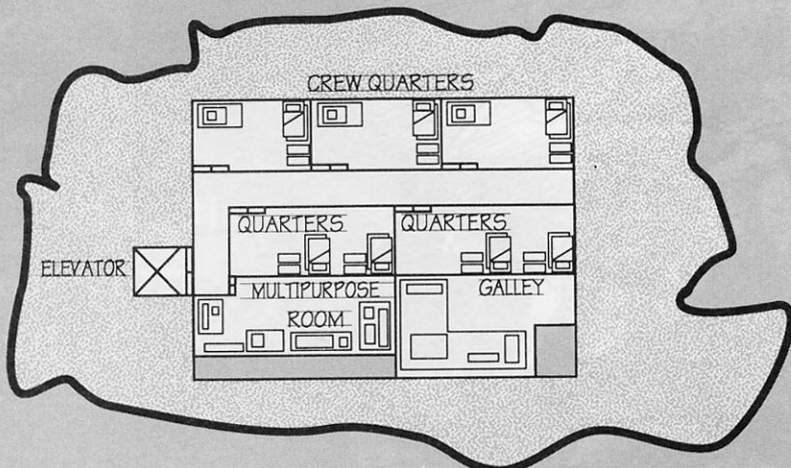
Finally, all the PCs hear about a second tragedy that strikes the *Forty Niner* Prospecting Company (the company that owned the *Forty Niner*). The orbital station used by FNPC exploded a day after the destruction of the *Forty Niner*, killing all the surviving FNPC personnel, except Rosco Jones. Jones, a well known and respected prospector, was aboard the company's other vessel, the *Gold Rush*, when the station was destroyed.

GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED

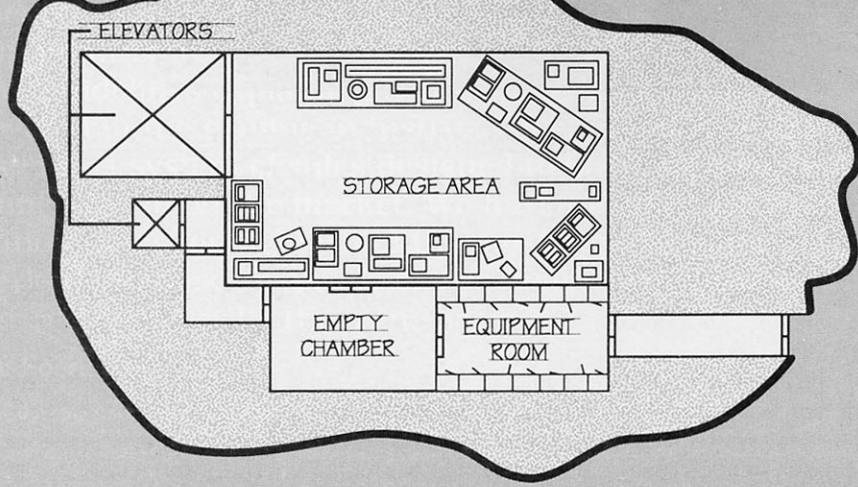
The PCs are contacted by Rosco Jones. He wants to hire the PCs to help him investigate what happened. He has access to the *Gold Rush*, a *Mammoth*-class freighter (with two Cargo Devil freight handlers), if the PCs don't have a ship of their own. The vessel is carrying custom-made modules that make the vessel into a fair prospecting vessel. The *Gold Rush* has a special sensor module, a module containing a geological laboratory, a module containing digging and sample-taking equipment and a base camp module—the rest of the modules are standard cargo modules.

Jones says his partners sent a message from the belt saying that the group had made a very important discovery along their prospecting route and that they were going to proceed to Apollo. They finished by saying that they would be bringing a big surprise back. They didn't go into details because they did not want to broadcast the specifics of their find until they were able to stake a legal claim on it. Jones says that he knows the prospecting route they were following when they made their discovery. He wants to hire the PCs to go with him into the belt to retrace his partners' movements and locate what they found that sent them to their untimely deaths. He offers pay appropriate to the PCs' experience, reputation and abilities. If asked, he says that he suspects that the two events (the destruction of the *Forty*

LEVEL 2



LEVEL 1



Niner and the destruction of the FNPC station) are connected and that he is worried about his own life.

THE REAL STORY

The *Forty Niner's* crew discovered an alien base in the belt. While investigating it, they accidentally re-activated the computer. The computer captured the crew and replaced their brains with robotic brains. The computer then sent its servants to destroy its old enemy, the computer based on one of Apollo's moons. The asteroid computer was thwarted in its plans when the Apollo computer noted the approach of the vessel and scanned it. The scanning revealed the presence of the robotic brains, and the Apollo computer sent its weapons to destroy the vessel. Prior to the destruction of the vessel, the Apollo computer captured one of the robot-humans and replaced the asteroid computer's brain with one of its own. This robot-human was sent (via a one-use vessel, similar to the alien weapons) to gather a force to attack the asteroid computer. The robot-human was detected by the other FNPC personnel, and it was forced to kill them to avoid being exposed. The robot-human is, of course, Rosco Jones.

Rosco Jones: The robot-human Jones functions as a Veteran NPC with an Initiative of 7. The robot brain is programmed with Sidearm 3, Combat Rifleman 3, Computer 3, Pilot 2, Prospecting 2, Demolitions 2. Jones is armed with a Mueller-Rivera P-3 and a Mueller-Rivera F-19. The robot brain is programmed with a personality that is based on the information the computer was able to acquire from Jones' brain. Jones can pass as a human being, provided he does not engage in long conversations. Unfortunately for the computer, Jones was legendary as a nonstop talker. If asked about his quietness, he will say that the tragedies have made him not want to talk. Naturally, he will avoid people who knew the real Jones well. His mission is to locate the asteroid computer and destroy it. To this end, he has a large supply of mining explosives aboard the *Gold Rush*.

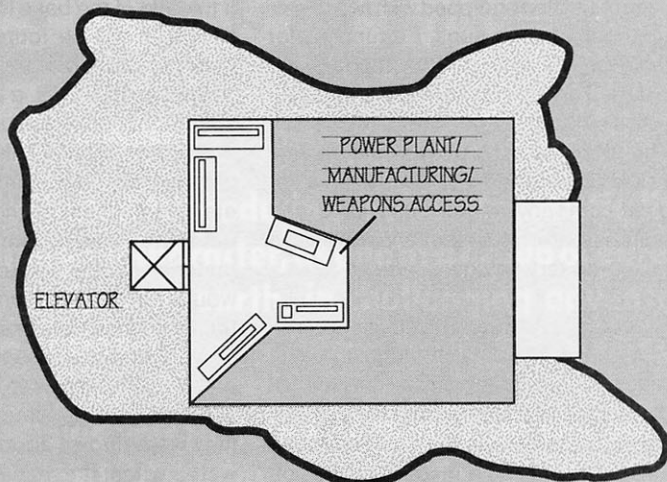
Task: To notice that Jones is not human: Difficult. Psychology. 10 minutes.

Referee: A successful roll will reveal that whatever Jones is, he is not a human. The roll should be made secretly for all characters with Psychology skill.

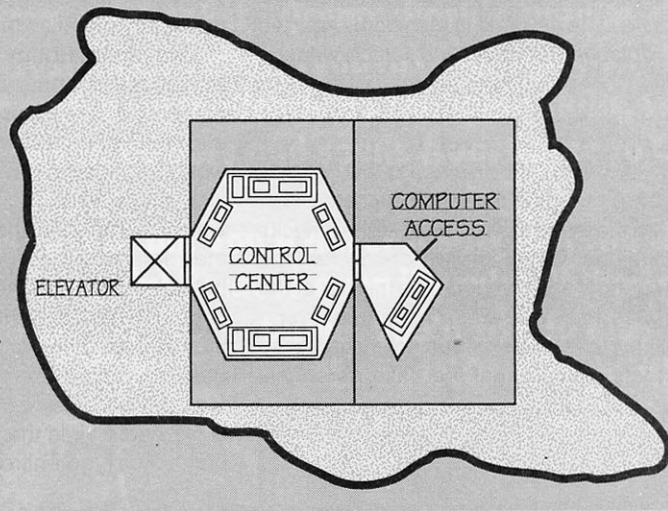
INTO THE BELT

The asteroid belt is 4.5 AU from the sun. It is quite dense and contains radio-

LEVEL 4



LEVEL 3



active ores and other valuable commodities. Only recently, small, independent mining companies have begun to exploit the belt's resources. There have been several lucrative finds in the belt. One expedition found several pieces of a manufactured alloy on an asteroid that turned out to be very, very old and not of human manufacture. No other such finds have been made.

Going over the *Forty Niner's* prospecting route will be a long and tedious task. There are a total of 32 asteroids on the route. The asteroid the PCs are looking for is the 28th asteroid (the *Forty Niner* crew only prospected that far). Asteroids 1 through 28 are marked as being checked, so 29-32 can be ignored.

Task: To examine an asteroid: Routine. Prospecting. 30 minutes.

Referee: The time roll is reduced by 1 for each person who makes the task roll. Minimum time is 30 minutes, however.

This roll should be made in secret so the players will not be certain they have not missed something.

STALKER ON THE ROCK

Once the PCs have been lulled into a false sense of security, it will be time to spring a nasty surprise on them. The previous expedition disturbed a robotic combat unit laying dormant beneath the asteroid's surface. It was slow to recover from its long rest, and the first expedition left before it could take action. Now it is alert and ready to deal with any invaders.

Robotic Combat Unit: The unit looks somewhat like a dull gray praying mantis. It is four meters in length, and has four legs and two arms.

Armor Value: 3 **Life Level:** 25 **Initiative:** 7 **Hit:** Routine

It is considered a Veteran NPC and moves like a human. Its arms are equipped with extendible blades (*Melee Range:* Short *Melee Skill Modifier:*

+2 DP: 0.4) and laser weapons (treat as Mueller-Rivera P-3s, with 40 pulses). The unit is also equipped with two chest-mounted plasma guns. Fortunately for the PCs, its ammunition hoppers are empty. The robot is extremely sophisticated and will act intelligently in combat. The robot (or parts of it) would be very valuable to human scientists or a robotic company as the unit's CPU and batteries are highly advanced relative to human technology.

ALIEN BASE

Asteroid 28 contains the alien base. A visual inspection of the asteroid at close range (or using magnifying viewing devices) reveals the existence of an airlock, as well as a metallic protrusion from the asteroid's lower side (relative to the arrangement of the base). The broken metallic pylon indicates the asteroid was once part of a larger structure. The asteroid is also oddly scarred in places (from laser and particle weapon hits).

Level 1

Access can be gained to this level via the airlocks on the top of the asteroid or via the airlock on the side. All the airlocks are operational and will open when the controls are touched. The interior of the base is lit with white light, and everything is scaled to human size. These facts indicate that the base personnel

were about the same size as humans and probably lived under a yellow sun. If the age of the base is checked scientifically, it will be found to be several hundred years old (at least).

The interior has a very thin atmosphere, not quite enough to breathe.

Storage Area: This area contains plastic containers. Some of the containers hold mechanical and electrical parts, but most contain remnants of organic material (food). The organic material would have been somewhat toxic to humans when it was fresh; now it would be very bad to consume. The containers are badly dented in places, and some of them are smashed open, as if they were thrown about the room (they were, when the base was smashed from its pylon).

Empty Chamber: A shredded and bloody human vacc suit with the name "Holtsen" is drifting about the room, orbited by globules of blood.

Equipment Room: Numerous empty lockers hang open. Broken pieces of equipment (weapons, scientific gear, etc.) float about the room. The pieces would be valuable to researchers. There is a single vacc suit in the chamber, which indicates that the crew was evacuated from the base. The vacc suit is human-sized, but the gloves are six fingered. The beings had an opposable thumb, four fingers and a fifth digit, possibly a claw-like structure, extending from the outside of the hand. There is still some air in the tanks. The mix is primarily oxygen-nitrogen.

Level 2

Crew Quarters: These spartan quarters each contain two bunks, empty lockers and a terminal.

Quarters: Like the crew quarters, except there are four bunks, four lockers and no terminals.

Multipurpose Room: This room is equipped with exercise equipment, electronic games and medical equipment. The medical equipment can provide information about the chemical composition of the base personnel (their biochemistry is similar to that of humans, but there are several differences). This room is fully pressurized, and the automated medical equipment has been in use recently. There are bloodstains on the table and on the door of what appears to be a disposal unit.

Galley: There is a broken Mueller-Rivera laser pistol floating in the room, along with globules of human blood. A vacc suit helmet with a shattered face plate also floats in the room. The wall between the galley and the multipur-

pose room bears marks from laser fire.

Level 3

Control Center: This room contains the controls for the base's weapon systems. Several of the control panels have been destroyed by weapons fire recently, and there are globules of blood in the room.

Computer Access: The base computer is accessed from here. The computer is very advanced and is intelligent (capable of intelligent actions and self direction), but it is not self aware. It is programmed to defend the base and destroy its enemy, the computer on Apollo. The computer can be destroyed by explosives or other violence directed at it from this area.

Level 4

Power Plant/Manufacturing/Weapons Access: This is the access area to the base's power plant, manufacturing systems and weapon systems. The power plant is a highly advanced fusion reactor. The manufacturing systems are designed to produce replacement components (including robotic brains). The weapon systems are two advanced lasers that would fire from the rectangle that extrudes from the asteroid if they were still operational.

DANGERS

Three Stalker robots are active on the base and are computer-directed. Their plasma guns (treat as Quinn-Darlan Mk 2-A2 PGMPs) are fully loaded. They will attempt to capture the PCs alive in order to replace their brains with robot brains.

FINISH

If the robot-human Jones destroys the computer, he will attempt to report back to his controlling computer on Apollo. He will do anything to complete his mission.

If the PCs survive and inform the authorities about the base, the base will be confiscated by the government, but the PCs will receive some compensation. The base itself is of great scientific interest, and the equipment in it, especially the computer, are of great value. If scientists have the opportunity to study the base, they will conclude that it actually is not a base at all, but part of a ship. The computer located on one of the moons of Apollo was once also part of a larger vessel. It will be speculated that two enemy vessels entered this star system, fought and crippled one another in the belt, and have been lying in wait, ready for another round. Ω

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By Michael C.
LaBossiere



WHAT in SEIOS

PCs engaged in a simple courier job are thrown into the midst of industrial contamination in this *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0* adventure.

This adventure can be set in any city that has an aerospace port. The PCs (or their contacts) are approached by two anonymous corporate agents (Logan Bilstants and Janet Towlend). The agents offer up to four PCs a simple courier job (additional PCs can come along but won't be paid). At least two of the PC must be solos, or the company will hire two NPC solos to go along. Bilstants and Towlend will not be accompanying the mission. Each hired PC will be paid \$2000 upon completion of the job. If the PCs are clever, they can bargain for up to an additional \$1000 each after learning the exact nature of the mission.

The team is to pick up a delivery at the aerospace port and transport it to another transport team 20 miles away. The characters will make the pickup on the runway, then go immediately to the exchange site. An orbital air spaceplane is scheduled to land at the aerospace port late at night. The spaceplane is supposed to drop off its normal passengers and cargo at the terminal, then taxi over to the hangar area, where the PCs will be waiting. Bilstants and Towlend say they do not foresee any trouble, but they always expect the unexpected. The PCs will be equipped with a courier van, but they must provide the rest of their equipment. The van has been equipped to transport hazardous biological and chemical materials. The PCs may point out that transporting hazardous agents in unmarked vehicles is illegal. If they make too much of a fuss about it, they could end up dead.

CRASH LANDING

Bilstants and Towlend suggest that the PCs listen to the air traffic control tower transmissions on the van's radio so they can be ready to meet the shuttle as soon as possible. As they wait for the shuttle, the PCs hear the spaceplane pilot requesting landing confirmation. The next thing they hear is a loud explosion in the background, followed by dead silence. Then the voice of the air traffic controller warns the spaceplane that it is coming down too fast. There is no reply from the spaceplane. In a matter of seconds, the PCs see the spaceplane's lights as it plummets toward Earth. The spaceplane hits the runway, its landing gear still up, and skids down the tarmac. During its skid, a wingtip strikes a fuel truck, and sparks from the skidding ignite it, creating a fireball on the runway.

The spaceplane, with patches of burning fuel on it, comes to a halt not far from the PCs. The spaceplane sits on the runway, smoking, for a few minutes, then the explosive bolts of its emergency escape hatch are fired, throwing the door onto the runway and allowing two figures to emerge. The two individuals (Jackson and Spender) immediately charge the PCs, guns blazing. During the course of the firefight, a third person (Weston) leaves the hatch carrying a bulky object (a container of Agent-454) and runs through the chain-link fence and into a nearby swamp. A Difficult: Awareness/Notice roll enables a PC to spot the fleeing figure. Four minutes after Jackson and Spender attack, four airport security guards arrive and attack Jackson and Spender. Five minutes later, eight more guards arrive. Under the influence of A-454, Jackson and Spender will fight either until they are killed or until they kill everything in sight (then they will turn on each other). When Jackson and Spender are neutralized, the guards ask the surviving PCs to remain for questioning.

SPACEPLANE

The spaceplane has been moderately damaged by its semicontrolled landing (Jackson "piloted" it in) and will require repairs before it can be used again. Emergency crews will move in after the firefight, but they will be happy to let the PCs take a look inside. Use the map provided on page 28 of *Near Orbit* for the spaceplane's interior.

If the PCs Enter the Shuttle: The emergency escape hatch opens into the passage between the cockpit and the passenger section. The door to the cockpit has been blasted open, and dead crewmembers are in their seats, except for the pilot, who is on the floor (he was thrown there by Jackson). The controls have been shot up. The passenger section is full of dead people who are still strapped in for the landing. They have all been shot.

The right-hand cargo bay door is undamaged, and the interior contains cargo boxes. The left-hand bay door is open, and the interior contains numerous transport boxes as well as three acceleration couches.

Near the couches is a standard hazardous material transport container, which is open. It has room for three containment modules, but only contains two. If the transport container is carefully examined, an *Average: Awareness/Notice* roll reveals a tiny puncture in the top of the container. If the PCs pull out

the top module, they find that it contains two metal canisters with biohazard markings. One of them has a tiny hole through it and is empty. If the PCs check the angle of the holes, they will be able to find a tiny piece of metal embedded in the side of the container and a tiny, sealed hole in the spaceplane's hull.

After the PCs find the container and have a chance to examine it, Bilstants, Towlend and four corporate solos show up in CBN suits. They load the container onto a hazardous material transport van. The PCs are taken to a corporate hospital, examined via remote instruments, then released for a briefing (see below).

If the PCs Don't Enter the Shuttle: If the PCs opt not to enter the shuttle, Bilstants, Towlend and four corporate solos arrive in CBN suits. Two of the solos and Bilstants stay with the PCs while Towlend and the other two solos enter the shuttle and remove the container to the van. The PCs are taken to another van and brought to the briefing.

Other Alternatives: The PCs may decide (for some reason) to take the container. If they do, the corporation will hunt them mercilessly and kill them in a very painful manner.

If the player characters resist Bilstants and Towlend, the pair will use force if necessary to get them to go to the briefing. The agents have no qualms about snuffing all the PCs on the spot if need be.

BRIEFING

The PCs are taken to an office rental building and escorted to an office on the 10th floor, accompanied by Bilstants, Towlend and their four solos. Weapons are left in a vault in the lobby. The group waits in the room for about an hour, then a middle-aged woman enters, along with two aides and two solos. The aides set up a computer linked to a projector. The woman, who will not give her name, tells the PCs that part of what they were hired to transport has been taken from the shuttle and that the company would like to hire them to recover the missing item. She will offer them \$100 a day and is willing to go up to \$300 a day, with a bonus of \$2000 each for the recovery of the item. This fee includes the price of the PCs' silence. If the PCs get obnoxious, the woman indicates that she is more than willing to have them killed and replaced by more reasonable people.

If the PCs accept the deal, the woman says the person with the missing item is Mark Weston, a freelance solo. She says that three men (Spender, Jackson and Weston) were transporting a new military-grade biological agent. Based on Towlend's report (and any information the PCs provide), the spaceplane was apparently struck by a small piece of metal which pierced one of the containers, releasing the agent.

The agent affected the three men and caused them to kill everyone else on the shuttle.

If asked, the woman will explain that the military agent induces paranoia and homicidal mania in those exposed to it. The agent decomposes rapidly (which is why the PCs were not affected by it) but has a long duration (estimated to be as long as 40 hours). If asked why Weston didn't attack, she says he is known to have enhanced antibodies which may have interacted strangely with the agent.

The woman provides the PCs with pictures of Weston, as well as all available data about him. She then closes the meeting and leaves.

If the PCs do not accept the job, Bilstants, Towlend and the woman leave, and six solos waiting outside attack. If the PCs escape, they will be hunted mercilessly by the corporation and will be killed if they are ever caught.

If the PCs realize that the company is up to something illegal, they may decide to go to the government. However, without evidence (some A-454) they will be unable to convince the government to aid them. If they go to a company for help, the company may be responsive

Agent-454

Type: Military agent

Strength: +3

Diff: 30

Cost: N/A

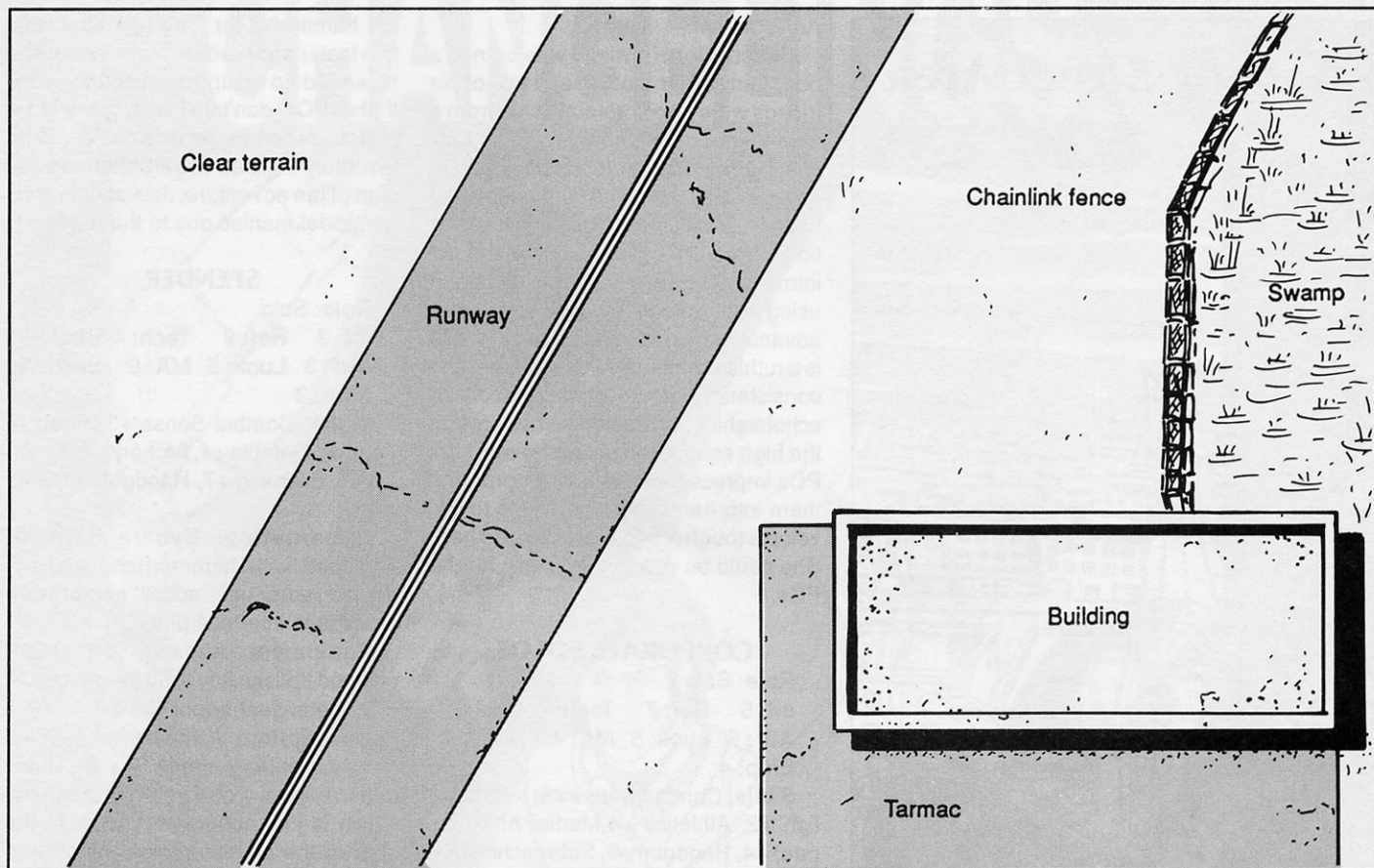
Duration: 4D10 hours

Agent-454 is a heavy-duty military agent which combines a witches' brew of viruses, chemical compounds and even a few nanites. The effects on those exposed to it are as follows: REF is increased by 3. It negates pain effects (+3 to stun saves. It increases CI by 3. The agent also has the following side effects: paranoia (see page 114 of *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*), psychotic rage (see page 114 of *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*). Fortunately, the agent has no lasting side effects. It takes 1D10 minutes for the agent to go into effect after it is breathed in, 2D10 if there is only skin contact.

If a person exposed to the agent has enhanced antibodies, toxin binders or nanosurgeons, the agent will interact with the nanites. The result of this interaction doubles the agent's duration (4D10x2 hours), but reduces the psychotic rage effects as follows: Each hour the user/victim has a 50% chance of going into a psychotic rage for 3D6 minutes. After the rage ends, the person will be extremely paranoid (even more than normal for the drug) for 1D6 hours. At the end of the agent's duration, there will be no agent-induced side effects. The agent takes 2D10 minutes to work if breathed in, 4D10 if there is only skin contact.

The drug currently exists only in a gaseous form. One canister can produce enough gas to fill a sphere 10 meters in diameter. Of course, the actual area of effect depends on wind, the amount of the agent released and so forth. A person in an airtight suit (like a space suit) cannot be affected by the agent, while a person with some sort of filter or breathing apparatus (like nose filters or any oxygen mask) can be affected by skin contact.

The agent is currently unlicensed and is quite illegal to produce, possess or sell.



and hire them to get the A-454. Of course, the PCs don't know which corporation they are currently working for, so there is a chance they may contact the very company they have been dealing with, which would be a bad thing.

HUNT

After fleeing the crash site, Weston enters the city. In his current condition, he is convinced that the shuttle was shot down and that enemies are hunting him, trying to steal the A-454 he is guarding. Weston spends his time moving about the city, for he is far too paranoid to stay in one place for long. While he is almost normal at times, he is subject to random fits of homicidal mania. During such fits, he will attack anything around him. Once a fit has passed, he will be convinced that he has just fought off "the enemies," and he will seek a place to hide. While these fits will result in many deaths, they will also provide a way for the PCs to locate Weston since they can monitor the police bands for reports of psychos. Of course, this method may lead them to unrelated incidents (after all, there are all sorts of "normal" psychos in modern cities).

Once the PCs find Weston, they cannot simply gun him down. He has one canister of A-454 on him, and shooting him is likely to result in the canister being

pierced. This would release the A-454 and would result in a very bad situation, especially if it occurred in a crowded area. Further, Weston has hidden the other canister (the exact location is left to the referee), and it will be found (and probably opened) by somebody at some point if left there. The company that hired the PCs will definitely want the other canister back, and the PCs may be able to negotiate for additional money for finding it (up to another \$1000 each). If Weston is taken alive, the player characters may be able to get the information out of him.

If 80 hours pass from the time Weston was exposed (the shuttle landed about half an hour after he was affected), he will recover from the agent, contact the company and return the canisters. If the PCs find him before he is able to contact the company, he will go along with them (since he was supposed to deliver the items to them in the first place), and the PCs will receive their reward.

RESOLUTION

If the PCs take Weston alive and return both canisters, the company will pay them the agreed fee, plus an additional \$500 each. If the player characters kill Weston but return both canisters, they will be paid the agreed fee. In both cases, the company will see the PCs as dependable and will hire them in

the future for similar jobs.

If the PCs return one canister, they will be paid half their fee and may be hired for later jobs. What happens to the other canister is left up to the referee. If the PCs' actions result in exposing people to A-454 (for example, if they shoot a hole in the canister) the company will not pay them.

If the PCs decide to turn one or both canisters over to the government or another corporation, they may receive a large sum of money (more from another corporation than from the government). If the government receives the A-454, it will investigate the situation (A-454 is quite illegal in most countries), while a corporation will either use it to blackmail the company that produced it or will duplicate it for its own purposes. In either case, the company will seek to retaliate against the PCs.

If the PCs get killed, they will be buried or sent to the body banks, depending on their funeral arrangements.

LOGAN BILSTANTS

Role: Corporate

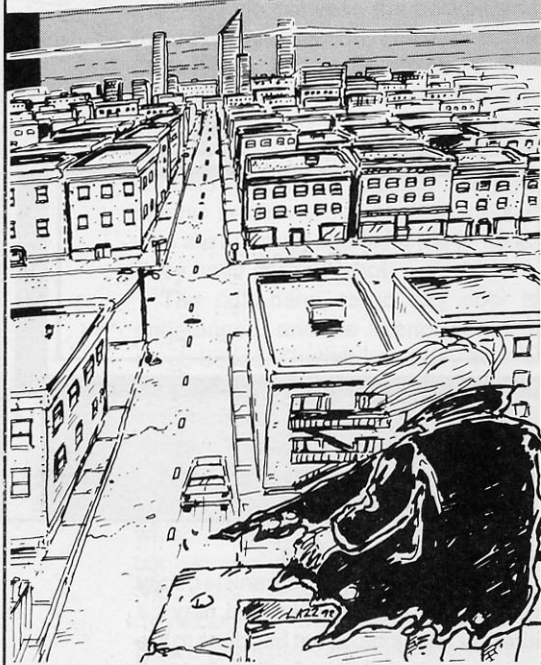
Int: 8 **Ref:** 7 **Tech:** 6 **Cool:** 6

Attr: 6 **Luck:** 7 **MA:** 4 **Body:** 6

Emp: 5

Skills: Resources +4, Personal Grooming +3, Wardrobe and Style +4, Human Perception +3, Interview +6, Social +4, Education & Gen. Knowl-

Generic Street Area



edge+6, Athletics+2, Handgun +2.

Cybernetics: Cyberaudio with phone splice, skin watch.

Equipment: Mini cell phone, pocket computer, Militech Arms Avenger.

Description: Bilstants is typical of the mid-level corporate involved in hiring outsiders. Rather unimaginative, he does not have much personal initiative, but is loyal to the company. To him, the PCs are just tools like his phone or computer.

JANET TOWLEND

Role: Corporate

Int: 9 **Ref:** 7 **Tech:** 7 **Cool:** 8
Attr: 8 **Luck:** 7 **MA:** 5 **Body:** 7
Emp: 6

Skills: Resources +5, Personal Grooming +5, Wardrobe and Style +5, Intimidate +2, Human Perception +4, Seduction +3, Social +4, Language (French) +2, Stock Market +2, Athletics +3, Martial Arts (Karate) +3, Handgun +4.

Cybernetics: Neural ware processor, interface plugs, contraceptive implant, enhanced antibodies, scratchers.

Equipment: Mini cell phone, pocket computer, smartchipped Federated

Arms X-9mm.

Description: Towlend was born to a poor family. Her brother and two of his friends were killed protecting her from a streetgang, and things got worse until she earned a corporate scholarship to college. She excelled in school and happily joined her sponsoring corporation to work off her debt. Once she got into the corporate world, she began using every means available to her to advance her power and position. While is a ruthless, power-hungry person, she consistently earmarks funds for college scholarships and donates her time at the high school and college level. If the PCs impress her, she may incorporate them into her plans (she wants to develop a tough group that is loyal to her). She could be a very useful ally for the PCs.

CORPORATE SOLOS

Role: Solo

Int: 5 **Ref:** 7 **Tech:** 4 **Cool:** 7
Attr: 5 **Luck:** 5 **MA:** 4 **Body:** 7
Emp: 4

Skills: Combat Sense +3, Interrogation +2, Athletics +4, Martial Arts (Karate) +4, Handgun +5, Submachinegun +4, Drive +4.

Cybernetics: Adrenal booster, neural ware processor, smartgun link, cyberoptic (right) with targeting scope.

Equipment: Smartchipped Sternmeyer Type 35, smartchipped Arasaka Minami 10, Kevlar armor jacket SP=14, Mastoid commo.

Description: Corporate muscle. These stats reflect a standard corporate solo. If the PCs are particularly tough, these NPCs can be beefed up a bit (heavier weapons, higher skills, etc.).

JACKSON

Role: Solo

Int: 7 **Ref:** 8 **Tech:** 6 **Cool:** 8
Attr: 4 **Luck:** 3 **MA:** 4 **Body:** 7
Emp: 4

Skills: Combat Sense +4, Awareness/Notice +3, Athletics +4, Hide/Evade +4, Brawling +5, Handgun +5, Submachinegun +4, Spaceplane Pilot +1, Z-G combat +1, EVA +1.

Cybernetics: Speedware (Sandevistan), rippers (both hands), cyberoptic (right) with targeting scope, low lite, antidazzle, neural ware processor and interface plugs.

Equipment: Smartchipped H&K MPK-11, Sternmeyer Type 35, metal gear (torso only) SP=25, leather pants (legs) SP=2.

Description: Jackson is from an African-American clan that is heavily involved in space. Unfortunately, he can-

not handle OG for long (the effects hit him faster and harder than normal), and he ended up drifting into security work. If the PCs don't kill him, he will be grateful when he recovers and will be favorably inclined toward them. At the start of the adventure, Jackson will be a homicidal maniac due to the A-454.

SPENDER

Role: Solo

Int: 3 **Ref:** 8 **Tech:** 4 **Cool:** 7
Attr: 3 **Luck:** 5 **MA:** 6 **Body:** 9
Emp: 3

Skills: Combat Sense +3, Strength Feat +4, Gamble +1, Archery +2, Athletics +5, Brawling +7, Handgun +4, Rifle +7.

Cybernetics: Cyberarm (right) equipped with hammerhand and hydraulic rams, pain editor, neural ware processor, interface plugs.

Equipment: Armalite .44, smartchipped Kalashnikov A-80 heavy assault rifle, metal gear armor SP=25.

Description: A macho-man, meat headed, killing machine, Spender doesn't like anyone smarter than him, which is just about everybody. At the start of the adventure, he will be in a homicidal state due to the A-454 (this is actually not much different from his normal state).

WESTON

Role: Solo

Int: 7 **Ref:** 9/11 **Tech:** 7 **Cool:** 9
Attr: 7 **Luck:** 4 **MA:** 6 **Body:** 7/9
Emp: 2

Skills: Combat Sense +6, Intimidate +2, Leadership +4, Hide/Evade +3, Wilderness Survival +2, Athletics +5, Martial Art (Karate) +4, Driving +2, Handgun +6, Submachinegun +6.

Cybernetics: Kerenzikov boosterware (+2), neural ware processor, interface plugs, subdermal armor, muscle and bone lace, enhanced antibodies, cyberoptic (right) with targeting scope, teleoptics, lowlite, antidazzle, cyberarm (right) with reinforced joints, RealSkin, popup Militech arms X-22, nose filters.

Equipment: Smartchipped Colt AMT Model 2000, H&K MPK-11, Metal Gear SP=25.

Description: Weston is a former US soldier who is now a free-lance solo. He is an involuntary cyborg. During his service, he was shot up in a firefight and put back together with metal parts and nanotechnology. His motivation is to accumulate enough money to retire comfortably and have his metal parts replaced with cloned organic parts. If the PCs take him alive, he will be grateful and willing to aid them on occasion. Ω

CHANGELINGS



BY ANDY SLACK

TIPS FOR TRANSLATING CHARACTERS, EQUIPMENT, AND ENTIRE CAMPAIGNS BETWEEN GAMING SYSTEMS.

Every so often, a referee wants to use something in a campaign from another RPG. It's not that difficult, and current trends in RPGs make it easier. But before you begin, you need to consider some questions.

WHY AM I DOING THIS?

There are three main reasons for conversion: importing scenarios, importing characters and exporting campaigns.

Importing Scenarios: Often I see a scenario I'd like to use—but it's been written for a game my group doesn't play. Rather than create new characters for a one-off scenario, I convert encounters and treasure into a system we use. If you do this a lot, the broad, anarchic canvas of the **MegaTraveller** Imperium is an excellent base campaign. Because of the vast distances and wide variations in worlds, there is almost nothing you can't import into it.

Importing Characters: Less often, I transfer characters into a new campaign. If you're doing this a lot—say the main thread of your campaign is time travel or hopping between parallel universes—**GURPS** is a good base rules system, because it covers a wide variety of campaign backgrounds and styles.

Exporting Campaigns: Least often of all (and most difficult), you might keep a campaign running and change the underlying rules system. (I know a referee who used the **MegaTraveller** Imperium background with **GURPS Space** rules.)

WHICH WAY ARE WE GOING?

Are you moving your PCs into a new campaign or extracting things from another game to use in your own? It's harder to convert PCs to a new game system in terms of arithmetic and in changing the characters' stories. If you are moving PCs, a dimensional gate is a good compromise; the PCs retain their existing history, home-worlds etc., but are moved wholesale into the new campaign, maybe with the long-term goal of finding a way home.

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Is the converted material for a one-off session or a permanent part of your campaign? If the new stuff is around permanently, it can wreck play balance. Creatures and NPCs are not normally a problem, but background and equipment need to be watched. Suppose the PCs bring a **MegaTraveller** fusion gun into your **Cyberpunk** game, for instance.

WHAT WILL I TELL THE PCS?

How will you explain the change to the players, especially if you're moving the PCs to another universe? Here are some rationales I've used. Pick one, or use them as a springboard to inventing your own:

Game Within a Game: The scenario is a virtual-reality computer game for training or entertainment. Creatures and equipment cannot be brought back to the "real world," but the PCs might keep any experience they earn. Death will be painful, not permanent.

Twilight Zone: The patron is a being from the far future or a parallel universe. The scenario may take place in the patron's world or the PCs'. Creatures and equipment may enter the campaign permanently, but will be one-off gimmicks and need not fit in with the rest of the campaign background. I've run fantasy scenarios in an SF setting with this approach, which shakes the players up wonderfully. The PCs should uncover this for themselves rather than being told.

Conspiracy Theory: Don't explain anything at all. Leave it to the PCs to notice discrepancies between what's happening to them and

the game's published background, then assure them there is no discrepancy, just something they haven't figured out yet. If you have no fixed explanation, wait for them to come up with an explanation you like during play, then adopt that as your rationale.

HELPFUL TRENDS

Several trends in gaming make conversion easier:

NPC Experience Levels: Many games have simplified rules for generating NPCs. For example, **2300 AD** splits NPCs into Green, Experienced, Veteran and Elite classes, with simplified attributes and a blanket set of die modifiers. It can be easier to bring new players into a campaign by starting them off with an NPC. If your game doesn't use this approach, introduce it. Once you have generic levels of competence, you can determine that an Experienced NPC in the source game is an Experienced one in the target game, and that's that. A knowledge of basic statistics and your favorite game will let you build your own conversion table.

Task-Based Skills Rules: The current generation of RPGs tends to group tasks into grade (Simple, Routine, etc.). If your system doesn't have this, introduce it. From then on a Simple task in one game is a Simple task in another. Typically, a character with minimal skill has a 50% chance of success at a Routine task, and other grades adjust the chance by several tens of percent either way (for example, in 40% chunks for **2300 AD** or 50% steps in **Cyberpunk**).

CONVERTING CHARACTERS

Don't bother converting individual skills for NPCs. A given NPC will be, say, Experienced in every skill he needs to use in the scenario, and that's that. The key aspects of NPCs are their personalities and physical tags (limps, wears a monocle or whatever); these are invariably defined well enough in plain English.

If you're converting PCs, start by reading both games thoroughly and making a list of which attributes and skills are equivalent. Often, one skill in game A is covered by several in game B. If converting **2300 AD** PCs to **GURPS**, the ubiquitous Melee skill translates as equivalent levels in Brawling, Axe/Mace, Knife/Spear (for bayonets) and Shortsword (for machetes). Should the PC never have used a bayonet, it might be reasonable to drop the Spear skill, for example.

Calculate the probability of dicing each level of attribute in both games, then translate based on this. For example, in converting a **Traveller** character to **2300**, the PC may have Intelligence 8. The 4D6 probability is 76%, the chance of rolling a 16 or less. That translates to Intelligence 12 in **2300**, as 4 is always deducted from the roll.

Calculate the probability of success at a Routine task in the old RPG for each skill the PC has. Convert the skill levels to give the same chance in the new system. Suppose a **Cyberpunk** PC needs to roll a 4+ on 1D10 to pick an Average lock; that gives him a 7 in 10 chance of success. The closest equivalent **GURPS** skill level would be Lockpicking-12, giving a 74% chance of success. The **GURPS Basic Set** has a table on page 45 for determining levels.

Other attributes of a PC—weight, complexion, etc.—can be converted in similar ways, or by the referee's best guess. Your PC may be bloodthirsty; in most games, that's just the way you play him, but in **GURPS**, it's an attribute—the Bloodlust disadvantage. Things not converted at all in one system are either dropped on conversion or dived from scratch, according to which way you're going.

CONVERTING EQUIPMENT

The key is to convert by function, not by statistics. Suppose your **2300 AD** PC has a Skyhopper jetpack. Nevermind the listed attributes; the function it fulfills in the game is that of the **MegaTraveller** grav belt, so give him one of those. Likewise, his portacamp becomes a hand computer, and the **Cambaceres**-class survey ship becomes a Type L lab ship.

Weapons are often easier to convert; most games have a 9 mm pistol, so your **Twilight: 2000** Beretta 92M becomes a Traylor M-47 in **2300 AD** or a plain vanilla auto pistol in **MegaTraveller**. **Ω**

Sample Skill Levels for Generic NPCs

Experience	2300 AD	Twilight	GURPS	Cyberpunk
Green	0	2	9	5
Experienced	1	4	12	6
Veteran	2	5	15	7
Elite	3	6	18	8

For **Traveller** and **MegaTraveller**, use **2300 AD** skill levels.

To Rescue

One of the great satisfactions of the Victorian Era setting in **Space: 1889** is that of roleplaying in a more civilized time. In such a milieu, gentlemanly conduct is as valued as machismo—often more so! A gentleman can go farther and impress more of the right people than a macho he-man. The action-oriented types modify their behavior to act in a somewhat respectable fashion, unless they want to be considered boors, lower-class brawlers, upstarts etc. Even Americans practice some sort of manners.

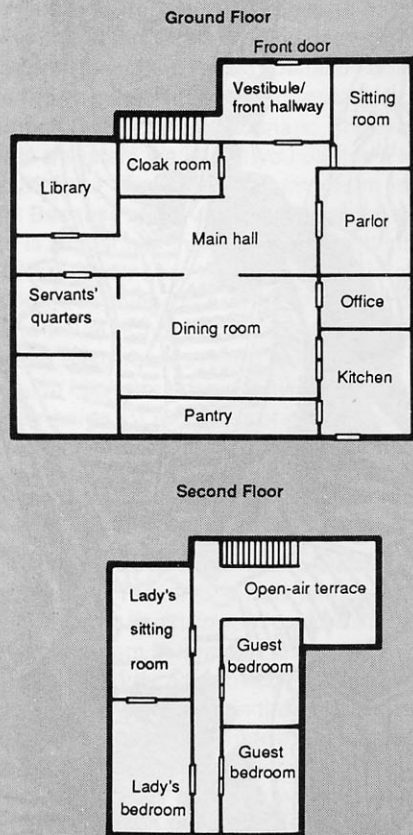
Of course, this does not mean the age has no place for the adventurer, the man-among-men, the hero. Indeed, there's something courtly about the era which encourages a sort of swashbuckling spirit and inspires the gallant explorer, the person who ventures into the unknown and faces untold dangers with eagerness and civility. Even the stories of the American West are filled with heroes of this stripe—their manners may not be up to those required for an audience with Her Majesty, but they have hearts of gold underneath their buckskins and grimy shirts.

A Lady Fair

By Craig Sheeley



The House of Jean LeClerc



True, the hardheadedness and pragmatism that make the worlds go round still underlies the deeds of dignified derring-do. However lacking in romance, the fact remains that life goes on, and someone has to do the actual work, no matter how dirty. This is the sort of thing that motivates a great deal of explorers, before Marco Polo and Columbus on to the present—after all, they weren't out travelling for their health or curiosity. No, it is the promise of cold, hard cash that pries most great discoverers and explorers from their homes and sends them into the mysterious boundaries of known space.

The planets, Mars and Venus, collect all types, including the hardened bottom-line entrepreneur and the boisterous wide-eyed romantic. Mars in particular holds promise of great wealth—if the streets of America are paved with gold, then those of Mars are paved with liftwood. This naturally attracts a large number of people seeking new frontiers and freedom from the growing social regulation of Earth—much to the Martians' dismay. For these are the very sort of people human society is most happy to lose—the troublemakers, the

rebels, those whose very existence threatens entrenched authority and status quo—dreamers, dissidents, nonconformists, idealists, ruffians, loners, vagabonds, con artists, thrill-seekers, opportunists and so on. In short, the very sort of people most often described in roleplaying games as PCs.

ANOTHER NIGHT, ANOTHER FIGHT

This adventure requires that the PCs have, or can lay their hands on, an aerial vessel of some sort. The adventure begins in one of the outer cities—Avenel, Moeris Lacus, Karkarham, Meepsoor, perhaps even in Oenotria or Crocea, if the adventurers are able to go to those cities.

While the adventurers are enjoying a quiet meal in a Martian public house on a dull night,

they run afoul of some ill feelings. The signs are there for all to see. While the adventurers sit and eat, they are favored with poisonous glares from various corners of the room, and several natives mutter darkly to each other. Finally, one of them can contain his ire no longer and hurls a drinking mug (luckily made of hardwood, not pewter—metals are too rare on Mars for that sort of thing). It's just off target and lands in the middle of one of the adventurer's meals (optimally in a large bowl of soup, for the spatter effect).

This turns into the signal to commence a mass melee. At least 10 of the native patrons surge to their feet and fall upon the aliens, hurling more mugs, wooden plates and wooden utensils, then following up the barrage by closing to fisticuff range. No weapons are in use, but the adventurers are outnumbered and battered by the tsunami of tableware (treat the attacking Martians as Green NPCs with Brawling skill 1, and treat the crockery as rocks, doing 1 point of temporary damage per hit).

After two rounds of melee, a new commotion is added, at the outside of the brawl. Several people seem intent

on making their way to the player characters, cracking a few heads in the process. After a few natives drop to the floor with knots on their heads, the rest drop the adventurers and flee, scattering through the doors.

The PCs' benefactor sheathes his sword and offers one of them a hand up.

"I apologize for the actions of my countrymen," he says in fluent, if accented, English. "Permit me to assist you. I am Murrat."

Some of the PCs (those more familiar with Martian society) may well suspect that Murrat is leaving off a title of some sort. The fellow is average size for a Canal Martian—that is to say, around 62 centimeters—smoothly handsome in a Martian sort of way. He is attired in durable but fairly wealthy clothing, with a long-sword hanging from his opposite shoulder, in the method used by medieval knights. He is accompanied by five other Martians, who are dressed in the same fashion, save that their clothing is not as richly constructed. They also have long-swords at their sides and look like they know how to use them.

A TALE OF HEARTACHE

Murrat reseats the adventurers at his own table and calls for the landlord to bring another dinner for them.

"I must apologize for the actions of my people," he says. "They are ignorant and often see no farther than the ends of their noses. Distant inequities become a personal thing when they perceive a chance to revenge themselves. They see redmen, any redmen, as representatives of the troubles your people have brought to our planet."

Murrat shrugs his shoulders and buries his nose in a mug of the local liquor. When he sets the mug down, he chuckles wryly and continues his tale: "Strange that I should assist you. For I have a more direct reason than any man in this house to hate redmen. But being an educated man, I know that you are not the redmen who have wronged me."

"The redmen war on the league of city-states. In the midst of this war, pirates from both sides find easy prey, since the warships that usually sweep them from the skies are busy elsewhere. I believe it is your custom to call them privateers. We have glamorous names for them as well, but state-sponsored or not, they are still pirates. Some are good men at heart; many are not. It was my chance to fall foul of the latter."

"There is a lady, of one of the city-states, who has me at the most severe disadvantage in nature: She has my heart. I was wooing her, ever so slowly,

with decorum, for such a thing is not done lightly or crudely! She had many suitors, and making a choice was fraught with delicacy, because of the repercussions. So I strove to win her, and dreamed of her at my side. But alas, this came to an abrupt end. She left on a journey and did not return. Heart-stricken, I set in search of her, to discover her fate. And I learned that her ship had been taken by one of the aerial scourges; she is in the hands of redman pirates.

"She is still alive. I have been able to discover that! But she is held captive deep inside the redman lands, indirectly guarded by English forces as well as those of the pirates. You see, the pirate has a powerful redman backer, who profits from the depredations of the pirate ship—there are always such people, among my folk as well as yours—and they covet my lady, for she is beautiful, young and cultured.

"I would give everything I have, everything I am, to deliver her from her captors. I have learned more than their identities; news of the pirate captain's character, and that of his master, have also reached me. And that news is not good. If these tales are true, then she suffers indignities and agonies that should not even be inflicted on an animal, much less a delicate lady of her breeding. To release her from that fate, I offer my rank, my fortunes, my life, without hesitation.

"I have come to this city to pursue this quest. I know where she is held, and I know who is holding her, but the war intervenes—I would not be allowed into the guarded cities of the redmen to succor her. Ah, if I only knew a redman who had a sky ship! I would happily make him a wealthy man and become a pauper to save Lady Alianni." By now his eyes have filled with tears, and he must pause to recover his composure.

OFFER

After hearing this, the PCs may very well be interested in assisting Murrat in his quest, either for love (in the case of the romantics) or for money (in the case of those whose blood flows gold). Should the PCs offer their aid, Murrat accepts their offer fervently. For those wanting proof of reward, he reaches into his purse and draws out a handful of Martian jewelry, easily worth £200.

"There is a cask of this in my possession, the heirlooms of my family," he says. "It is yours when Alianni is rescued!" He gives the PCs the jewels he has on him as collateral.

Once the bargain is struck, Murrat lays out what he knows. Alianni is being

held in the city of Parhoon, in the house of Jean LeClerc. The pirate who captured her is Black Jack Tar Kirk Arithon. The PCs have never heard of either.

Murrat proposes that he and his men accompany the adventurers north to Parhoon, travelling incognito on their skyship as crew. Once in Parhoon, they can find the house of LeClerc and swoop down upon it, surprising the guards and liberating Alianni. He welcomes suggestions from the adventurers on how to go about the rescue, but he insists on staging it with the skyship fairly close by for a quick getaway.

JOURNEY

Travelling north in these war-ridden times is perilous, like taking a ship to the West Indies 300 years earlier. Agreed, the adventurers will be going north, away from the general hostilities, but they still risk running afoul of unscrupulous pirates preying on the shipping lanes and High Martian raiders from the Astusapes Highlands. With a ship, the journey should only take two to three days, but there is still the chance of meeting trouble on the way.

Use the standard one in six chance of an aerial encounter, as outlined in *Space: 1889*, but on the last day of travel, the adventurers are ambushed as they near Parhoon. About 50 miles from the city, a concealed High Martian screw galley rises to do battle with the adventurers! The High Martians have caught the adventurers by surprise, and the adventurers are in danger of the bestial attackers overwhelming them immediately. Have each player character make an Observation task roll against a target of 16; anyone who succeeds spots the High Martians at a range of 600 yards. Otherwise, one of Murrat's henchmen sounds the alarm as the screw galley swoops up at 400 yards!

The High Martians have one *Clearsight* screw galley (if the adventurers have a ship larger than 300 tons, the High Martians have two *Clearsight* galleys). Their intent is to board and capture the PCs' ship rather than blast it—with their flight ability, the High Martians have an advantage in such assaults.

The PCs are caught flat-footed. They cannot change course or fire any weapons for one combat turn, while they call the crew to the deck and load their weapons (treat slow-firing weapons as completely unloaded—for instance, it would take the adventurers' crew two turns to load a rogue gun or other slow-firing weapon). Murrat and his henchmen do heroic duty, fighting off the High Martians with their swords and firing

muzzle-loading rifles into the boarders. They will not use their concealed revolvers unless extremely pressed.

The High Martians use as many troops as they can spare from the galley's operation—this means the captain (a Veteran NPC) and 10 warriors (Experienced NPCs), leaving two gun crews, six maneuver crew, the deck crew and the bridge crew aboard the galley. The High Martians are fearless but will retreat if the captain is killed. When the Martians retreat or are destroyed, the galley's remaining two guns open fire, and the galley swings away at speed 3.

PARHOON HO!

Arrival at Parhoon is properly paranoid—the adventurers' ship is met by an obviously rearmed and refurbished *Clearsight* (converted to steam power, speed 3, armed with two 4S guns fore and aft and two Hotchkiss 6-pdrs on the wings, and carrying 20 marines) flying the Union Jack. The lieutenant in charge orders the PCs' ship to stand down for boarding and inspection. He and his marines look through the ship's holds carefully, and check out the PCs' papers and credentials. Unless he finds something terribly amiss (like evidence of anarchist activity, armed High Martians lurking belowdecks, etc.), he clears the ship and returns to patrol. If trouble starts, the marines have their rifles fitted with bayonets and are ready to fight. Times are tense in Parhoon.

The PCs find out just how tense once they get on the ground. High Martian pirate attacks from the northwest have made everyone edgy, unsure of when they'll strike next. The cloudship taverns ring with stories of attacks and threats from unknown quarters. The PCs' experience on the way into Parhoon is yet another incident of a sort that has become too common of late.

Gathering information on the house of Jean LeClerc is easy. Any resident can direct the adventurers there. The house is located on a hill just on the outskirts of town—"but you won't get in," the adventurers are told. "The master of the house is a recluse and doesn't go out. And he sees no one, at least not during the day. (Dark, furtive glance.) Although he does have folk in at nights. He locks up the bulldog first, see?" Apparently the master of the house is none too fond of trespassers.

GENTLEMAN'S ADVANTAGE

If the adventurers have friends in high places who would have clearance to secret information (naval intelligence officers, high-ranking diplomats, etc.),

Murrat Deltot (Elite NPC)

Murrat Deltot is an Oenotrian noble, residing in the city-state of Deltoton. He is only a minor noble, of a rank corresponding with the knights of feudal Europe, a warrior by trade. His business has not been profitable since the British arrived, so his fortunes have dipped. In Deltoton, Murrat's name is dark. He has never been caught perpetrating any evil enterprises, but rumor serves well enough—the word on the streets is that trusting Murrat is like trusting an eelowaan, because sooner or later he turns on you. And rumor has it right.

Murrat has studied the British, questioning captives, meeting merchants, sneaking into British cities to observe and meet his enemies. He believes that he understands them well and can fool them with greater ease than he fools his own people. He is charismatic, a good actor and consummate liar. His greatest weakness is his ego. His success—the fact that he's never been caught—has gone to his head. He thinks he's superior to everyone, and he resents anyone who demonstrates superiority to him. When he's busy with one of his schemes, he sticks to whatever part he's playing—for instance, with the British, he stays polite and mildly subservient. But once the masquerade is over, he makes his disdain apparent, gloating over his victory.

Attributes	Skills
Str: 4	Fisticuffs 3, Throwing 3, Close Combat 5 (edged weapon)
Agil: 5	Stealth 4, Crime 3 (forgery), Marksman 3 (pistol)
End: 3	Wilderness Travel 2 (mapping), Fieldcraft 1, Tracking 2
Int: 6	Observation 4, Gunnery 2 (muzzle-loading cannon)
Cha: 5	Eloquence 5, Theatrics 4, Bargaining 4, Linguistics 4 (High Oenotrian, English, Parhooni, Koline)
Soc: 5	Riding 3 (gashant), Piloting 2 (cloudship), Leadership 4

Motives: Ruthless, Arrogant, Aggressive.

Appearance: Murrat is a polished item. He is moderately tall, smoothly handsome—his features lack the usual strength of Martian facial topology, making him look close to human—and always clean. His manners are excellent, his conversation witty, his demeanor friendly. That is, until he decides he doesn't need you any more. He carries his broadsword (treat as a cutlass) more as a rod of office than as a weapon, though he can use it. He hides a light revolver under his tunic.

Retainers: Murrat's men are loyal to him (they have to be—they've done so many foul deeds that a word from him would result in their painful execution). They are Veteran NPCs, with broadswords (cutlasses) and light pistols hidden beneath their tunics. They obey Murrat's orders.

and if they press for information on the house of Jean LeClerc, they meet with suspicion. If the adventurers tell Murrat's story, the informant is shocked. If the adventurers are known to be bad sorts (American traders usually fit in this category), the informant will assure them that Murrat's story is correct—then will swing into action after the adventurers leave, moving Alianni from the house and doubling the garrison.

If, however, the adventurers are known to be straight arrows and worthy of HMS government's trust, the informant sets them straight immediately:

house of Jean LeClerc are full of the sort of furniture and clutter that is now fondly referred to as "Victorian." This reduces effective movement to one-fourth normal. Anyone moving faster than this must make a Difficult: Agility test (target level 12) to avoid falling over hassocks, throw rugs, end tables, secretaries, etc. Anyone passing this test may move at one-half normal movement rate.

Lady Alianni is heavily guarded. The admiralty has placed some of its best troops here to protect her. The house itself is surrounded by an eight-foot high wall, and a large bulldog with a nasty

"Good grief! This fellow has gotten news of one of the navy's closest secrets! It is true that Kirk Arithon took a cloudship and captured Lady Alianni. However, he's a bonafide privateer working for HMS government. She was brought here for safe-keeping, as a prisoner of war. The house is actually the admiralty's, and she's a guest of the admiral. She's being treated according to her station, which is quite well, don't you know."

If the adventurers seem baffled, the informant smiles and enlightens them. "Alianni is one of the wealthiest property owners in the city of Deltoton. She's quite a power in Oenotrian politics and has always been somewhat opposed to the war—bad for business and all that. We're holding her for the right moment; when the Oenotrians start to lose influence, we offer to release her if the city-state of Deltoton will withdraw from the war. What with her wealth and position, it's a fair bet."

The informant has no knowledge of Murrat Deltot or what his game is.

THE HOUSE OF JEAN LECLERC

The rooms in the

temper is allowed to run loose at night in the enclosure. Statistics for the bulldog are as follows: *Size:* 1x1 *Move:* L40 *Wounds:* 2 *Save:* 1 *Weight:* 75 pounds *Weapons:* Teeth (2,2,0,2).

There are 10 guards at the residence, plus the staff of the butler, the cook and the maid. The house staff are treated as Trained NPCs, while the guards are Experienced NPCs. The guards are usually stationed in the following fashion—one at the vestibule/front hall, one at the back door in the kitchen and two on the upper landing at the top of the stairs. The others are either asleep in the upper guest bedroom/bunk room or lounging about. The guards are armed with Lee-Metford rifles and bayonets; the upper landing has a Maxim gun on a tripod that can be deployed out onto the terrace.

There is a guard officer present, who sleeps in the other guest bedroom. He has a heavy revolver and is an Elite NPC.

Lady Alianni spends most of her time in her sitting room or bedroom, attended by her personal maid (a Canal Martian, captured with her). She is treated well and is fairly well liked by the guards.

ESCAPE AND SUCCESS

Murrat uses every argument to enlist the PCs' active aid in the rescue—mentioning that he and his crew assisted during the pirate engagement, playing on their sympathies, even pointing out that if Alianni doesn't make it back from the rescue, the adventurers don't get the cask of jewels.

Alianni will go with her rescuers, glad to escape her imprisonment. She is less than happy to see Murrat, whom she considers somewhat odious, but she will go along with him in order to return to Deltoton. True to his word, Murrat will give the adventurers a cask of jewels once they return him to any Oenotrian city. The jewels are quite real and quite valuable, worth another £2000 (he keeps his word because now that he has Alianni in his power, £2000 is a drop in the bucket).

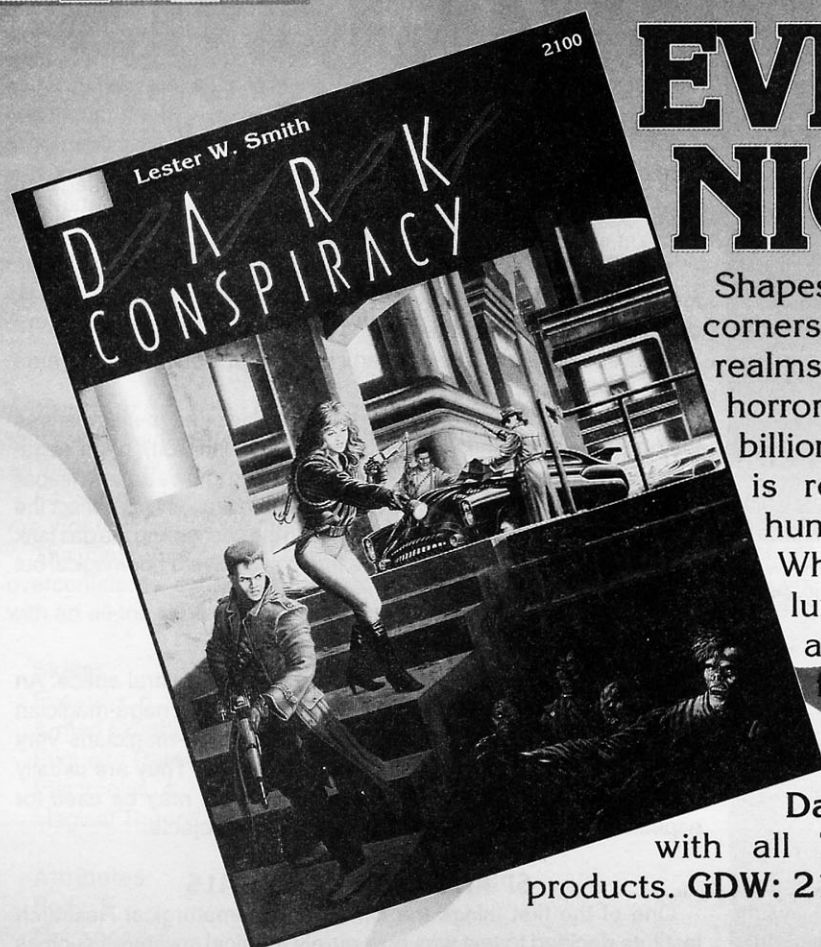
Of course, if the adventurers actually did invade the house and steal a prisoner from the admiralty, it's likely that they are now *persona non grata*, as well as having a price on their heads.

If they might have discovered his game before the rescue, HMS government might not be averse to laying its hands on Murrat and questioning him a little.

Someone of Murrat's talents might even be turned into a double agent. Ω

W

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An optional rules supplement by David Perry

Professor Matthew Hawkins first put forward his now-famous Intelligence-Generated Reality Inversion Field theory (IGRIF) in the spring of 2047 at the Chicago Thaumaturgical Research institute. Put simply, the theory went something like this:

The fact that magic and certain meta-human races feature so prominently and so frequently in folklore shows that these legends are undoubtedly based on a previous Awakening, or possibly Awakenings. Given that these legends are true, how could stories have come about of, for example, humans destroying dragons, when anybody attacking a dragon with a sword would be fried by a spell before he could do any damage?

Hawkins' colleagues replied that these stories were obviously fiction created around distorted memories of the Awakening. Hawkins disagreed and argued that the stories were true. And for them to be true, there must have been certain people immune to magic. And if they existed then, they must exist now.

Despite the scorn poured on this theory by his colleagues, Hawkins embarked on a worldwide search for the magically immune people he was sure existed. His colleagues dismissed him as a crank and so were more than a little embarrassed when two years later he reappeared with Miles Freeman, the world's first nega-magician.

RESEARCH ON NEGA-MAGIC

Research has shown that the nega-magician's powers are manifested in a field that the nega-magician unconsciously maintains around himself, even when he is asleep or unconscious. The width of the field varies but never reaches out beyond two centimeters from the nega-magician's body.

Within this field, no form of magic can exist.

Theories as to why this is are mixed but generally fall into two schools of thought. One, the minority school, believes that the nega-magician's field is a form of magical talent which absorbs all magic within its area to maintain its power, a sort of magical vampirism. The second, more popular, theory maintains that the nega-magician's mind maintains the field around him. Within this field, some claim, the physical laws of the planet are changed to laws wherein magic cannot exist. In effect, the nega-magician maintains his own personal reality. Both these theories are just theories, and no one really knows how a nega-magician's powers work.

EFFECTS OF MAGIC

Nega-magicians are completely immune to all forms of magic. They cannot be harmed by combat spells, fooled by illusion spells, affected by manipulation spells or detected by detection spells. Magic cannot affect them at all. Similarly, the powers of paranormal animals cannot affect a nega-magician.

A nega-magician's immunity to magic includes the powers of physical adepts and magical weapons. If a nega-magician is hit by a physical adept doing a Killing Hands attack, he takes damage as from a normal punch. If hit by magical weapon, he takes damage as

if hit by a normal weapon. In addition, every time a nega-magician is hit by a magical weapon, there is a one in six chance that the weapon will lose its magical properties forever.

Nega-magicians can never cast spells of their own, or have spelllocks cast on them, or have beneficial spells such as healing or disguise spells cast on them.

Area spells cast at a nega-magician will not work within the area of the spell as normal.

Magicians still take the drain for spells canceled by nega-magicians as they have still cast the spell. It is possible to indirectly harm nega-magicians through magic. For example, if a mage throws an area fireball spell at a nega-magician standing by a car, the fireball won't affect the nega-magician. But it may have an effect on the car (igniting the gas tank and causing an explosion), which in turn could have a nonmagical but nonetheless harmful effect on the nega-magician.

ASTRAL SPACE

Nega-magicians quite simply don't register in astral space. An astrally projecting mage could be standing next to a nega-magician and never realize it. Naturally, this makes nega-magicians very popular as spies and corporate intrusion agents. They are usually too rare to waste on guard duty, although they may be used for especially important or magically dangerous projects.

SPIRITS AND ELEMENTALS

One of the first things the Chicago Thaumaturgical Research Institute decided to test was how purely magical creatures such as Elementals would react to a nega-magician's power. To this end, they summoned an air elemental and ordered it to attack Freeman. The air elemental replied, "Who?"

The mage in charge pointed to Freeman and explained that he was the one the Elemental was to attack. The Elemental said, "Who?"

After a half-hour of unsuccessful wrangling, the mage asked Freeman to stand in front of the air elemental, then ordered the air elemental to advance five paces, reasoning that this would take it through Freeman's field. The air elemental took one step forward, then stepped two paces to the right of Freeman, walked past him, then took two paces left and walked two paces forward—taking it to exactly where it would be if it had taken five straight paces forward.

When asked why it had stepped by Freeman, the air elemental vigorously denied ever having stepped aside.

Repeated experiments with other Elementals and Spirits produced exactly the same results.

Nega-magicians appear to be totally invisible to purely magical creatures, but some subconscious instinct prevents them from accidentally coming into contact with a nega-magician's field. For this reason, a Spirit or Elemental can never detect or affect a nega-magician. (Some mages suggest that the Elementals can see nega-magicians but wisely refuse to have anything to do with them.)

CYBERWARE

Even with regard to cyberware, nega-magicians follow none of the usual rules concerning magic.

While cyberware usually causes a steady and measurable decline in a magician's powers, nega-magic seems to operate on an all-or-nothing principle. While some nega-magicians have lost their powers after minor surgery (such as implanting a datajack), others have retained theirs despite major cybernetic alteration. The power loss is never gradual—either it completely stays or it completely goes after cybernetic enhancement.

In game terms, for every piece of cyberware implanted, the GM should roll 1D6. If the roll is less than or equal to the number of points of Essence lost, then the nega-magician has lost his powers forever. A roll of a 1 automatically means the roll has failed.

NEGA-MAGICIAN ARCHETYPE

You never heard of a nega-magician!? What am I? Untouchable, that's what I am. Your enemies can throw spells at me all day, and all they'll get is a headache.

Face it, chummer, for magical shadowrun, you can't do without me. For that matter, for any shadowrun, you can't do without me.

The nega-magician's immunity to magic tends to make him overconfident—something that can be a fatal mistake for someone with an all-too-human vulnerability to bullets.

Skills:

Firearms: 6
Armed Combat: 5
Etiquette (Street): 3
Electronics: 4
Magical Theory: 4

Attributes:

Body: 5
Quickness: 6
Strength: 5
Charisma: 3
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 3
Reactions: 6
Essence: 5.4

Cyberware:

Smartgun link
Datajack

(As the nega-magician has taken two pieces of cyberware, he has to make two rolls to see if he's kept his power. Even though he hasn't lost a point of Essence yet, if he rolls a 1, he will lose his power.)

Contacts:

Corporate
Street samurai
Rigger
Fixer

Gear:

Armor jacket, Browning Max-power, H&K S variant, Flash grenades, Combat axe, IR goggles Ω



**A teenage
girl disappears
at the local mall.
Police investigators log her
as a possible runaway,
but something darker
may be lurking beneath
the incident.**

One of the player characters has been contacted by a close friend, Trudy Forrest, who lives in the suburbs of Atlanta. Trudy's teenage daughter, Shareen, has disappeared, and Trudy wants the adventurers to find out what happened. She cannot offer very much, but will agree to pay all the player characters' expenses during the search.

According to Trudy, Shareen was getting ready for a party one Friday evening. At 6 p.m., she went to the local shopping mall, Park Forest Towne Center, to buy some hair mousse. When Shareen did not return that evening, Trudy assumed she had gone directly to the party. But the next day, she didn't come home, and none of her friends had seen Shareen at the party. The police investigated, but found nothing. Shareen has been logged as a possible runaway, and the authorities have gone on to more important cases.

GATHERING INFORMATION

There are several sources the players can check for reports on Shareen's disappearance: the local police, the *Atlanta Constitution* news service, her friends and the shopping mall management.

Local Police

The adventurers can get the incident report from the local police, but it doesn't say much more than Trudy's account. The investigating officer, Detective Carter, isn't very optimistic about the chances of finding Shareen Forrest: "This kind of thing happens all the time. We simply don't have the resources to search for every kid who goes missing."

News Service

The *Atlanta Constitution* has an on-line news service available via modem, with all the paper's back issues for the past few years. Less high-tech investigators can go to a library and look at microfilms. There are hundreds of missing person reports from all over the Chatatanta metroplex, but an Easy: Intelligence task roll will reveal that over the past year, nearly a dozen missing persons were last seen at the Park Forest Towne Center mall. The news database will also mention that the former security chief of the mall, J. R. Bedford, resigned six months ago for unknown reasons.

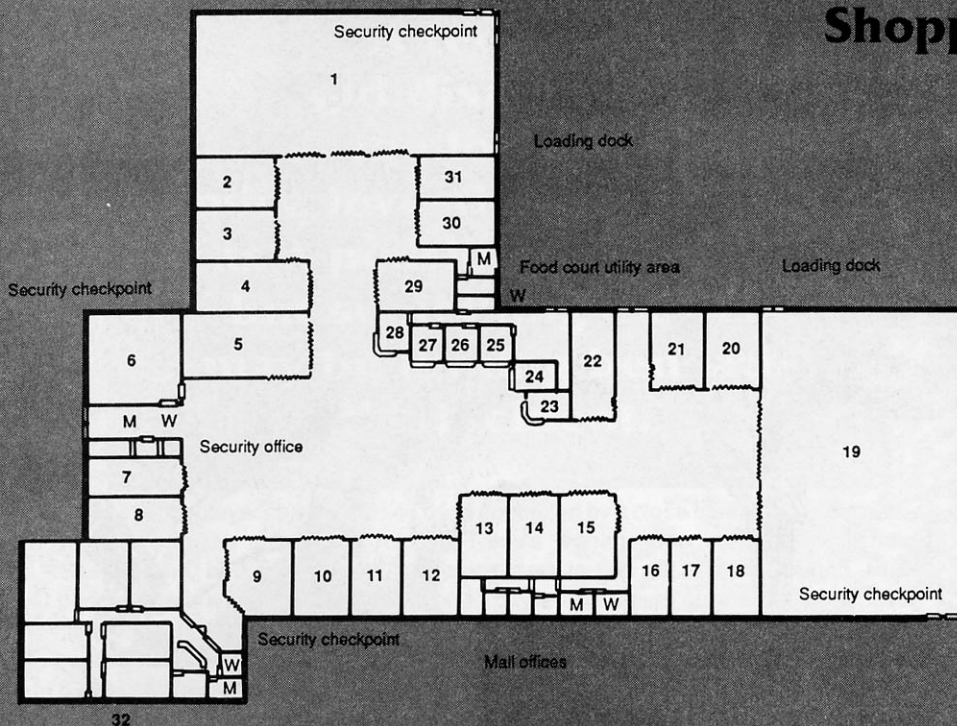
Shareen's Friends

Trudy can give the PCs the names of some of Shareen's friends. Most of them are students at Ted Turner High School. After school, they can be found hanging around at the mall. The kids will be reluctant to talk with an adult; a Difficult: Act/Bluff or Persuasion roll is required to get anything useful. Most of them know nothing, but one girl, Deenie Kelly, recalls that she saw Shareen at the mall the night she vanished: "Like, Shareen's, you know, buying some mousse, okay? And so, I ask if she's, like, going to the party. And she says yeah, but first, you know, she wants to check out some new clothes at Pen-Mart, right? But she never showed up."

An adventure by James L. Cambias



Shopping Mall



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 Pen-Mart (department store) | 12 Wal-Dalt Books | 22 PowerJam (music) |
| 2 Elite Feet (women's shoes) | 13 Vacant | 23 Sushi Shak (sushi) |
| 3 Lester's Games (games and toys) | 14 In Step (women's shoes) | 24 Mucho Macho (Mexican food) |
| 4 Shoe Warehouse (shoes) | 15 Chic Mystique Boutique (clothing) | 25 Chicken King |
| 5 Pharmatek (drugstore) | 16 Loren's Sharper Trend (gadgets and gifts) | 26 Soy 'n' Krill |
| 6 Cap'n Wally's (restaurant) | 17 Vacant | 27 Vacant |
| 7 Michelle's Maternity Fashions | 18 Hair To Stay (hair styling) | 28 Frozen Fun (desserts) |
| 8 Iguana Republic (clothing) | 19 Sears-GUM (department store) | 29 On with the Shoe (shoes) |
| 9 Pro-Tech (athletic shoes) | 20 Ladyslipper (shoes) | 30 Vacant |
| 10 S&S Software Shack | 21 Tech Center (electronics) | 31 Fun Zone (arcade) |
| 11 Alexandra's Secret (lingerie) | | 32 Holo-Scope Super 7 Cineplex |

Shopping Mall Management

The manager of Park Forest Towne Center is Nathan Heem. Heem likes to talk about how his mall is the heart of the community, a modern version of the old town square. But questions about the disappearances provoke a much less friendly response: "There is no evidence that any of those missing people actually disappeared here at the mall. Our security is first rate. If you continue spreading rumors about this center, you will face legal action. I have no further comments at this time."

Mall Security Guards: If the PCs try to get information from the mall security guards, it will require a Difficult: Persuasion roll to get any answer other than, "I can't comment about that." On a successful roll, a guard will tell the investigators to check with Joe Bedford, "but don't tell anyone I said so."

Bedford

Joe Bedford was security chief at the

Park Forest Towne Center until a year ago, when he resigned to become a private investigator. Today he lives and works in a seedy old motel in the decaying heart of Atlanta.

When the PCs initially contact him, he will be suspicious (he fears that they are agents of SoProDev, the corporation that owns the mall). But if the investigators seem sincere enough, he will show them his secret files.

Bedford has collected clippings and notes about 14 missing person cases which involved the mall. All have occurred within the past year. There seems to be no connection among the cases. The victims are all ages, all ethnic groups and both genders. "The only thing I can see is that these people were at the mall," says Bedford. "Something in there is making people disappear. Of course, SoProDev doesn't want anyone to find out about that—they've been working hard to keep this covered up."

Bedford can give the PCs a detailed

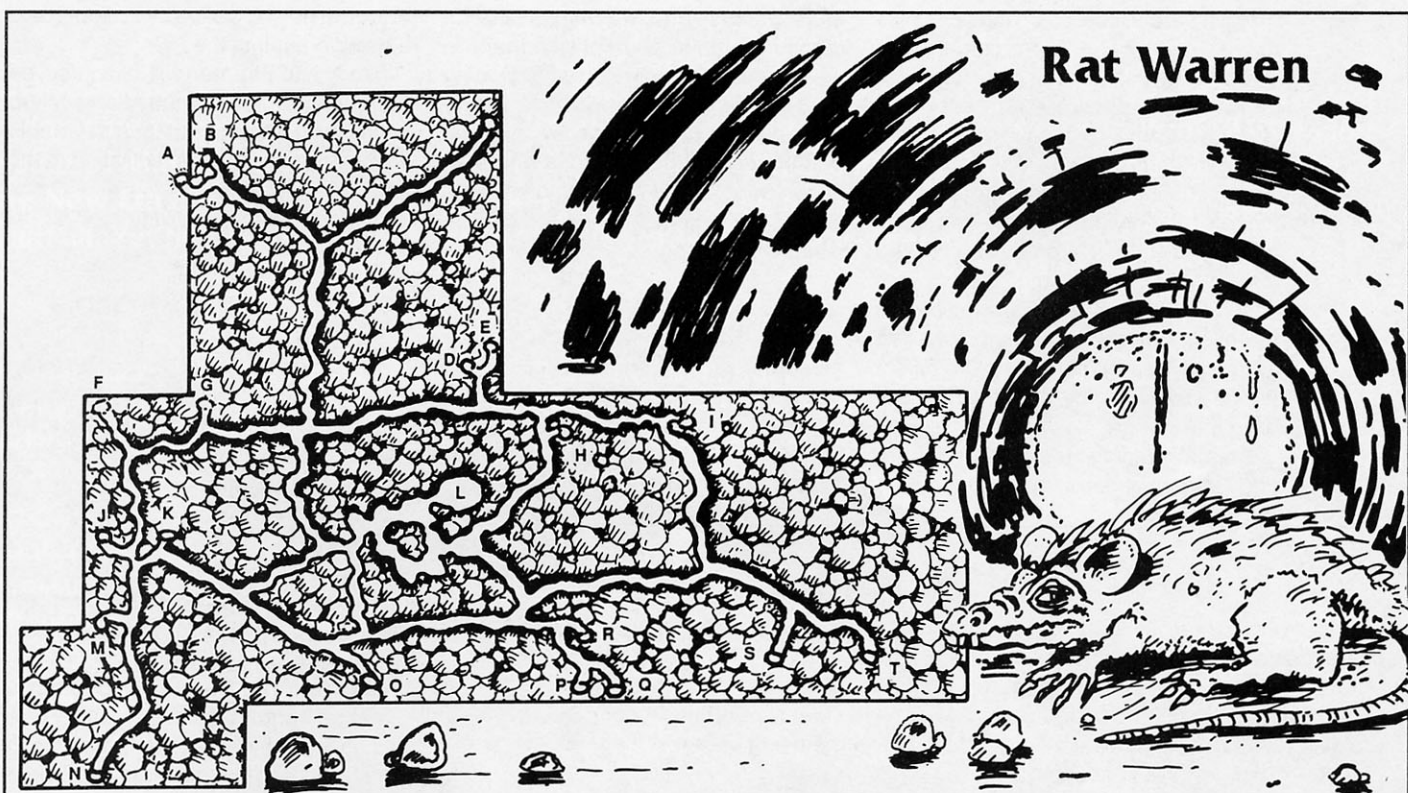
description of the mall's security systems (see below) and can provide them with a keycard, which he "borrowed" before leaving. The card will allow access to the mall and will prevent the security droid from reacting to the party.

WARNING

Once the player characters have done some snooping around, they will receive an anonymous postcard in the mail, bearing the message: "Stop meddling where you aren't wanted. Someone might get hurt." If the PCs continue their investigations, they will get a second note: "Leave town or die."

Nathan Heem is behind these threats, as he doesn't want any word to get out about the disappearances. After the second note, he will pay a group of gang members to beat up the PCs. (Use the standard Ganger NPC from the rulebook.)

Heem will make sure the gang attack cannot be traced back to him.



- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| A A planting bed outside Pen-Mart. | I The storage room at the Tech Center. | O The changing room at Alexandra's Secret. |
| B A changing room in the Junior Miss section of Pen-Mart. | J, K The restrooms next to the security office. | P, Q The restrooms next to the offices. |
| C The staff restroom at Pen-Mart. | L Beneath a bench in the center of the mall. | R A changing room at Chic Mystique Boutique. |
| D, E The restrooms next to the food court. | M The changing room at Iguana Republic. | S The changing room in the Casual Male section of Sears-GUM. |
| F The kitchen at Cap'n Wally's. | N The closet at the Cineplex. | T The women's restroom in Sears-GUM. |
| G The storage room at Pharmatek. | | |
| H The food court utility room. | | |

PARK FOREST TOWNE CENTER

Park Forest Towne Center is owned and operated by the SoProDev corporation. The mall contains the usual mix of stores and is identical to thousands of other malls across America.

Security

To enter the mall, shoppers must pass through one of the security checkpoints. These are manned by a pair of guards who screen out gang members, panhandlers and anyone who is drunk or obviously drugged. There are metal detectors set up at each checkpoint, and no guns or large knives are allowed in. A backup team of three guards waits in the security office.

When the mall is closed, all the entrances are sealed by steel doors, with Armor Value 6. They are controlled by a Maxiguard Multilock system, which opens for authorized palm prints or keycards. It recognizes the prints of all the security guards and the mall manager. Each store manager has a keycard. The shopping center is locked from

12:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.

The stores have folding chain-link steel gates. Most have no additional security, but the two department stores, Pen-Mart and Sears-GUM, have beam alarms covering the entrances.

At night the mall is patrolled by a Kraus Maffei-Deere GB-1000 guardbot. It can visually recognize the security guards, manager and anyone who displays a keycard; all others are considered intruders. The robot will tag intruders with its paint marker gun and will alert the mall alarm system to call the police. If attacked, it will use its tear gas canisters. It does not react to anything with a smaller mass than 30 kilograms.

RATS IN THE MALL

A group of super rats have taken up residence beneath Park Forest Towne Center. They use tunnels to capture humans, snatching people from changing booths and rest rooms. They eat some of the captives and give the rest to the humanoid ETs for their horrid purposes.

There are 16 super rats in the colony. Most carry knives, but three go armed with minisaws, two have zip guns, and one has an ET sonic stunner. (Minisaws and stunners are described in **DarkTek**; if that is unavailable, substitute machetes and a stun gun.) Four are unarmed.

The rats are clever and will remain hidden as long as they can. But if intruders get into their tunnel network, the rats will attack, fighting to the death to protect their secret.

Rat Warren

The super rats have dug a labyrinth of tunnels beneath the mall, with secret passages giving them access to many of the stores. Fortunately for the player characters, the rats have not bothered to set any booby traps in the tunnels, as they are confident they will not be discovered.

Entrances: There are 20 entrances to the rat warren. All are cunningly concealed, requiring a Difficult roll against Observation or Tracking to find—but

only if a careful search of the location is made. See the Rat Warren map.

Down Under: The tunnels are about three feet in diameter and are unlit. Humans can only crawl or wriggle through them in single file, and it requires a full action to turn around. The tunnels twist and turn, so the maximum visibility is three meters. Because the tunnel walls are soft dirt, they do not channel the force of an explosion, so the effects of explosives are resolved normally. Gas or flamethrower bursts will be channeled by the tunnels, doubling their range.

Beneath the center of the mall are nine large chambers, each about three

meters across and two meters tall. Humans can move and fight normally in these rooms. Three captives (including Shareen) are tied up in these chambers, waiting to be eaten by the rats. The bones and possessions of a half-dozen people litter the floor, along with a couple of bodies the rats haven't finished dining upon.

AFTERMATH

Once the player characters have found the rat warren and rescued the captives (assuming they survive), Heem will stop sending them anonymous threats and instead will offer a bribe of \$10,000 to avoid any unpleasant pub-

licity. But he and SoProDev will still bear a grudge against the PCs.

Trudy and Shareen will, of course, be eternally grateful, and the Atlanta Metro police will probably take a favorable view of the characters' activities in the future.

Of course, any surviving rats will remember, too.

JOSEPH R. BEDFORD

Level: Veteran.

Skills: Computer Operation 5, Interrogation 4, Melee Combat (Unarmed) 6, Melee Combat (Armed) 4, Observation 6, Small Arms (Pistol) 4, Small Arms (Rifle) 2, Streetwise 4.

Initiative: 4.

Physical Description: Bedford is a large, beefy man with crew-cut gray hair. His demeanor is bland and expressionless, from years of police work. Bedford is 43 years old.

Motivations: *Heart King:* Bedford is a man of honor, who believes that protecting the public is more important than maintaining the company's image. When he learned that SoProDev was concealing the disappearances, he resigned in protest. *Club 9:* Bedford is not afraid of a fight, and he frequently tries to solve problems with force. In combat, his goal is usually to disarm or subdue opponents without harming them. This does not apply to nonhuman monsters. Ω

Super Rats

Super rats are discussed in some detail in **Dark Races Compendium, Volume I**. A condensed version of that material is given here.

The super rats are the product of genetic engineering experiments gone awry. They are about the size of a dog (10 to 15 kilograms) and have human-level intelligence. Super rats are evil, vicious creatures who dwell in the shadows, preying on unwary humans.

Strength: 2 **Education:** 2 **Move:** 5/10/20/40
Constitution: 5 **Charisma:** 1 **Skill/Dam.:** 3/2
Agility: 7 **Empathy:** 3 **Hits:** 4/6
Intelligence: 4 **Initiative:** 5 **# Appear:** 1D6

Special: Super rats have a 75% chance of knowing how to use human weapons. They have Small Arms (Rifle) 4 and Thrown Weapon 6.

Super rats will seldom take on a human in melee combat, preferring to snipe at them from a distance or attack from behind. They are sadistic and utterly without mercy.

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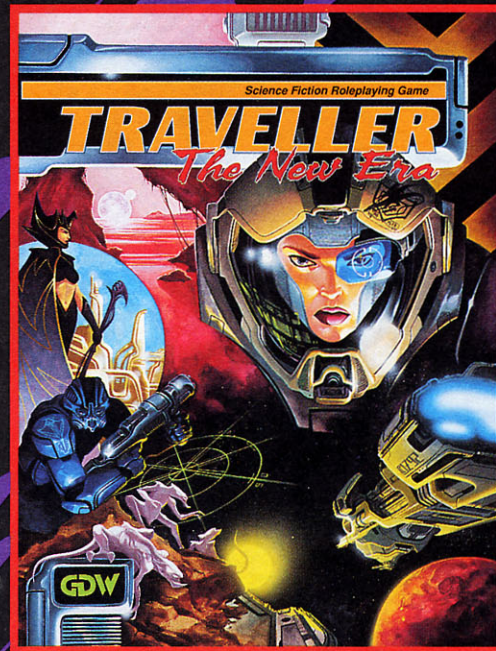
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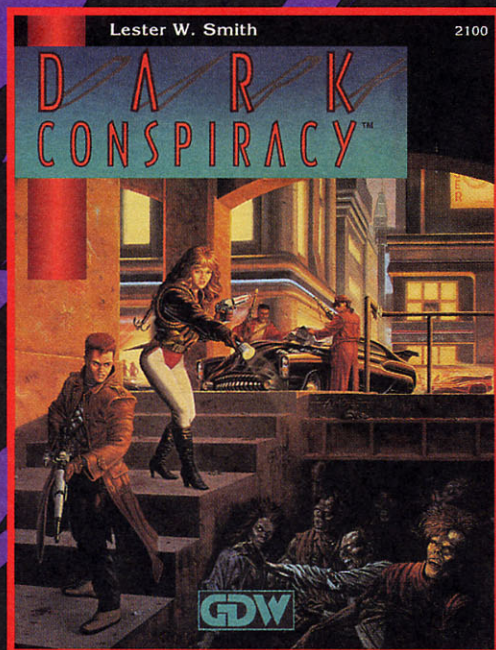
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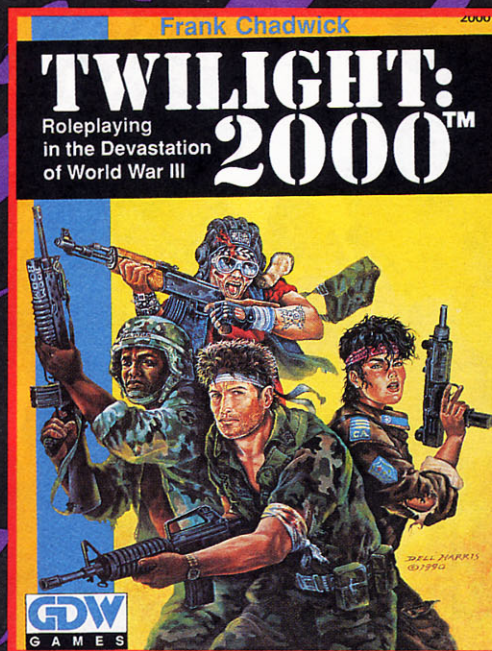
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BURIED TREASURE

By Greg Videll

The PCs **IN** this adventure are racing toward jump point with two TIE fighters in immediate **PURSUIT**. At least four more are beyond long range, but gaining.

Characters can be derived from any PC template. The only requirement is that some PCs or NPCs be experienced with starship skills. If the group lacks a starship, they are issued the *Transorb*, a *Rho*-class shuttle, detailed below. Run space combat using the basic rules and start at medium range. Please note that West End Games' rules upgrade **OF** tasks has been incorporated into this adventure. When rolling a task, inexperienced characters use the lower end of **THE** range, while veterans use the higher end.

Sometime during the pursuit, the player characters' ship is hit by a laser bolt (fudge the rolls, if necessary). While the shot does no critical damage to the ship, it does severely degrade several components in the ship's power plant and drives. Roll against the Starship Repairs skill, diagnosing the **UNEXPECTED** damage on a result of (6-10). The components should make it through the next jump (of course, don't tell the characters that), after which the team should consider finding a nice, quiet place to lay over for repairs. The Imperials will no doubt have broadcast a hypercomm containing the ship's description to surrounding systems, thus denying the better-travelled systems to the PCs.

Muugrah: Consulting the local nav charts will, on a roll of (6-10) against Planetary Knowledge, show a notation by Alliance intelligence that an extensive starship graveyard exists on the planet Muugrah. The parts needed to repair the ship can probably be found there. Lacking any sizable Imperial presence, slightly off the trade routes and within easy reach, the system provides the quiet place the characters need. Close out the episode by having one of the PCs make the Astrogation roll to jump to Muugrah.

Muugrah is located in the middle ground between the Imperial core and the frontier, although it's closer to the frontier than the core. The system is just off the established trade routes in a sector where piracy is a definite problem. The Imperial Navy devotes a substantial amount of its local resources to combating this criminal activity. The Empire, recognizing the threat to local shipping, has partially relaxed restrictions on starship weaponry for just this reason (meaning that the *Transorb's* weapons fit isn't technically illegal in the system).

Much of the planet is open grassland which is home to a fair number of ranchers and prospectors.

STARSHIP GRAVEYARD

You've encountered no major problems in securing clearance to land at Squarn's Junkyard. Squarn is apparently the owner of the junk heap visible outside the viewports. Off in the distance, about 10 clicks, is the city of Slaibo, its towering spires and gently curving domes reflecting the light of the system's twin suns.

As the Transorb drops closer to the landing pad, you look out over kilometer after kilometer of rusting, broken and tangled metal. Only the occasional recent arrival is noticeable for its lack of decay. There's a slight shudder from the ship as the hydrostasis modulators and flux capacitors begin to breath their last.

Squarn owns several square kilometers of land, almost all of it covered by starships in various states of decay. As new wrecks are brought in, they're dumped on old ships already there. The hulks are stacked so deep that the ones on the bottom have compacted to form a kind of humus of hull metal and ship steel.

Guard Force: Visible on the property is a contingent of six mercenaries employed by Squarn (use the Merc template if stats are required). They guard the yard and assist the junk seller if he

runs into problems with unruly guests. They have access to two speeders should the need arise.

Squarn: The PCs will be met at the pad by an assistant of Squarn's. The assistant, Klev, will lead the characters to a permanently emplaced military surplus shelter module which serves as the junk seller's office. The assistant will "talk up" the services of the ship graveyard along the way.

Once there, Klev will introduce the PCs to Squarn. Filled with artificial friendliness, the junk merchant will undertake to negotiate a fee for allowing the team to browse about the property and for use of landing space. He is also willing to rent a repulsorlift skiff should the characters so desire. Refer to the Arrogant Noble template for Squarn's stats.

Negotiations: Squarn will set an initial price of Cr500 for "browsing rights" and Cr10 an hour for the skiff. This is subject to negotiation, which should be roleplayed in accordance with the rules set forth in the basic rulebook (see *Star Wars*, page 36, for more on the Bargain skill). Squarn will act as though every credit the characters shave off his proposed fee is taking food out of his corpulent mouth. The characters should have a small contingency account given them by the Alliance from which to draw upon (the exact amount of funds on hand depends on how tough the gamemaster wants to make negotiations). Squarn will give the PCs free of charge (which he goes to great lengths to point out) his most current computer map of the ships on his property. The cost for any parts found is the subject of future negotiations.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Slogging through the uneven metal mountains, you try to orient yourself according to the map on the databoard Squarn gave you. It's tough going because the landmarks you've picked out aren't easy to find. Off to your left should be a Vellian drop ship, but instead there's a hummock denoting a partially collapsed cargo container. It's about then you hear the soft trilling whistle.

Care must be taken while walking through the lot. Otherwise, the PCs should roll a saving throw of (11-15) against Dexterity to avoid falling and cutting themselves on the exposed metal debris. There are also a number of hidden pits, weak spots where the underlying ships have succumbed to the forces of nature. A roll of (11-15) against Perception is needed to spot such a deadfall. Damage in either case should

be minimal and not life threatening. The search can also be complicated by the presence of Mynocks or other creatures living in the junk heap. Stats for Mynocks can be found in the sample adventure in the rulebook.

Squarn's map is as accurate as possible given the circumstances. No one is terribly intent on accuracy when they dump a wreck or chart it. Rolls against Technical are required to determine the type of ships which should contain the needed parts (6-10), and to locate a specific hulk (11-15). Getting into the right ship and removing the required parts is dependent upon the task rolls devised by the gamemaster in accordance with a particular ship's age, condition and so on.

Discovery: In the process of scavenging for parts, one or more PCs will hear a whistling noise after rolling (6-10) against Perception. Those characters who do very well on their rolls will realize that the sound is produced by a droid, probably an astromech model. A Search roll of (11-15) is required to track the noise back to its source. Alter the roll to (6-10) if all the PCs cooperate.

What the characters find is a mostly buried cargo container which seems to be filled with nothing but junk. It is carbon-scored and open to the elements because of a large rent in the top. As the PCs peer inside, a Perception task (11-15) reveals the remains of a Y-Wing fighter with a droid still locked in its socket. The little automaton lets out a cry of relief upon being spotted.

Rescue: The characters should be more than a little curious as to how and why a Y-Wing ended up in Squarn's junkyard. Recovering the droid will go a long way toward answering these questions.

The hole in the container's hull is quite brittle. Also, the scrap the fighter is resting on is unstable. In both cases, a roll of (11-15) against Dexterity is required to avoid a mishap. (Falling damage is in accordance with the gamemaster's chart in the back of the rulebook. From the opening in the cargo container to the "floor" below is about five meters.)

It's up to the PCs to figure out how to get into the hulk and recover the droid. Such basic necessities as cutting tools and ropes are included as basic stores in the characters' ship's locker. Additionally, if the Rebels are in possession of a repulsorlift skiff, it can be modified for VTOL operation. This requires a roll of (16-20) using the Repulsorlift Repair skill. Task failure can result in damage to the skiff. (Squarn will attempt to bully the

characters into compensating him for the damage, or some wildly unpredictable responses to the PCs' attempts to use it.)

Y-Wing: Complicating recovery of the droid is the fact that the clamps holding it in place have jammed tight. While the astromech was able to rewire the socket so that it could draw on what little power remained in the ship's energy cells, it can't free itself from its prison. A Technology roll of (16-20), as well as the proper tools, is needed to free the droid. Unless other measures are applied, it will take a total of 9D of Strength to pull the astromech free.

Looking over the Y-Wing, the characters will note the following details: First, it's obvious that the fighter has been on the short end of a fierce battle. One engine pod is missing, and the other is badly laser scored. Also, both ejection seats are missing from the cockpit. Second, there are indications that the fighter was carrying an externally mounted recon pod. All that's left of the pod is the ragged stub of its attachment pylon.

DEESIX

Finally, the battered and scraped little droid stands revealed in the light of Muugrah's twin suns. It's obviously low on power and wobbles slightly atop the cargo container. Both legs are warped, indicating possibly damaged actuators. Still, the feisty little astromech still seems full of spunk. Time to find out what it knows.

To communicate with the droid requires that it be hooked up to a display screen (its holoprojector is damaged). This can easily be accomplished aboard the characters' ship. Roll (3-5) against Droid Programming/Repair. Squarn will, of course, be willing to help for a fee. If a droid PC or NPC is available, it may also be able to translate for the party. The junk merchant will want Cr750 for the astromech, almost the cost of a new droid. If the PCs haven't become tired of the repeated haggling, conduct negotiations as described in the basic rules.

Deesix's Story: Once able to communicate with the Rebels, the astromech droid, Artoo Deesix, can relate the following information. The Y-Wing was conducting a reconnaissance for pirate bases in the region. The Alliance, which has itself lost ships to the pirates, was hoping to learn enough that it could chart routes around the areas of heaviest activity. Unfortunately, the fighter crew was a little too efficient in the search and became the target of a pirate attack.

A vicious battle ensued which the Rebels subsequently lost. Their fighter mortally damaged, the crewmembers made for a nearby world, intending to attempt an emergency landing. Instead, they were forced to eject (they dumped the information from the recon pod to a storage unit before doing so). The crippled Y-Wing was tractored aboard the pirate ship, which then made for a covert outpost. Deesix "played dead" and, since it couldn't be easily freed from its socket, was largely ignored during the flight.

The pirate outpost commander, upon seeing what his men had brought in, panicked and ordered the fighter disposed of. Being wanted for piracy is one thing. You only get sent to the spice mines of Kessel for that. Being a Rebel means facing the likes of Darth Vader. The starfighter, with Deesix still aboard, was loaded into a cargo container full of junk and dumped at Squarn's yard.

Deesix managed to rewire its socket so that it could obtain enough power from the Y-Wing to keep its memory

intact and monitor the area for any sign of help. With a single-minded determination (not unlike that displayed by R2-D2 in the movies), the droid resolved to somehow get back to the Alliance.

Buried Treasure: The information gathered by the recon pod was also dumped as a matter of course to the astromech droid. It still retains the data on the pirate bases, making its recovery and subsequent delivery to the Alliance vital. Locating the fighter's crewmembers, assuming they're still alive, is equally important. Damage to Deesix prohibits the characters from dumping the data on-site; they'll have to wait until they get back to base. Even the droid is prohibited from accessing the information. The characters, if they can get their ship repaired, are sure to earn high praise for this chance meeting on Muugrah.

UNWANTED COMPANY

You're feeling pretty good as you carefully pick your way back to the landing pad. Bouncing along in your pocket

Transorb

The *Rho* class was the precursor to the *Lambda*-class shuttles currently used by the Imperial Navy and is now considered obsolescent. A great many vessels of the class, of which thousands were built, were sold off as surplus to commercial concerns or scrapped during the time of the Old Republic. A few remain in Imperial service in the outlying sectors of the galaxy.

The *Transorb* has been upgraded and refurbished by the Alliance in order to meet the Rebellion's demanding specifications. All such modifications have been discreetly made.

Craft: *Rho*-class shuttle

Type: Space shuttle

Crew: 2

Passengers: 10

Cargo Capacity: 2000 kg.

Consumables: 1 month

Hyperdrive Multiplier: [x2]

Nav Computer: [Yes]

Hyperdrive Backup: [Yes]

Sublight Speed: [3D]

Maneuverability: [1D]

Hull: [3D]

Weapons: Two dual laser cannons (each pair fire linked)

Fire Control: [3D]

Damage: [5D]

Shields: [1D]

PIRATE SHIP

The pirate ship is a stock light freighter which has had the following stats modified. All others remain as per the basic rules.

Sublight Speed: 3D

Maneuverability: 1D+1

Weapons: 2 laser cannons

Fire Control: 2D

Damage: 4D

Shields: 2D

is the final module needed to bring the ship back on-line. The whole team is looking forward to quitting Muugrah and Squarn, and getting back to base. Even Deesix seems happy as it shuffles along, whistling a nameless tune. It's at that point that you hear someone say, "That's about far enough. Turn over the droid and you won't get hurt."

After the team learns Deesix's secret, there's still the matter of ship repairs to attend to. Once again, the PCs undertake the search and recovery process detailed above. The droid will stubbornly, in its own way, insist on accompanying the team while it goes about its task (it's taken quite a liking to the Rebels). It's sufficiently determined to stay with the team members that it will try to slip off the ship to find them if it is intentionally left behind. This could lead to some interesting side adventures if the gamemaster so wishes. Keep in mind that the astromech could be very useful in expediting the repair process, a spur to the PCs to bring it along.

Just after the characters have recovered the last part they need, they're confronted in the junkyard by a team of eight individuals. All eight are pirates from the same band which shot up the Y-Wing. A particularly cagey Imperial intelligence agent learned of the encounter and is putting the squeeze on the band in order to secure both the

fighter and the droid. He's promised to forget about the pirates if they get him what he wants (a lie, of course).

The pirates' stats are per the Pirate template. Weaponry varies with the individual, referee's choice, and at least one member of the team is carrying a heavy blaster rifle. The band as a unit forgoes sabers, seeing them as a silly affectation. Their ship, parked near the PCs', is a "stock" light freighter (see the sidebar).

Discreet questioning of Squarn and his men has led the pirates to believe they're on the right track. The junk seller referenced a group trailing a droid matching the proper description.

Firefight: The PCs and NPCs running into each other was a chance occurrence. Because of this fact, the pirates have not had the time to lay an ambush or formulate any kind of extensive plan. The pirate leader requests that the PCs turn the droid over to them and broadly hints that violence will be employed if they don't comply. Given the importance of the information in Deesix, the Rebels will soon have a fight on their hands.

How the adventure proceeds from here is dependent on how the PCs deal with the situation. Keep in mind the treacherous terrain of the junkyard, with its hidden pitfalls and animal denizens, while conducting combat or chases. If the gamemaster wishes to complicate matters, Squarn's mercenary contingent

could enter the fray on either, or neither, side. It's even possible for Imperial stormtroopers, dispatched by the intelligence agent pressuring the pirates, to appear. This could easily turn the adventure into a wide-open melee.

Once the characters regain their ship, there's the matter of the remaining module to be installed. Time will likely be critical, and the gamemaster should take this into account while creating the appropriate task rolls. A final chase as the characters make a break for hyperspace is a good way to close out the adventure, dependent on events.

CONCLUSION

"Buried Treasure" concludes with the PCs' ship making the jump to light speed. Barring gamemaster-imposed events, the characters manage to make it back to their home base safely. The Alliance will be quite pleased with the data stored in Deesix. Many Rebel lives will eventually be saved as a result of the information the PCs have recovered.

Depending on their performance to date, the team may be rewarded with increases in rank or responsibility. They may also be tapped to locate and retrieve the missing Y-Wing crew, a lead-in to another adventure.

Finally, the PCs will have made a friend in Artoo Deesix. GM permitting, the little droid could become a permanent addition to the Rebel team. Ω

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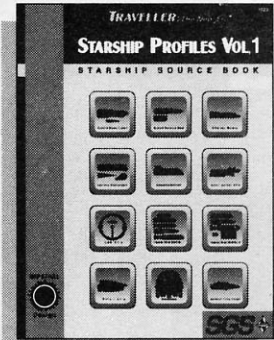
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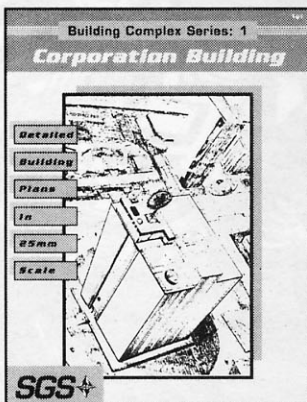
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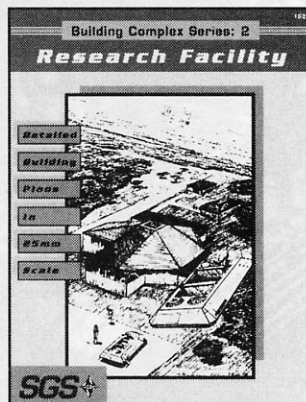


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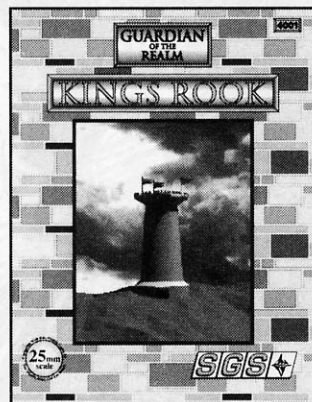


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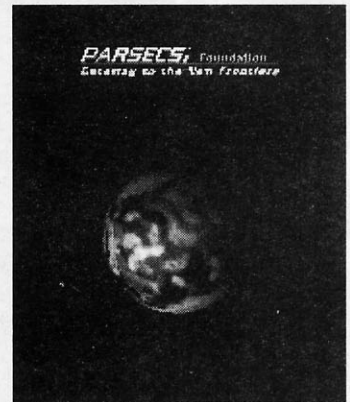


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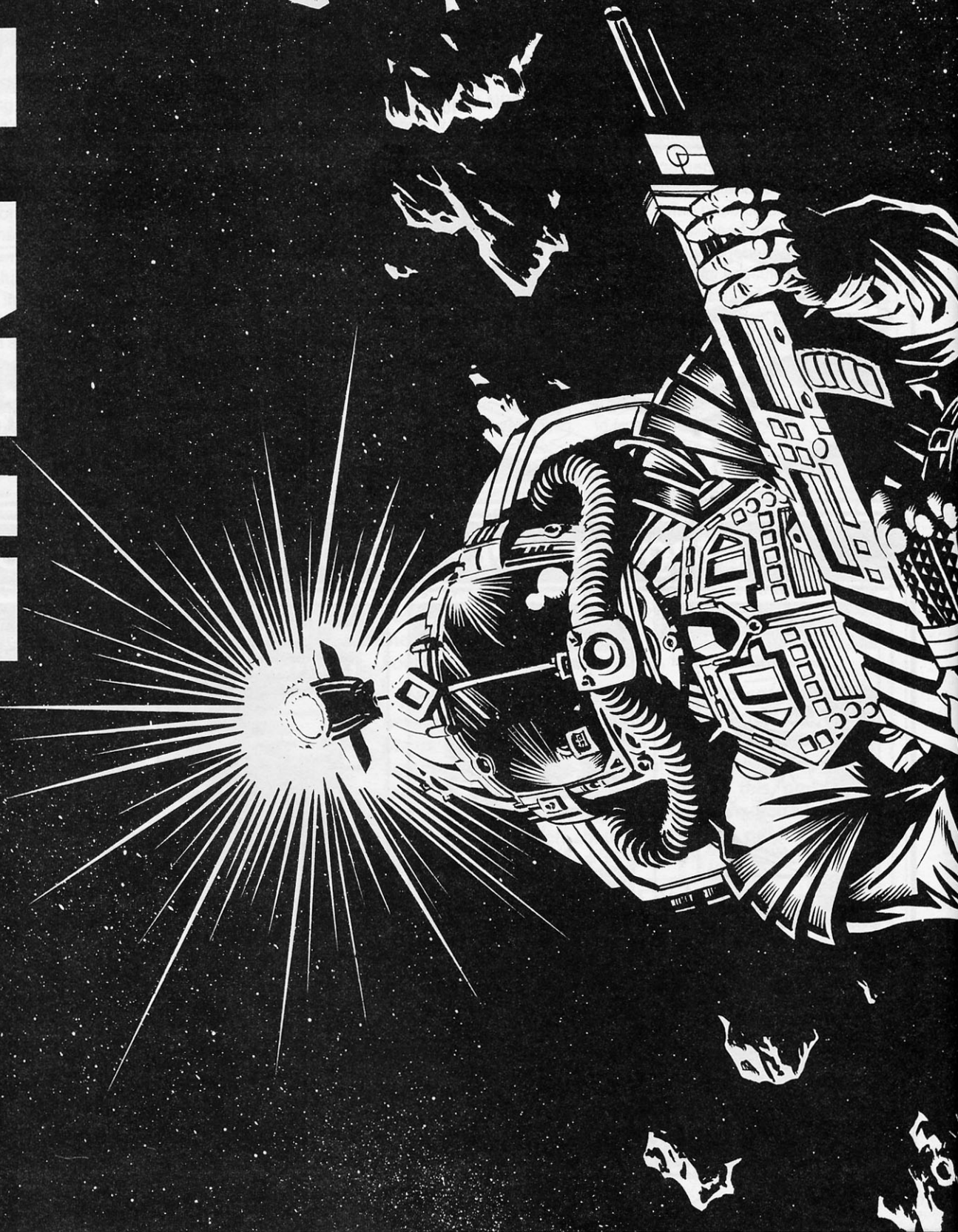


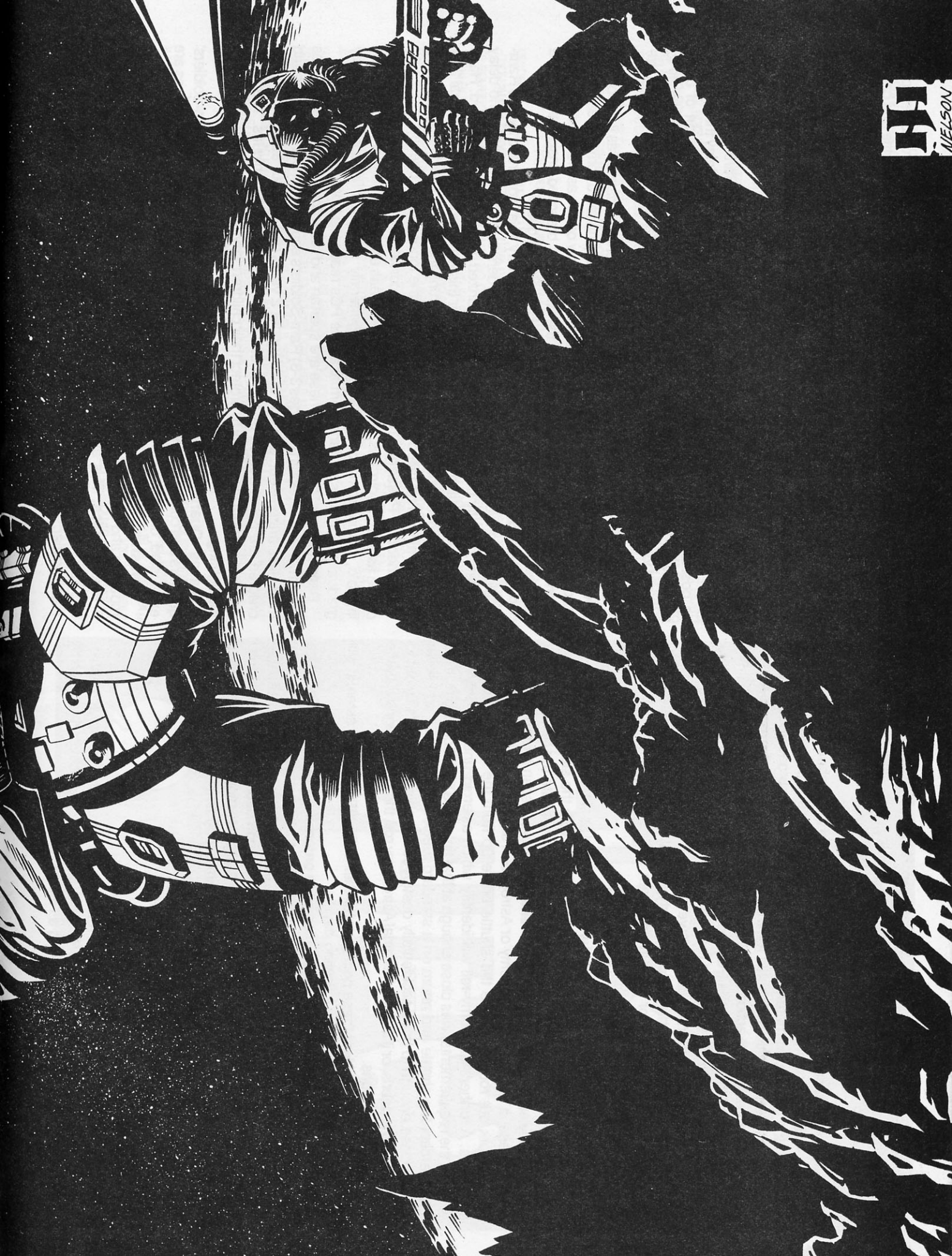
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SO LONER FANTASIES

By Andy Slack





The PCs are part of a small unit of Van Owen's Rangers, assigned to security duty on a small station of the referee's choice in the Asteroid Belt. The detachment is small enough for one of the PCs to be in charge, probably no more than a couple of dozen troops.

The station head summons the PCs and informs them that a shuttle, expected in from a neighboring colony, has failed to arrive on schedule. However, a cloud of debris with the orbital parameters expected of the shuttle is approaching at speed. He wants the PCs to locate the shuttle (or what's left of it), identify the cause for the delay and take appropriate action at their discretion. He will loan them a small shuttle for the duration of the mission; the PCs must provide other equipment themselves. This operation is within the bounds of the PCs' contract with the station head, so no additional reward will be forthcoming. However, the PC commanding the unit can twist regulations to classify this as combat duty, so that hazardous duty rates (*High Colonies*, page 94) are paid for the current month.

APPROACH

The PC with the highest Pilot skill level will be assigned as shuttle pilot (if none have the right skills, allocate the group a generic NPC pilot with the skills listed in *High Colonies*, page 58). The PCs may fly straight out to investigate the debris (the trip takes one day each way), or they may use remote sensing to scan it from the station. In either case, a successful Astronomy or Astrogration skill roll from any PC means he can work out roughly where the shuttle broke up from the dispersion of the fragments. A further Astronomy roll will identify which asteroid (there is only one meeting the requirements) was close enough at that time for a spacecraft to fly from it to intercept the shuttle and return on a standard fuel load—there are no known objects close enough to have accidentally destroyed the ship. If the PCs fly out to investigate the debris, or if they make a final Astronomy roll, they notice signs of battle damage on the debris.

If the PCs fail to think of these points, or fail their rolls, NPCs on the asteroid will supply them with this data the following day.

When he learns of these facts, the station head orders the PCs to investigate the asteroid, in their borrowed shuttle; this trip will take two to three days each way. If they think they can deal with whoever is responsible, the PCs have authority to engage; otherwise, they should conceal their presence and report back. (If the party doesn't think it can take on the base after having scouted it, allocate more NPCs to the group on its return and have the station head send them out again.)

RETRIEVAL

The PCs will return to base using the shuttle.

MAP DESCRIPTION

The asteroid the PCs investigate is an abandoned mine, with minimal accommodations for several dozen miners. The PCs should be able to discover this much by browsing through old records (or making a History roll).

It has been taken over by a band of renegade Ram-Soldiers (*High Colonies*, page 83) who are using it as a base. They have destroyed the missing shuttle and carried off its cargo and passengers. The renegades have no passive sensors other than a telescope (used to find suitable victims for piracy), and they dare not use their shuttle's radar to scan for intruders as it would give them away. The referee should allow the PCs to approach the asteroid undetected. The map shows a small part of a large asteroid, which is rotating slowly to simulate gravity. A Pilot roll is required to approach and dock safely. The docking bay, observatory and personnel airlock are in 0G.

Docking Bay: This contains a small shuttle, guarded by one Ram-Soldier whose duty is to raise the alarm via communicator if intruders enter, then delay them as long as possible. The bay doors cannot be opened from the outside short of using explosives. This will depressurize the area (the airlock will close automatically to prevent loss of air elsewhere in the station), kill the guard and alert all the other Ram-Soldiers.

Observatory: The renegades' telescope is here, currently unmanned as it has broken down. Scattered about are shipping routes and schedules plundered from their earlier kills, used to find future victims. This area has the only window on the asteroid. Airtight doors automatically close to seal off this area if the window is breached. Inside are a slave technician trying to repair the telescope and a Ram-Soldier guard.

Personnel Airlock: The PCs' probable point of entry, this is guarded by one Ram-Soldier just inside the inner door, also under orders to raise the alarm and delay intruders. Initially the airlock itself is depressurized, with both doors closed. Have each character make a Stealth roll if they enter this way; success indicates that they get into the airlock and pressurize it without alerting the guard. The guard notices the intruders at the first failed Stealth roll or when the inner door is opened.

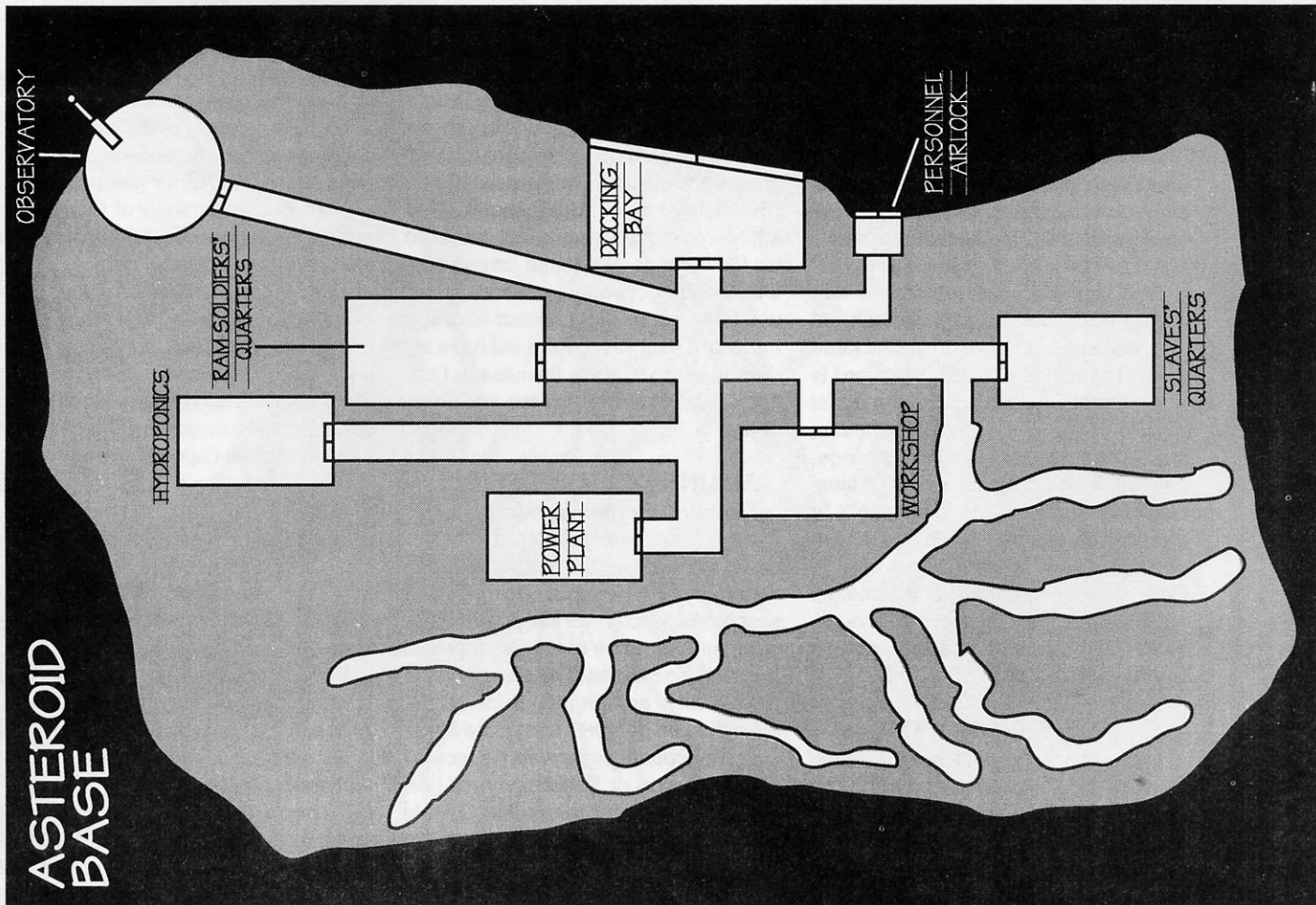
Connecting Passage: This sloping corridor connects the 0G areas of the mine, on the asteroid's spin axis, with the inhabited areas under spin farther out. It is badly lit, cold, damp from condensation and generally spooky. The apparent gravity gradually increases to Earth normal as the PCs reach the bottom end.

Ram-Soldiers' Quarters: These are spartan and resemble nothing so much as an army barracks. Adult (i.e., ages 3-8) Ram-Soldiers equal in number to the PCs and their allies are present, and one child (under 2 years old) per four adults. The older children are being trained by the adults in various military techniques. The Ram-Soldiers will fight fanatically to protect their children; several older children will join in the fighting.

Slaves' Quarters: These have even fewer facilities than the Ram-Soldiers' quarters and contain as many slaves as there are party members. These slaves are exhausted, chained to their beds, of little use to the PCs.

Workshop: Here are a handful of slaves, guarded by one Ram-Soldier, at work repairing and maintaining various weapons and devices.

Hydroponics: This area contains a hydroponic farm large enough to feed the base's inhabitants, being worked by a half-dozen slaves under guard by an armed Ram-Soldier.



Abandoned Mine Tunnels: These are empty. PCs who don't question slaves about the layout can get lost and be ambushed by Ram-Soldiers, who know the tunnels intimately. The PCs get lost almost at once. Thereafter, roll 1D6 every few minutes. On a 1, the PCs find their way out. If there is any reason for the inhabitants to suspect their presence, on a 5-6, the party is ambushed by an equal number of Ram-Soldiers.

Power Plant: This generates barely enough power to keep the base livable. The plant is decrepit and worn, and requires constant attention from the two slaves present.

REFEREEING THE SCENARIO

Ram-Soldiers are biogens (genetic constructs), created by the Band of Humanity to fight in the Purge War many years ago, and long thought extinct. Unlike normal biogens, they are able to reproduce. But like other constructs, they have a very short lifespan—around eight years—and are totally focused on their programmed tasks—in this case, warfare. Thus, Ram-Soldiers cannot exist in isolation. Like soldier ants, they are overspecialized warriors who must depend on others for support. This band has survived for several of their generations by piracy and slavery; all noncombat tasks are performed by slaves.

The Ram-Soldiers are expecting trouble—they're programmed to—and have alert guards posted. Ram-Soldiers should be played as ruthless and competent. Should they beat the PCs—and the PCs should always think they can—any surviving characters will be enslaved and may be rescued later by a follow-up party from Rangers' HQ.

Slaves range from rebellious to broken, but are all unarmed and want to sit out the fight. The referee can use them to rebalance the scenario by having them seize the chance to revenge themselves on their captors—strangling them with chains, attacking with improvised clubs from behind, etc. Any slave freed by the PCs can describe the base layout to them. Captured Ram-Soldiers will never talk (they're programmed not to).

NPCS

Ram-Soldiers: Most of these are very similar, although older ones tend to have higher skill levels. They are equipped with a wide variety of weapons and armor, either left over from the Purge War or captured since. The referee should choose whatever combinations he finds interesting, bearing in mind that the PCs will probably wind up owning most of it. Use generic Weapons Specialist statistics from *High Colonies*, page 58, for adult Ram-Soldiers, but for the older children, reduce the skill levels to those of a normal soldier to reflect their lack of experience.

Slaves: Use a mixture of generic characters from *High Colonies*, page 58, with average attributes. Very few will take an active part in the struggle, and those who do will die swiftly, so their precise statistics are not important.

ALTERNATIVES AND VARIANTS

The referee may choose to have one of the slaves be dedicated to civilizing the Ram-Soldiers. He has been with the band for generations and is revered as a teacher although still a slave. This person will view the Ram-Soldiers as his children, and will try to avoid bloodshed, pointing out that the biogens have only done what they had to do to survive. If the PCs then want to work out a deal with the Ram-Soldiers, good luck to them.

DEATH ON THE DOCKS

By Robert
James
Christensen

The news sweeping London in late October 1893 is that Jack the Ripper is back plying his trade in the back alleys of Whitechapel and Stepney. Seven prostitutes have been murdered in less than three weeks. Scotland Yard is saying nothing about the details of each case, but rumors and gossip have told of such horrid details as missing organs, bodies drained of blood and necrophilia (among other gory tales). The entire East End of London is in sheer terror, and neither the London Police nor Scotland Yard have any clues.

THE INVESTIGATORS ARE BROUGHT IN

The investigators are summoned by Col. Edmund Warnford, an ex-soldier of the Queen's Army, who is distressed by the sudden disappearance of his youngest son, Oswald, last seen three weeks ago. The police conducted a search, but with no sign of foul play, the case was put on hold. Oswald is a bookish yet very eccentric young man with a keen interest in things occultic. Warnford is worried that Oswald, a part-time cellist with the Primrose Chamber Orchestra, has either run off with his "strange, devilish friends" (other occultic fans, including an "Aleister something") or has come to foul play in the lesser sections of the city. With his wife in Cornwall visiting her sister, the colonel has offered £250 for the investigators to find out what happened and if possible find his missing son.

KEEPER'S NOTES

What has happened is that young Oswald, in his diligent studies in the Royal British and Royal Natural History museums, believed he discovered the cave where legendary Merlin lies—right here in London on the Isle of Dogs!

combs. Here, he found a single stone coffin. Ironically, this was *not* the resting place of Merlin, but rather of Mhae-Yrn, an ancient Druidic priest of Shub-Niggarth. Using the Charm of Waking, Oswald woke the sleeping wizard, who took on the eager young man as his apprentice. Mhae-Yrn was interred here by Roman troopers who thought they had executed him.

On the night of the New Moon, Mhae-Yrn will attempt to call Shub-Niggarth to Earth. To do so, he must have 200 SIZ of human blood to first summon five Dark Young and then Shub-Niggarth, who will probably flatten the city. Right now, Mhae-Yrn and the now-insane Oswald are doing the dirty work themselves, but they are also conjuring up ghouls and ghosts to hunt fresh victims. One victim has not been sacrificed to Mhae-Yrn's experiments but rather to his lust—she is kept in the catacombs. If Mhae-Yrn gets enough blood, he will use Greenwich Park to enact his summoning. The investigators will have six days in which to solve the case or London will be destroyed by the malignant entity.

SEARCHING FOR OSWALD

Upstairs in the Warnford home, Oswald's bedroom is cluttered with hundreds of books, notes, and an odd assortment of art, sketches and trinkets. A successful Occult roll will determine a large number to be of various mystical and occultic natures. The artwork in the room is all in an Arthurian Britain slant. Most of them deal with Merlin the Magician. The housekeeper, with a successful Persuasion or Psychology roll, will reveal to the investigators that Oswald was nearly obsessed with the legend of Merlin.

According to Warnford and the house-

keeper, Oswald's main retreats were The Natural History Museum (two blocks away), Albert Hall (where the orchestra often practices), Regents Park (another music locale), the London Library (mostly in the Legends and Lore stacks), the Royal British Museum (in the British and Medieval Antiquities department with Partridge) and London University College (a hangout for his "occultic" friends).

The staff at the Natural History Museum and London Library all know Oswald from his nearly daily visits. With successful Fast Talk or Persuasion rolls, the investigators will convince the staffers to discuss Oswald's most recent research. Otherwise, the investigators are referred to the History and Literature sections.

Vernal's Poem: The references that helped Oswald deduce the whereabouts of Merlin are in the London and Royal British libraries, which have an old copy of Vernal's "Merlin" poem that contains reference to a year 999 quest to seek Merlin to "save the world from the millennium."

10th-Century Manuscript: The second clue is a 10th-century manuscript, written by a Christian monk, located in the attic of the London Library. A successful Library Use roll will uncover this text in one to three hours. A second roll is allowed after the third hour of searching. The writer suggests that "old Roman records in the City Center could tell of Merlin's resting place" (where the witch Nimue imprisoned him). There, the mage would be awakened and help bring forth King Arthur (considered an ancient British persona of Christ). No evidence of a successful quest by the monk are to be found.

The Mage of the Isle: Another book in the London Library, *The Mage of the Isle* by R.J. Davidson, contains a reference to Merlin's long slumber, including the "Charm of Waking," an alleged magic spell that will awaken the sleeping wizard and restore Camelot. However, the charm is actually a spell to return a dreamer from Earth's Dreamlands, where Mhae-Yrn sent his mind before his execution. The page has been written on, and an investigator with a sample of Oswald's handwriting will see that it is his.

Professor Andy Partridge: Partridge is the assistant director of the museum's Antiquities department. He can be found in his office, mulling over some recent archaeological finds. He has been worried about his young friend, and when informed of his disappearance, will be cooperative as possible. He knows a bit of Oswald's more bizarre habits, nota-



bly hiding in the building after hours, spending up 10 hours a day researching trivial items and other compulsive habits. The professor also knows of Oswald's present research area, but not of its results. The last time the professor saw Oswald was the day before his disappearance.

Islas Caninus: The Royal Museum contains old Roman records, which are actually those of an execution by drowning of a suspected barbarian "wizard," the Druid priest Mhae-Yrn. The death occurred three miles away (Roman equivalent) on "Islas Caninus," a sharp bend in the river resembling a dog's tooth. Oswald's enthusiasm and poor Latin skill made him miss the part of the execution.

Oswald's Friends: Oswald's occultic friends—Geoff and Lydia Page, Harlan McGullicutty, Esther Daniels, Christopher Simms, Shephanie Nichols, Roger Kemp and young Allister Crowley—may be found in a bohemian-type coffee house, The Myst Eternal. They all appreciated Oswald's interest in magic and knowledge of Arthurian Britain, but sometimes tired of his dull academic attitudes. Most of them are into the occult for prankish fun, except for the sinister-looking Crowley, who will quietly tell the PCs that Oswald is a fool who will be swayed by powers greater than man. The PCs are left with the vision of Crowley's evil smirk.

TERROR IN THE EAST END

The problem in Whitechapel is unofficially cited to Jack the Ripper, but police sense several disturbing differences in these new crimes. First, the only wounds found were two lacerations in the back of the head and four deep gashes in the pressure points, indicating blood drain. None of the victims suffered any other type of injury. The investigation is not going well, and police are none too cooperative to nosy investigators with wild tales of "monsters and wizards."

Inspector Roland S. Hanson is the Scotland Yard detective in charge of the "Jack" case. Not in the mood for more crackpot insights into the murders, he is quite disturbed by the case, as it is definitely not the work of the original. In order to talk to the inspector, the investigators need to roll a successful Fast Talk, Law or Persuasion task to avoid being shown the door, physically removed from the scene or even arrested as a public nuisance. If convinced of the investigators' intents, Hanson will provide as much aid as he can.

Local Reaction: The locals in White-

chapel are terrified. Citizens are now extremely wary of all strangers, so any "strange" behavior could warrant a call for the bobbies, who are nervously trying to prevent more murders or even an unruly mob intent on dealing out "justice."

Streetwalkers: Local prostitutes are either flippantly uncaring, paranoid (travelling in armed groups) or on temporary leave. The numerous brothels are searching their patrons for weapons and turning over any armed men to the police. One of the local "dollymops," Mitzi Robbins, is certain she's seen "Jack," along with "pagan heath'ns." A young but seasoned veteran, she reported to the police "a bony-white noble-looking devil whi'a ferrin' accent" and "a strange little lad 'cumpnin' a tall, old, bearded feller with Arab clothes sneakin' about the alleys." Authorities discount such fantasies. The investigators will have to interview 3D10 streetwalkers before hearing Robbins' story. The "bony-white feller" is actually an innocent Romanian official taking in the local "business," in case the investigators decide to go vampire-hunting.

McRory Brothers' Meat Market: Another less conspicuous story is that the McRory Brothers' Meat Market in Rotherhithe had several whole steer carcasses stolen with no sign of forced entry. This is the work of Mhae-Yrn's conjured ghosts, who worked their way through the city sewers and then into the slaughterhouse for collecting blood and a light snack.

Yi Soong: If the investigators choose to do so, an expedition into the Chinese section of the East End (Limehouse) will reveal more clues.

A number of Chinese laborers have disappeared, but the authorities flat out ignore these events as unimportant. Inquires will generally be directed to an elderly shopkeeper, Yi Soong. He allegedly saw one of the victims being attacked by what Soong describes as "the most evil of the Yeti race," the creature being tall, semi-human, with "flaming eyes, burning like two lanterns in the night." The thing slipped underneath a sewer grating with a motionless body in its clawed hand. If the party members take him seriously, Soong will present each investigator with a clasp of "magic herbs" and advice that the "Yeti" fears the day and will die if caught in sunlight. The herbs smell pleasant, but are rather useless against the ghosts.

TRACKING DOWN THE PAIR

As the area was industrialized, the

network of caves in which Mhae-Yrn was interred have been covered over with streets, docks and warehouses. With successful Persuasion/Fast Talk rolls, the investigators will learn that local workers have noticed a "rather excited young pup of a lad" snooping around several sewer openings.

City engineers have noticed a mysterious loss of water at Pump 44, but it is not serious enough to warrant repair. The water loss comes from the reopened cavern that leads to Mhae-Yrn's chamber.

Also, workers have noticed that three local beggars have seemed to "move on." A resident hobo of the area, "Wheezer" Evans, has been trying to get the local police to investigate a sewer, where he claims, "tree o' me mates got 'et by a demon, sir'd by ole Scratch he'sef." Known for his tall tales, the terrified old man is ignored by the police as either a drunken hallucinator or just a great storyteller. The demon was actually one of Mhae-Yrn's conjured ghosts which left the cave entrance searching for more victims. The three unlucky hobos ended up as dinner. Wheezer will latch onto any professional-looking investigators who happen through the area and plead his story. Belief and perhaps a little nip of alcohol will reward the investigators with a wealth of information.

The old man does not know of the exact location of Mhae-Yrn's cave, but he will lead the investigators to where he's seen the ghosts, including the site of the attack on his friends. Roll Spot Hidden to locate bizarre footprints of unknown origin. Three successful Track rolls are required by the group to follow the prints to an isolated sewer opening. Otherwise, the investigators will have to search the dark and fog-strewn alleys for two to 12 hours before meeting one of the ghosts.

Roll the party's average LUCK. If the roll is successful, the investigators will spot a hulking and hideous shape dart into a sewer opening. If the party fails the roll, a PC or NPC will be snatched by the monster (keeper's discretion). That unlucky person will have to roll a successful Dodge in order to escape the ghost's vicious claws. Otherwise, the other investigators will hear a bloodcurdling scream and see a pair of struggling legs sail forever into the shadows.

THE WORLD OF WIZARDRY

Upon discovering the sewer entrance, the investigators can either heroically enter the underground viaducts or intelligently return later with maps readily

Continued on page 77.

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available (with Fast Talk/Persuasion/Credit Rating) from the London Public Works Office. The sewers are pitch dark, clammy, and filled with malodorous sewage. If the weather is rainy, the flow is moderately swift and deep. Since the tunnels are big enough, small boats can be used for travel. The investigators will have to search the entire Isle of Dogs sewer system, taking three to 18 hours, unless they have the clue about Pump 44. In this case, the trip takes just under one hour, the long boat ride taking just as long as walking.

Unfortunately, Mhae-Yrn has several ghouls patrolling the sewers for unwary interlopers. One to three ghouls will attack from their overhead grottoes using their inherent Sneak skill to determine surprise, if the investigators are not inspecting the ceiling. If the investigators are actively on guard, use their average Spot Hidden on the Resistance Table (ghouls are a passive 16).

After the investigators reach the Pump 44 section, the current pick ups, and the sound of rushing water fills the putrid air. A section of the sewer has broken away into a six-foot-high cave entrance, with water pouring through. Use either a Climb or DEX percentile roll to enter the cavern. Wading through knee-deep water, the investigators must watch out for several holes and side passages that end with bottomless waterfalls. While travelling in the cave, the party will meet up with one or two ghouls, who stand guard near the main chamber.

Just past the guards, the investigators enter a lighted cave room adorned with new carpets, faded tapestries and rugs, rough-hewn shelves filled with Druidic scrolls, two large pillows and a 10-foot-long stone table covered with furs. A Critical Success on a Spot Hidden roll will also reveal a secret passage to the shore of the Thames. In a rear room, there will be several large barrels of blood (human and animal) and a dazed female chained to the wall. She is a kidnapped scullery maid who was spared being sacrificed in order to become Mhae-Yrn's mesmerized consort. After a week of hospital care, she will regain her identity and recover. If the fifth night has past, the barrels will have been taken to a secret location in Greenwich Park, awaiting the summoning.

Mhae-Yrn is in the chamber 70% of the time and will be alerted to the intrusion. If the investigators arrive on the fifth day or sooner, the wizard and Oswald will attempt to escape with the majority of their magic items to set up shop elsewhere and wait for the next

new moon to attempt the summoning. But if the investigators arrive on the day of the new moon or overwhelm the ghosts in short notice, Mhae-Yrn will be forced to combat the intruders with spells. If the battle goes badly for him, Mhae-Yrn will have Oswald throw several smoke bombs and escape via the secret passage, leaving his "apprentice" behind.

Oswald will be in a half-crazed, bewildered state, sobbing maniacally and wondering aloud why Merlin has forsaken him. A successful Psychoanalysis or halved Persuasion will induce Oswald to reveal that "Merlin will call forth the King at midnight at the Center of the World." This pertains to the fact that Greenwich Park is at 0 degrees longitude. Only Oswald knew this—the ancient Druid has no concept of modern cartography. If the investigators are just as ignorant of the fact, permit them an Idea roll.

Using Library Use skills with Mhae-Yrn's scroll collection will reveal his worship of "the Black Goat with a Thousand Young" (they'll find a drawing of such a creature as Old Gaelic is not to easy to read) and the plans to summon it.

BAREHOVED IN THE PARK

If Mhae-Yrn gets to Greenwich Park, he will first consecrate his stone altar (actually a memorial to George Graham, renowned astronomer and inventor) and then attempt to summon one to three Dark Young to assist in calling forth Shub-Niggath (a base chance of 50%+10-30% per Dark Young summoned). The surviving ghosts are carrying four barrels of blood (200 SIZ worth), plus two bound and gagged female victims (one is English, and the other Asian). If not rescued, Oswald will loyally carry Mhae-Yrn's magic tomes, along with several of his own.

The best time for the investigators to stop the Druid is before he conjures the Dark Young or before Shub-Niggath is summoned. The ghosts and any remaining ghouls will circle their master to protect him from attack. If the ghouls and ghosts are stopped, the Dark Young will then join in the fray with spells and physical combat. Smart investigators will cause diversions and then attack with long-range spells or weapons. If Mhae Yrn is incapacitated, the ghouls will run away; the ghosts will be dumbfounded for 10 minutes then run away; and the Dark Young will sop up the sacrificial blood and go their merry way. If Shub-Niggath is summoned but dis-

missed by the investigators, the Dark Young will vanish with their "mother."

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

If Mhae-Yrn is captured alive in the cave and Oswald is rescued unharmed (although insane), the investigators will get 1D6 SAN and the assorted reward monies. If the PCs are forced to kill the Druid or Oswald, they only get 1-3 SAN and just the reward for the "Ripper."

If Mhae-Yrn gets to Greenwich Park before being stopped, the investigators will get 1D10 SAN plus 1-6 SAN for each defeated monster. However, if the Dark Young escape, the poor investigators will lose 1-6 SAN for allowing these horrors into the unsuspecting countryside.

If Mhae-Yrn is successful in summoning Shub-Niggath, the investigators will lose 1D10 SAN plus the loss for witnessing the awful event. If the investigators cannot dismiss the Great Old One, London will be trampled under hoof, and thousands will die or go utterly insane, destroying British society and possibly the world.

NPCs

Oswald Warnford: Oswald is a 25-year-old cellist with a nearly obsessive interest in the supernatural, notably that dealing with Arthurian Britain. He is bookish, with rather wild tendencies punctuating his duller moments. Somewhat elfish in appearance, he has short black hair and small reading glasses. He now wears old street clothes when on the surface and Druid robes below. Although not completely insane, he is utterly enthralled with his "master" and oblivious to the murder and mayhem going on. Oswald seriously believes he has become Merlin's sole apprentice and cannot be readily cured of this disorder.

STR: 9, CON: 8, SIZ: 10 DEX: 13, APP: 12, POW: 8, INT: 15, EDU: 14, SAN: 20, HPs: 9.

Skills: Art (Cello) 55%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 45%, Fast Talk 25%, History 60%, Library 65%, Occult 50%, Gaelic 40%, Latin 50%, Persuade 30%, Sneak 35%, Spot 50%, Babble Wildly 80%, Follow Idol 90%.

Weapon: Enchanted cane.

Mhae-Yrn: He is an ancient resurrected Druid priest intent on conquering the world for his god, Shub-Niggath. Clad in a mix of robes and modern, colorful fabrics, he stands seven feet tall, with long, grayish-silver hair flowing over his pointed facial features. His speech is rough English with overwhelming Gaelic overtones. He does look the part of Merlin.

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STR: 13, CON: 20, SIZ: 17 DEX: 11, APP: 10, POW: 22, INT: 17, EDU: 21, SAN: 0, HPs: 18.

Skills: Astronomy 55%, Chemistry 30%, Climb 50%, Grapple 40%, Hide 35%, Listen 60%, Medicine 25%, Occult 60%, Sneak 45%, Throw 40%, Dagger 40%.

Spells: Call Shub-Niggath, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Summon/Bind Ghost, Bless Blade, Command Animal, Create Mist of R'lyeh, Death Spell, Dominate, Enchant Knife, Enchant Stone, Enthrall Victim, Flesh Ward, Implant Fear, Mesmerize.

Weapons: Enchanted cane, two blessed daggers, five flash-powder grenades.

Ghosts (3): STR: 22, CON: 13, SIZ: 21 DEX: 12, POW: 10, INT: 3, HPs: 20, Damage Bonus=2D6.

Weapons: Bite: 40%, Dam=1D10; Kick: 25%, Dam=1D6+bonus.

Armor: 3 points of skin.

Skills: Sneak 70%. Sunlight kills them instantly.

SAN Loss: 0/1D8

Ghouls (5): STR: 16, CON: 11, SIZ: 13 DEX: 13, POW: 9, INT: 10, HPs: 12, Damage Bonus=1D4.

Weapons: Claws: 30%, Dam=1D6+bonus; Bite: 30%, Dam=1D6+dis-ease.

Armor: Projectile weapons do one-

half damage.

Skills: Burrow 75%, Climb 85%, Hide 60%, Jump 75%, Listen 70%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 50%.

SAN Loss: 0/1D6.

Dark Young (1D4): STR: 44, CON: 16, SIZ: 42 DEX: 16, POW: 17, INT: 14, HPs: 27, Damage Bonus=4D6.

Weapons: Tentacle 80%, Dam=bonus+STR drain; Trample 40%, Dam=2D6+bonus.

Armor: Impaling weapons do 1 point damage; fire, electricity, poison do none.

Skills: Sneak 40%, Hide in Woods 80%.

Spells: Contact Ghoul, Create Gate, Summon/Bind Byhakee, Bait Human, Pipes of Madness, Dampen Light.

SAN Loss: 1D3/1D10.

NEW WEAPONS

Flash-Powder Grenade: Causes a blinding bright light and then a thick gray lasting seven to 10 minutes (D6+4). Treat as a CON 5 poison on Resistance Table for choking.

Blessed Dagger: Treat it as a typical dagger but with an additional 1D6 damage.

Enchanted Cane: When used to hit, the cane drains 1 POW from the target. If touched by anyone but the owner, it still drains the point of POW. Ω

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Format: All manuscripts *must be typed, double-spaced*, on standard-sized white or off-white paper. Staple each article separately. The first page must contain the *author's name, address and social security number*, as well as the *title of the article, the game it refers to, the publisher of that game and a word count*. Each page must be numbered and contain the author's name.

Articles use three levels of headings (refer to past issues for examples). The first level is the article title. Next, any divisions within the article need *section headings*, which are all caps on their own line (like Subject Matter, below). Any further divisions within a section need *subsection headings*, which are upper and lower case, followed by a colon and text (like Format, above).

References: Always include clear, precise sketches of maps, diagrams or pieces of equipment for artist reference. If you send photocopies for artist reference, always indicate the original source or publication. If your article includes tables, send a printout of each table the way it should appear. Always send a copy of your technical design spreadsheets, if applicable (especially for Traveller). Also, please include a bibliography of your sources, especially with historical or geographical submissions. Mark both technical design sheets and bibliographies "for reference only."

Computers: *Submissions on disk are encouraged and will expedite the publication process.* Send disks in a suitable mailer, *along with a printed copy*. Disks will *not* be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer. Always keep all printer commands, page numbering and so on out of the text. We are able to take submissions only from Apple Macintosh, IBM PC and compatibles. Apple Macintosh files may be saved only as ASCII text or as MS Word files. IBM PC and compatible files must be MS-DOS and must be saved as ASCII text.

Modem: Modem/computer bulletin board/electronic submissions are not accepted at this time.

FAX: FAX submissions must be sent after 6 p.m. CST. FAX submissions of more than 20 pages must have prior approval. Disk/hardcopy submissions are preferred (see Computers, above).

SUBJECT MATTER

We will consider articles on any science-fiction roleplaying game by any publisher, including Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000, Traveller, Dark Conspiracy, Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Shadowrun, Star Trek, Star Wars, BattleTech, High Colonies, Call of Cthulhu, Paranoia, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. and others. We will not provide coverage for any products produced by or licensed to Palladium Books, at the request of Palladium Books.

Adventure scenarios are preferred. Sourcebook-type articles should be combined with adventure ideas whenever possible. *Game variants* should be playtested in advance by you and be applicable to a broad range of gaming situations. *Referee's notes* should give hints to the referee on how to increase interest in the game, make his life easier or spark his imagination. In general, articles should be consistent with previously published information.

Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000: Articles must be usable with Twilight: 2000 2nd edition or Merc: 2000. Ideas include an adventure situation with a geographical setting, short equipment descriptions, generic personalities or locations for use in a variety of situations, and examinations of modern military life or military equipment.

Traveller: All Traveller articles must be usable in the Traveller: The New Era universe. Include tasks and game statistics where appropriate. Ideas include an adventure with relevant background data, bestiary or short equipment description. Articles may follow either the "adventure nugget" or traditional Challenge format.

Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Others: Short adventures (2000-3000 words), plus a page or so of maps. See Twilight Encounters (a GDW supplement) for samples of the preferred format.

Reviews: Product reviews are not limited to the gaming systems normally covered in Challenge. Evaluations of science-fiction films, novels and other products are also accepted. All reviews must include the approximate date of release, plus the publisher, price, credits and components, if applicable. See previous reviews for format. Reviews should be 500-1000 words in length.

Fiction: Challenge is not seeking fiction at this time.

Art: Artists may send copies of their art portfolio to the Challenge art director. Never send an original or your only copy.

*Good luck. If you have any questions, send them along with a SASE to:
Michelle Sturgeon, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA*

On
The

Cutting Edge

Apple Churchill Hawkeye 4077 Weapon Linkage System

By Vincent J. Tognarelli and Ryan Gore

The Apple Churchill Hawkeye 4077 weapon linkage system is an example of the resurgence of the Capellan Confederation's capabilities in the area of cutting-edge battlefield electronic technology.

The linkage system is an advanced weapon coordination and target selection computer. It links the targeting subsystems of weapons of the same type and size that are located in the same physical area of a BattleMech or combat vehicle (i.e., all in the right arm, left torso, etc.), and causes these weapons to act as a single weapon firing at a single target.

No longer will the enemy sneer at a machinegun-armed 'Mech! By using a linkage system, a light BattleMech with machineguns becomes a lethal opponent!

Linked LRM launchers have some minor problems when fired indirectly, exhibiting the computer equivalent of stubbornness, but Apple Churchill is working on correcting this bit of electronic "misbehavior." At present, Apple Churchill factories on Sian are the only place that the linkage system is being manufactured, and the system is being retro-fitted into many of the Confederation's light and recon lances located primarily along Andurien border of the Free Worlds League and the entire Periphery frontier. Despite some of the strongest military equipment regulations against such activity, some linkages are finding their way into service and with mercenary units serving in the Free Worlds League nations of Andurien and Oriente—

an occurrence which the new chancellor of the confederation would like to stop if he could get his hands on the officers involved.

GAME NOTES

Any linked weapons must be of the same type and the same size. For example, only machineguns can be linked to machineguns, and machineguns cannot be linked with medium lasers. Any number of weapons may be linked together, but they must all be located in the same area of the BattleMech, and the requirements of the weapons for tonnage and critical space will impose further restrictions. For example, a 40-ton Clint replaces the ER PPC in its arm with three SRM4s and a linkage system, and replaces its two medium pulse lasers with three small pulse lasers and a weapon linkage in its left torso. This weapon mix causes no change in the 'Mech tonnage, but does add three critical hit locations more than normal.

Any 'Mech linked with linked weapons must activate the system at the start of any game before any 'Mechs have moved. The player announces the fact that the linkage is being activated and rolls 2D6 for each linkage. On 4+, the linkage is activated. Once turned on, the system remains active until shut off. To deactivate a linkage system (so that the weapons may be fired individually), no roll is needed, but again, the player must announce this decision at the beginning of the turn. Weapons which are linked may not be fired individually during any turn in which the link is active.

A linked system attacks as a single

BATTLE

weapon; no matter how many weapons are linked together, only a single attack roll is made. Linked weapons are dealt with as a single unit for to-hit purposes, as well as damage and heat point calculations. Any other facets of the weapons in question are dealt with individually. For example, three linked small pulse lasers located in the Clint's left torso are fired as a single weapon; the damage is calculated as a single hit ($3 \times 3 = 9$ damage points); and the heat generated is combined ($3 \times 2 = 6$ heat points). The total number of missiles launched from the three SRM4s in the arm ($3 \times 4 = 12$) are calculated in a like manner, as is the heat ($3 \times 3 = 9$ heat points).

Ammunition usage, when applicable, is always dealt with individually for each weapon in a link.

One of the strengths of the linkage system is that it causes all linked weapons to hit and damage the same area of the target. When fired, all linked energy weapons and ballistic weapons are attacking the same target area. However, due to their size, complexity and requirements of mandatory pilot supervision, LB-X and Ultra AC weapons cannot ever be linked together. For example, the Clint fires its linked small pulse lasers at an enemy Javelin, doing 9 points ($3 \times 3 = 9$) of damage to its center torso—melting through the armor and doing some internal structure damage. This generates 6 heat points for the Clint. The flight of 12 missiles which follow the laser attack also hit the target, and must roll on the 10 column of the Missile Hits Table (round off any odd numbers to the nearest column, using the lower column if the number falls exactly in between the two). The result is that six missiles strike the Javelin—two in the left torso, one in the right leg, one in the left arm, one in the right arm and one in the center torso—further complicating the Javelin pilot's day by causing an engine critical hit! The Clint generates 9 heat points from this.

The linkage system is not as effective with missiles as it is with direct-fire weapons. The to-hit ability and hit location by linked missile launchers are still determined as normal. The only advantage to linking missile launchers is to increase the volume of missiles fired. When missile launch-

ers are linked together, only those launchers which fire 10 or less missiles at a time may be linked. Due to the limitations of access that the linkage can place upon the sensor array of a BattleMech, no linked missile systems may ever launch more than 20 missiles at one firing. The linkage computer simply cannot handle the flight trajectory calculations required for more than 20 missiles. The linkage system is incompatible with SRM Streak and Artemis fire control systems, and any missile launchers equipped with these systems cannot be linked.

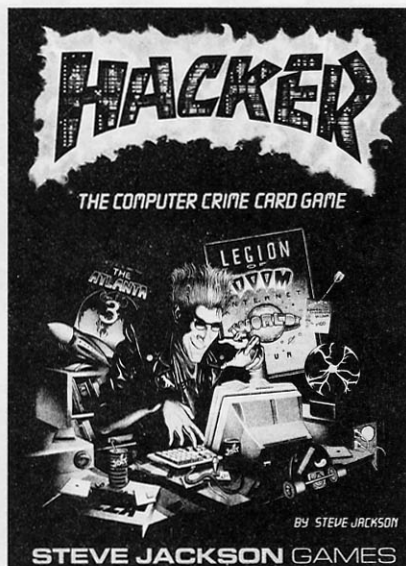
Linked LRM launchers do exhibit a small problem when fired indirectly. Although linked LRMs do fire on an indirect trajectory, the linkage computer appears to "resist" this method of use, generating a +1 to the to-hit number in addition to the usual +1 modifier for indirect firing.

If a weapon which is part of an active linkage is damaged, a roll must be made to see if the linkage is disrupted. Roll 2D6, and on a 7+ the linkage remains active. A failed roll means the linkage computer has temporarily crashed and needs to reboot and recalibrate itself. Linkage deactivated in this manner may be re-established at the beginning of the next turn with a normal activation roll of 4+ on 2D6, but the damaged weapon will not be available. For example, the Clint, with three linked small pulse lasers in the left torso, takes critical damage to one of the lasers. A roll of 5 indicates that the linkage shuts down because of the loss of the weapon. At the beginning of the next turn, a roll of 6 means that the linkage again activates; this time with only two small pulse lasers linked together.

Linkage equipment weighs one ton and takes up one critical space, no matter how many weapons it is linking. It must be placed in the same area in which the weapons that are being linked are located. The Apple Churchill Hawkeye 4077 weapon linkage system costs 100,000 C-Bills per unit. Ω

For an adventure involving the Apple Churchill Hawkeye 4077 weapon linkage system, see "Fire on the Mountain" by Vincent J. Tognarelli in Challenge 68.





Hacker

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Published in 1992.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

In 1990, Steve Jackson Games was raided by the U.S. Secret Service during a "hacker hunt" that went disastrously out of control. We lost several computers, modems and other equipment. Worse, we lost the manuscripts to several uncompleted games, most notably GURPS Cyberpunk, which a Secret Service agent the next day called a handbook for computer crime. The company had to lay off half its staff, and narrowly avoided bankruptcy.

Eventually, we got most of our property back (though some of it was damaged or destroyed). The Secret Service admitted that we'd never been a target of their investigation. We have a lawsuit pending against the officials and agencies responsible.

But since the day of the raid, gamers have been asking us, "When are you going to make a game about it?"

Okay. We give up. Here it is. Have fun.

The above is the introduction to *Hacker*, a game simulating the life and times of the netnerd, the computer geek, the often under-aged programmer, the hacker. Drawing from *Illuminati* game experience, Steve Jackson and his cohort of twisted conspirators have produced a wonderfully fun game of computer madness.

The game runs in player turns. First, the players build the computer networks that form the battleground for hacking. Then, each player has his turn, drawing a card

that is either another computer network to add to the overall net, or a special card conferring bonuses to the hacker or usable as a weapon against opponents. Then the player has a choice of going hacking in attempts to gain access to the systems in the net, or (gasp!) getting a momentary job to finance improvements to his hardware (to enhance his hacking, what else?). After the player is done hacking, he can give a free hacking attempt to any other players he wishes, allowing them to "phreak" on his line. Then play passes to the next player.

The action is startlingly real. In order to hack into a system, a player has to roll 2D6 to match or beat the system's security rating. If the roll matches or fails to beat the system's ICE rating, the hacker is kicked out of both the target system and the system he called from! Upgrades, allies, manuals and other factors can boost a hacker's chances by adding to his rolls.

The game is challenging—and long. The winner is the first hacker who hacks into a dozen systems. It's tougher than it seems. There are a lot of systems that aren't pushovers; hackers have to be able to trace communication lines through the net; there are sysops who "clean house" and delete bogus accounts when the systems get too full; and there are the other hackers to worry about. The hacker who is in the lead gets the dubious honor of being "Net Ninja." There's a big card to place in front of this player; it confers a +1 bonus to all hacking attempts and serves as an instant target—the Net Ninja is the player to beat on. He's the target for dirty tricks and system purges. He's definitely worth narking on (informing a targeted sysop that there are hackers in the system, which sparks a system purge) and hitting with legal raids. Hopefully, you can even get him busted!

The game is a great deal of fun to play; not only is the action entertaining, but the computer systems and the cards are amusing. Companies and agencies such as ComSecMilNavPac, Dynababble, Greed-comm (I think I used to work for them!), InterCrunch, Newsleak Magazine, No Such Agency, Phiber Optik, Superfluous Software, Univacuum, and WysiWizards stud the network. The special cards include such interesting events as finding a Back Door into a tough system, Raids, Disk Crashes, Social Engineering, System Upgrades, Password Files, Dutch hacker allies, Caffeine and Pizza rushes, and even the favorite Get A Life! card where the hacker accidentally discovers the opposite gender and briefly entertains the notion that there may be more to life than hacking.

EVALUATION

Hacker has possibilities. The net and game system even lend themselves to

cyberpunk-genre games—with a little work and adaptation, the game could serve as a visual replacement for the video-game-like and totally unrealistic systems presented in the games *Shadowrun* and *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*.

This game is definitely a winner. It's a good evening worth of fun. It's a little hard to learn, but is fun to play, tactically challenging and spiced with enough skullduggery to amuse those players who can't bear a game without adversarial options. I'm waiting for SJG to publish a supplement (they could call it *Hacker Upgrade!*), because response on the company computer BBS has been good, and they've gotten suggestions for more cards—things like "Your Mother Cleans Your Room" (hackers, shudder at the thought!), or "Spill Cola On Your Computer." We shall see.



Fringeworthy

The Game of Interdimensional Adventure.

Tri Tac Systems. \$18.95.

Written by Richard Tucholka.

192-page roleplaying system.

Published in spring 1992.

Review by Dirk DeJong.

Once in a while, lightning strikes twice. And with *Fringeworthy*, it struck for the third time. Richard Tucholka has finally come back with an expanded and revised version of his 1982 game of interdimensional exploration.

Fringeworthy shares a common game system with its sister games from Tri Tac. A skill-based setup with a fairly complex and complete combat system, it could be described as the first truly generic roleplaying system. There are options for almost everything, the biggest problem being keeping track of it all. The new system has

systems for fire combat, unarmed combat, world creation, solar system creation, clothing, vehicle creation, diseases and allergies. While the new index in the rear of the book is a great help, the multitudinous tables can be overwhelming to the unprepared.

This is basically an exploration game, where you are one of the lucky few (1 in a 100,000 to be precise) who can travel the Fringepaths, alien-designed portals to alternate versions of Earth, or anything else you can imagine. If you've ever wanted to visit ancient Egypt, explore the worlds of Sinbad or find out what things would have been like if Germany had won either of the world wars, you can. The only problem is that the Tehrmeleers, who designed the paths, were almost destroyed by their own creation—a rather vicious shape-shifting race known as the Mellor, whose favorite hobby is eating anything, you included. You've been chosen to take the Tehrmeleers' place and win back the Fringes. Lucky you! The one good thing is that you're being funded by a branch of the UN known as the Interdimensional Agency (IDA) and are a member of the Interdimensional Exploration Teams (IDET). As such, just about anything that you can give a good reason for having, within reasonable limits, you get free.

This is the third edition of *Fringeworthy* and thus contains a number of changes from the previous versions, not the least of which is a revised and greatly expanded background. The inclusion of alien races and other humanoids fills a major hole. There is a much more complete background on the Fringeways, including tables for things that might go wrong during a transfer to a different dimension. And, to get you going, there's a small adventure designed to show you the system and the possibilities inherent in it.

PROBLEMS

The biggest complaint I have, aside from the plethora of tables, is the combat system. While it is more realistic than most, and does include a Fast Kill section for NPCs, it's reality overkill. To determine whether a PC was hit and what happened can take minutes, depending upon what type of weapon was used and how realistic you want to get. Everything from bone and nerve damage to hydrostatic shock is included. I haven't seen a combat system with this much detail since the early '80s.

PRAISE

Combat system and tables aside, there's a lot to like about *Fringeworthy*.

Since it's a mission-oriented system, there's no need to have everyone there all the time. If someone's missing, his character is just on vacation.

Second, the 90 extra pages added to this version were used to good effect, with the addition of aliens and other humans, new equipment, and new information on the Fringes.

Third, while not up to the standard of some companies, the physical book is quite good, perfect-bound, with large type and readable tables (this is important if you have this many tables).

EVALUATION

As to whether you should buy *Fringeworthy*, I'd stop and consider all the other games based on multiple alternate realities (including the ones based on time travel) that have gone down the drain. To take everything into account, you either have to have a super simple system, or a very complex one. While *Fringeworthy* leans to complexity, I feel that it has been well enough designed that, if you can handle the tables, you'll get along fine. And considering that Tri Tac has computer utilities out for a number of systems (Apple II and IBM now, with C-64/128 and Macintosh on the way) to save on some of the trouble with those tables, I'd have to recommend buying *Fringeworthy*. It's a good buy, with plenty of background and a usable system, and once you know the system, learning any of the other Tri Tac releases is a snap.



Space Marine

2nd Edition.

Games Workshop. \$54.95.

Designed by Jervis Johnson and Rick Priestley.

Boxed wargame with 480 epic-scale plastic troop figures, 66 epic-scale plastic vehicles, one plastic Titan, 10 full-color cardboard buildings with plastic roofs, 132 counters, five templates, 57 unit cards, two playsheets, one Titan playsheet, five dice (three are special), 64-page rulebook.

Published in 1991.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

Several years ago, Games Workshop decided to make a large-scale wargame out of its *Warhammer 40,000/Rogue Trader* man-to-man tactical system. The result was 6mm Epic Scale, with the giant robot combat game *Adeptus Titanicus* and the first *Space Marine*. New rules and units were added to the basic game, until it required one supplement and many *White Dwarf* magazines to have all the rules. For all that, it was still a simple and fast game, colorful and playable. But instead of compiling the rules into one source (and repairing some that needed it), GW decided to "simplify" the system and re-issue it.

The resulting game still takes place in the Games Workshop universe of turmoil, warfare and hopeless doom. The forces of the Imperium still struggle to defend the domain of humanity from the alien and subversive elements that seek to destroy humanity, or at least survive in humanity's proximity. The forces of Chaos continue to rampage through space, destroying and perverting that which they touch. Battle-suited Eldar fight a losing war against their extinction, as each trooper that falls in battle is the loss of just one more member of their shrinking population. Green-skinned Orks storm planet after planet in haphazard fashion, fighting for the sake of fighting. The only change in the background is the

shift from emphasis on the Horus Heresy history to the current state of the Imperium.

CHANGES

The game system works essentially the same way the old system worked: Both sides arrange their troops in units for morale and cohesion purposes. The troops and vehicles that make up these units must remain within six centimeters of another troop stand or vehicle in the unit, maintaining a cohesive whole. Each troop stand or vehicle has a movement rate, an armor save, and weapons listed with ranges, hit probabilities and saving throw modifiers. Each unit is given specific orders for the turn.

The turn sequence is different: Now sides roll for initiative, and the side that has to move first moves all its forces, then the other side moves all its forces. Units are no longer moved in sequence with orders. Then, units with first fire (no movement, concentrating on fast and accurate fire) fire, including fire at other units that moved into contact to initiate close combat. The close combat phase

follows (and is a lot more deadly), and finally the advance fire (the order combines fire and movement, but such units fire last) phase is completed.

Stands and vehicles now fire in units—for instance, a Marine company conducts all firing at the same time. Each side alternates fire back and forth between units, with combat results taking place immediately. And the weapons no longer distinguish between light weapons (i.e., antipersonnel) and heavy weapons (antiarmor). Now any weapon can affect any other unit—some weapons are still more powerful than others.

Firing barrages (artillery) and firing at Titans, the giant two-legged war machines, is now somewhat different. Special dice are included to decide where the fire goes, for indirect artillery fire can deviate and land some distance from where it was supposed to be. Titans have templates listing their various locations, and their swift movement may cause fire at some of their areas to miss.

When hit by enemy fire, armored vehicles still have saving throws. So do Titans, now—a separate saving throw for each location at each angle. Few troops have armor saving throws now; a hit on a troop stand usually destroys it instantly.

The elements of morale and rigid unit organization have been added, as well as terrain rules and rules for fighting over specific objectives rather than simple slugfests until one side is destroyed.

The biggest change is in unit composition. Unit cards list the makeup and cost of each unit (company and platoon detachments), the "break point" (the number of individual components that have to be destroyed for the unit to test morale), the morale value of the unit and the victory points awarded to the opponent when the unit is "broken."

WELCOME CHANGES

Some of the efforts in *Space Marine* 2nd edition are worthwhile. The morale rules were needed; they're simple and effective. The new pop-up attack rule for antigrav skimmers is very useful. Other rules clearly define troop transport movement and illustrate the fact that vehicle armor is usually thicker to the front—vehicles hit from the side or rear have reduced armor saves.

The rules on victory conditions and terrain are excellent. Now each side fights over terrain objectives, as well as fighting to destroy the enemy. Terrain is now placed randomly and is easily dealt with (shades of the *WRG* ancient miniatures rules system!). And, despite the objections to follow, the "simplification" does make the game move more swiftly.

OBJECTIONS

All Weapons the Same: The weapons may have different and more colorful names (a factor named as one of the reasons *Space Marine* was changed), but now they're pretty homogenized. In the first edition, a troop stand had its basic weapons—antipersonnel stuff—and a heavy weapon for antiarmor use. Now those capabilities are combined into one, with extended range and reduced troop-killing power.

And all weapons affect all targets! No longer are vehicles classified as normal (full armor) or light (no armor protecting the crew). A bike armed with an antipersonnel bolter can rip an arm off a Titan with a lucky shot. Yeah, right.

All Firing Arcs the Same: Infantry has always had a universal firing arc. Vehicles with turrets used to, too. Not any more; now all vehicles have a 180° firing arc to the front. Period. There are a very few vehicles that have 360° firing arcs, but most are helpless if attacked from the rear.

Every Unit Composition Changed: Complete sets of unit compositions had been published in *White Dwarf*. Players had already assembled and painted up their troops and vehicles in this format. With the new rules, every organization is trashed, and every *Space Marine* player has to re-paint to fit the new organizations. That sort of rules incompatibility caused major ripples in the ancient miniatures world when *WRG* 7th edition forced massive unit changes on players of *WRG* 6th edition. This *Space Marine* rule change is about as welcome.

Don't Lose Those Cards!: The organization cards are priceless. They contain the only information on unit composition, and if you lose one, there's no place to go for backup information. Since the cards are small (5x7 centimeters and 7x10 centimeters), they are easily lost.

Return of "Panzerbush": Years ago, Avalon Hill Game Company's *Panzerblitz* suffered from a curious phenomenon. There was no way to fire at enemy units during the movement phase, so the game evolved into short dashes from cover to cover, across fields of fire. In reality, such tactics result in the moving force being shot to bits; opportunity fire rules were later added to the its system to compensate.

Space Marine 1st edition had an excellent set of simple rules to deal with this problem. But these opportunity fire rules have been removed from *Space Marine* 2nd edition. Since close combat is now thunderously deadly, the effect is that fast close combat units (bikes and jetbikes) rip across the battlefield to engage hapless defenders, and unless those specific defenders are braced to receive the charge,

no other unit in the entire game can fire at the close combat attackers! Even the British know of the "bounding overwatch" theory, where one unit covers another's advance. A suggested "snap fire" opportunity fire rule is included below to bring this game back up to snuff.

Too Much Emphasis on Close Combat: In reality, hand-to-hand combat has been relegated to a last-ditch effort by repeating weapons and hand grenades. Yet, with the new rules, close combat is now the major killer of the game. No force can afford to be without bikes now, since they are the major close combat killers.

Another Incomplete Product: Revisions are supposed to be more-or-less complete. *Space Marine* 2nd edition is not. There are expensive rules packages already on sale to expand the game, heavily revamping the force compositions published in this game. By the time they're done, Games Workshop will have pushed the rules pricetag on this game to \$145.

Poor Product Quality: In a startling development, the colored cardboard components are not laminated, like the original game's. The new order counters are particularly disappointing and nowhere near the quality of the old ones.

OPTIONAL "SNAP FIRE" RULE

A unit on first fire orders may fire at an enemy unit moving during the enemy's movement phase, while the unit is moving. If the snap firing unit has multiple attack dice, it must use them all against the same moving detachment. Units that fire in this way are marked by a snap fire marker and cannot shoot again later in the turn, not even to attempt to destroy units that close to enter close combat.

EVALUATION

Space Marine 2nd edition does play more swiftly than the old system. It's easier, quicker, deadlier. And the victory conditions are better. But the original game wasn't too difficult. It was more accurate and faithful to *Warhammer* 40,000, too. So why "simplify" it so drastically? A few minor rules changes and a compilation of the rules from *White Dwarf* would have been better. In addition, GW decided to bump the price, too. The original game cost \$47.95. This edition adds a 14.5% increase in price for about the same amount of material.

And the final insult—all new units and vehicles to be made for the system will have official second edition stats, making first edition no longer usable. So if you want to continue to play *Space Marine*, particularly at conventions where "house rules" are a bad idea, you have to go by second edition rules. ☐

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STAR WARS RPG enthusiasts/players needed by intermediate GM in the Pittsburgh, PA area. Campaigning, adventuring in the *Star Wars* style. Contact Edgar B. Schodde, PO Box 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142 for details. (66)

LOOKING FOR gamers in southeast Nebraska, southwest Iowa, northeast Kansas or northwest Missouri. Preferred game system is *Shadowrun*, although I also enjoy *GURPS*, *Vampire* and *Dark Conspiracy*. Also looking for playtesters for adventures/sourcebook material for these systems. Benjamin J. Rogers, RR 1, Box 1, Stella, NE 68442. (66)

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PLAYERS INTERESTED in a *Cyberpunk* corporations PBM please write to Ross Mackenzie, 3 Dunlin Close, Sandpipers Estate, Kingswinford, West Midlands, United Kingdom DY6 8XP. Some knowledge of *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0* is helpful but not essential. (66)

NEED PLAYERS in Michigan in the Macomb County, Rome or Washington area. For *Shadowrun*, *Cyberpunk*, *Rifts*, *AD&D*, *Star Wars*, *Cthulhu*, *Floating Vagabond*, *Car Wars*, *Vampire*, and many others. Contact Steve Matovski, 39504 Della Rosa, Sterling Heights, MI 48313. (65)

ATTENTION GMs in NE Ohio/western Pennsylvania area. New gaming society is looking for experienced game masters for *Call of Cthulhu*, *Chill*, *MegaTraveller*, *AD&D*, *RuneQuest* and others. Write to Bruce Jones, 1236 Robbins Ave., #2, Niles, OH 44446. (65)

GAMERS WANTED in Maryland. Players of *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*, *Shadowrun*, *Star Fleet Battles* and other games please contact MD Gamers, 9984 Guilford Road, Suite 102, Columbia, MD 20794-3931. And ask about

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LOOKING FOR players/GMs for *Twilight: 2000* or *Dark Conspiracy* in Pinellas County, FL or Baltimore area (moving this fall). Contact Steve Enzor, 506 13th Ave. NW, Largo, FL 34640. (64)

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LOOKING TO JOIN players of board war-games and *Twilight: 2000* or *2300 AD* RPG in the Suffolk/Nassau Cty areas of Long Island. J. Broder, 41 Hunting Hills Drive, Dix Hills, NY 11746. (64)

SHADOWRUN players wanted in Houston area. Anyone interested please contact Austin Govella, 10015 Cane Creek, Houston, TX 77070. (63)

NEED PLAYERS of *Dark Conspiracy*, *Cyberpunk* or any Palladium game (*Rifts* is okay but hard to run). Have experienced game master. Write to Nick Christenson, 2191 Spinning Wheel, Cincinnati, OH 45244. (61)

CAR-PGA Inc., a nonprofit organization, is looking for dedicated gamers who want to advance the hobby through positive public awareness and defense from censorship. To join or to receive free informative literature, write to CAR-PGA, 111 E. 5th., Bonham, TX 75418. Please enclose 52¢ postage. (61)

PLAYERS WANTED for a *Living Steel* play-by-mail game. Swords and Alpha team members are needed to secure a base of power on the planet Rhind. For more information, please send a SASE to David Peters, 5422 Pine Glen Road, La Crescenta, CA 91214. (60)

FOR SALE

JTAS 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (very good condition), plus *FASA Adventure-Class Starships Vol. I-II* (mint). Best offer. Contact John Kovalic, 4679 Goodland Park Road, Madison, WI 53711. (66)

WARGAMES and supplements from the '70s and '80s. Many out-of-print titles from Metagaming, SPI, TSR and Yaquinto. Most in perfect or good condition. Send SASE for list to Gary Kalin, 1026 Timberfield Drive, Ballwin, MO 63021. (66)

TRAVELLER, *Runequest*, *Rolemaster*, *Spacemaster*, *Shadowrun* and *GURPS* books and games for sale. Most in good condition. Send SASE to Kevin Knight, 6520 US Highway 60 East, Henderson, KY 42420. (66)

ITEMS FOR *BattleTech* (*Compendium*, *Technical Readout 3025*, *Mechwarrior 1st ed.*) and *Dark Conspiracy* (rulebook, *PC Booster Kit*). Also *Middle-Earth* boxed set. Contact Steve Matovski, 39504 Della Rosa, Sterling Heights, MI 48313. (65)

USED RPGs for sale or trade. Contact Eric Nelson, 2401 W. Broadway #1107, Columbia, MO 65203. (62)

VINTAGE TRAVELLER ITEMS, wide magazine selection: *Space Gamer*, *S&T*, *F&M*. Diverse mint game collection must go: civil war, roleplaying, science fiction, *AD&D*, WWII-III. Priced to sell. For list, write to Andrew Pierce, 7825 SW 57th Ave., Apt. C, Miami, FL 33143. (61)

MARTIAN METALS 15mm miniatures for *Traveller*, all in original blister packets. K'kree, Zhodani, Sword Worlds, Darrian, Citizens, Patrons, Striker Force, Air/Raft, etc. For list, send SASE to Paul Sanders, 612 S. Patton Ct., Denver, CO 80219. (61)

TRADE

TRAVELLER information exchange. I wish to trade photocopies of out-of-print *Traveller* books, supplements, adventures, fanzines, articles, etc. Please send a list to Larry Davis, H-8 Casa Grande Dr., Liverpool, NY 13090. (61)

WANTED

JTAS 4 and DGP's *Referee's Kit*. Contact John Kovalic, 4679 Goodland Park Road, Madison, WI 53711. (66)

TWILIGHT: 2000 1st edition products: *Going Home*, *Pirates of the Vistula*, *Ruins of Warsaw*, *Black Madonna*, *RDF Sourcebook*, *Armies of the Night*. Contact Dexter Davis, 924 East 48th St., Brooklyn, NY 11203. (66)

GAME SCIENCE rules of *The Petal Throne*, any rules supplements and miniatures. Please send list with price and condition to David Peters, 5422 PineGlen Road, La Crescenta, CA 91214. (65)

BETA/VHS copy of 1979 *Star Wars Christmas Special*. Contact Gotham Highlanders, 120 Gorrion Ave., Ventura, CA 93004. (65)

CHALLENGE 36, 37, 40, 45, 46, 48, 57. I would prefer originals, but photocopies will do. Also, any *Striker* 15mm miniatures. Any reasonable price. Send details to Joe Boeke, 2520 Camino del Sol, Fullerton, CA 92633-4825. (65)

25MM TRAVELLER miniatures from Grenadier. Prefer unpainted, but will consider painted if in good condition. Will trade duplicates of other Traveller miniatures or old Traveller material, or will pay cash. I am especially interested in the following numbers (found on the bases): T-2, T-6, T-7, T-10, T-12, T-15, T-27, T-29 through T-35, T-40, T-41 and (if they exist) T-47+. Also, the boxed set of about 12 figures. Contact David Pildner, 3984 Massillon Road, Apt. D, Uniontown, OH 44685. (65)

CALL OF CTHULHU magazine articles for bibliography I am writing. Have all *Challenge*, *Different Worlds*, *White Dwarf* and *White Wolf* articles. Mainly need fanzine, nongaming and foreign magazine appearances. Information needed: magazine name, issue, article name, author(s), type of article (scenario, rules, spells/books, essay on Lovecraft...), plus any pertinent notes. Willing to trade copies of articles. Anyone helping will be listed on credits if article published and sent copy of bibliography. Brent Heustess, 4305 Duval St #107, Austin, TX 78751. (64)

LOOKING TO PURCHASE *Twilight: 2000* modules *Armies of the Night* and *RDF Sourcebook*. Will pay reasonable amount over cover price and shipping. J. Broder, 41 Hunting Hills Drive, Dix Hills, NY 11746. (64)

HELP! I'm a struggling RPG gamer and novice GM who is incarcerated in the Arizona prison system with no funds. Would any fellow RPG gamers be willing to help by donating *AD&D* (2nd edition), *2300 AD*, *MegaTraveller*, *Space: 1889*, *BattleTech*, *Shadowrun*, *Marvel Super-Heroes* gamebooks, novels or magazines, or any *Challenge*, *Dragon*, *Dungeon*, *White Dwarf* or *Polyhedron* magazines? Photocopies would be greatly appreciated. Please send whatever you can to Richard Steinberg, #69458, Arizona State Prison, Florence/smu, PO Box 4000, Florence, AZ 85232. (64)

MORROW PROJECT and *AfterMath* material/ideas. Contact A. W., PO Box 69, New Almaden, CA 95042-0069. (64)

DRAGONTOOTH, Archive, Heritage miniatures. Will pay reasonable prices for fantasy, sci-fi/historical miniatures. Also interested in old Martian Metals 15mm Traveller figures. Mitchell White, 1418 Basilan Lane, Nassau Bay, TX 77058. (64)

HELP! While I was away, all my original Traveller was stolen. I desperately need photocopies of everything by GDW and Digest Group but *Book 4*, *76 Patrons*, *Grand Survey* and *Grand Census*. Anything readable okay. Will pay expenses, if necessary, but outright altruism also appreciated. Also would like copies of all Traveller News Service bits except those in *Journal 26-28* and *Challenge 54+*. Send to John R. Barton, c/o Katrina Reef, 900 S. Baker St., Unit 2220, Linfield College, McMinnville, OR 97128. (63)

LOOKING FOR the *BattleTech* novels *Mercenary's Star* and *The Sword and the Stars*, published by FASA. Will pay any reasonable price for a complete copy of either. Michael Gray, 1909 Winterset Parkway, Marietta, GA 30067. (63)

SHADOWRUNNERS or cyberpunks wanted to send ideas on new cyberwear, weapons, spells, vehicles and other gear. Particularly wanted are programs and gear specifically for the decker or netrunner character class, plus scenario ideas for the Houston and Texas locales. Will trade ideas. Send ideas to Austin Govella, 10015 Cane Creek, Houston, TX 77070. (63)

SUPERIOR STARSHIP MODELS, Any types, painted or unpainted. Also looking for Superior catalog with photos/drawings of the starships they produced. Jed Docherty, 400 Grant Ave., Highland Park, NJ 08904. (62)

A COPY OF FGU's *Bunnies and Burrows* and/or a boardgame titled *Christians and Lions*. Willing to buy or trade for this material. Eric Nelson, 2401 W. Broadway #1107, Columbia, MO 65203. (62)

STILL SEEKING *Security Leak* and *Third Imperium* fanzines. Originals or photocopies. Willing to pay all copy and postage costs, or trade for other materials. Contact Richard Artis, 151 G. Meadow Place, Hope, IN 47246-9441. (61)

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK RPG and all adventures. Willing to pay reasonable price. Contact Patrick Morgan, 3905 Northern Lights Drive, Pocatello, ID 83201-5934. (61)

ANY PROFESSIONAL or personal work, article, background, etc. dealing with *Star Trek's* Vulcans or any similar pacifist/logical/scientifically advanced race in any science-fiction RPG (Transhumans, etc.) Please write to Jean-Francois Virey, 17 rue St. Andre, 59800 Lille, France. (61)

ANY AND ALL FGU *Space Opera* supplements/modules, including the following star sector atlas/sourcebooks: *The Galactic Peoples Republic*, *The Hiss*, *The Sikozant Belt*. I will buy or pay for photocopies. Contact M. Yount, PO Box 1744, Corbin, KY 40701. (61)

LASERBURN rules, scenarios, miniatures. Send any information to Paul Sanders, 612 S. Patton Ct., Denver, CO 80219. (61)

FANZINES

ALLIANCE ADDRESS: The only known *Star Wars* roleplaying 'zine in the galaxy needs subscribers and contributors. We are open for submissions and ideas. Send a large SASE for information to Universe Publications, PO Box 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142. (66)

APART newsletter is free and covers a wide range of games and topics, with computer game reviews, plus RPG articles and scenarios. Send your name and address for a free copy. We are also looking for submissions from authors and artists (unpaid). Write to David P. Kufner, PO Box 373, Barpt, HI 96862-373. (66)

AMBERZINE is now published by Phage Press, PO Box 519, Detroit, MI 48231-0519. (64)

HORROR GAMING APAZINE seeks participants. Focus will be on *Dark Conspiracy*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Vampire* and *Chill*. Fiction and other games accepted. For more information, please write to Dan Snuffin, TESC Building D, Room 114D, Olympia, WA 98505. (63)

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITANNIC TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY, a newsletter dedicated to the *Space: 1889* RPG, is seeking art and article submissions relating to Victorian SF adventure. For submission guidelines, please send a SASE to *The Journal of the Britannic Technological Society*, c/o Dragonshead Gaming Concepts Ltd., 21W127 Tee Lane #3, Itasca, IL 60143. (63)

MELBOURNE TIMES: Newsletter of the Earth Colonies Development League provides background material for completely new, non-Imperium campaign setting. Features include news service, world briefs, character sketches, sophont descriptions, corporate portfolios, political analysis, cultural events and more. Subscribers and contributors send SASE to *Melbourne Times*, c/o David Johnson, 2800 NASA Road One #514, Seabrook, TX 77586. Overseas include three IRCs. (62)

MOTIVE: An Amateur Press Alliance (APA) which covers all aspects of the RPG hobby, is looking for new members. Members contribute to and receive a 200-page (+/-), bimonthly APA. RPGs most often covered are *MERP*, *HERO System*, *Twilight: 2000*, *CoC*, *Shadowrun* and *BattleTech*. Please write to Wayne Peacock, 190 Reed St., Athens, GA 30605. (60)

THE SWORD & BLASTER: A new publication detailing games and groups in the Atlanta, GA, area, is now available. The publication covers all aspects of roleplaying and boardgames, including reviews, poetry, game schedules, group contacts and much more. For information, contact Jeff Leggett, 2102-B Wexford Dr., Norcross, GA 30071. (60)

Don't miss **Challenge 68**, available in January.

MERC: 2000

Poppies

Lots of people say how nice it would be if the terrorists and the criminals would just kill each other. Well, it just doesn't work like that. Because sometimes they're in league with each other. Trust me. I know. *By Andrew Borelli*

Rolf MacKenzie

An NPC patron for **Merc: 2000**. *By Robert James Christensen*

MEGATRAVELLER

Lightning Never Strikes Twice

On a trouble-shooting mission for the Antarean intelligence network Trasilon, the PCs are about to learn that there is more going on than meets the eye. *By James Maliszewski*

Mercenary Supermart

Ever worry you'll get yourself in a jam your old trusty gauss rifle can't get you out of? Mercenary Supermart stocks maximum fire-

power at minimum prices! Check out these bargains! *By Michael Brines*

For the Union Blue

Rebuilding political entities is difficult in the resource-poor environment of the Hard Times era. And difficult struggles make for both lucrative and dangerous adventures. *By Charles E. Gannon*

DARK CONSPIRACY

Window of the Mind

The physics the old doctor had worked out required the existence of dimensions adjacent to our own and accessible to it. It was up to my research team to test his claim empirically, using what our detractors called a mix of super science and witchcraft. *By Michael C. LaBossiere*

2300 AD

Bugout

Wherever there is war, there will be refugees—even in AD 2300. Indeed, the swiftness of advanced assault more than matches the speed of transport to take non-combatants away from the death and destruction. *By Craig Sheeley*

SHADOW-

RUN

Zoned

Out

Jasper looked over at the young Elven girl

awhile. *By Christopher E. Wolf*

New Shamanic Totems

The shaman is an intrinsic part of any shadowrun. Introduced here are four of the more colorful, and neglected, shamanic entities from the west coast. *By Andrew J. Lucas*

CYBERPUNK

Collins Third

Street-Slang Dictionary

Attention street-brothers, we've got The Brother on a Trash Run backed up by a Valkyrie packing Shredders and Quakers. You understand me? *By David Perry*

STAR WARS

Parts is Parts

Hauling a ravenous wildebeest, placating a menacing loan shark, and breaking into the black market get the PCs deeper and deeper into trouble in this adventure. *By Wallace D. Greer*

HIGH COLONIES

Kleptomania

A wealthy trader has a commission of some delicacy that he wishes the PCs to undertake for him. *By Andy Slack*

CHILL

Operation: 9 Hells

The PCs find themselves playing with fire when they conduct experiments involving ancient rites and quasi-alchemical formulas. *By Greg Unger*

SPACE: 1889

Science Marches On

New inventions for **Space: 1889**. *By James L. Cambias*

Exogamous Mating

A European has been kidnapped by Hill Martians—and the British Legation has a ransom note to prove it. *By Andy Slack*

How To

Anime

Japanese animation, or *anime* (pronounced ah-nee-may), is an excellent resource for the SFRPG referee, providing a bountiful source of inspiration for adventure ideas. *By Darold Higa*

BATTLETECH

Fire on the Mountain

Ivan's Marauders are on a non-sanctioned raiding mission! *By Vincent J. Tognarelli*

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GDW

strapped to the cot. She groaned and weakly struggled to regain consciousness. The prison drug in her system was working—that should keep her harmless for

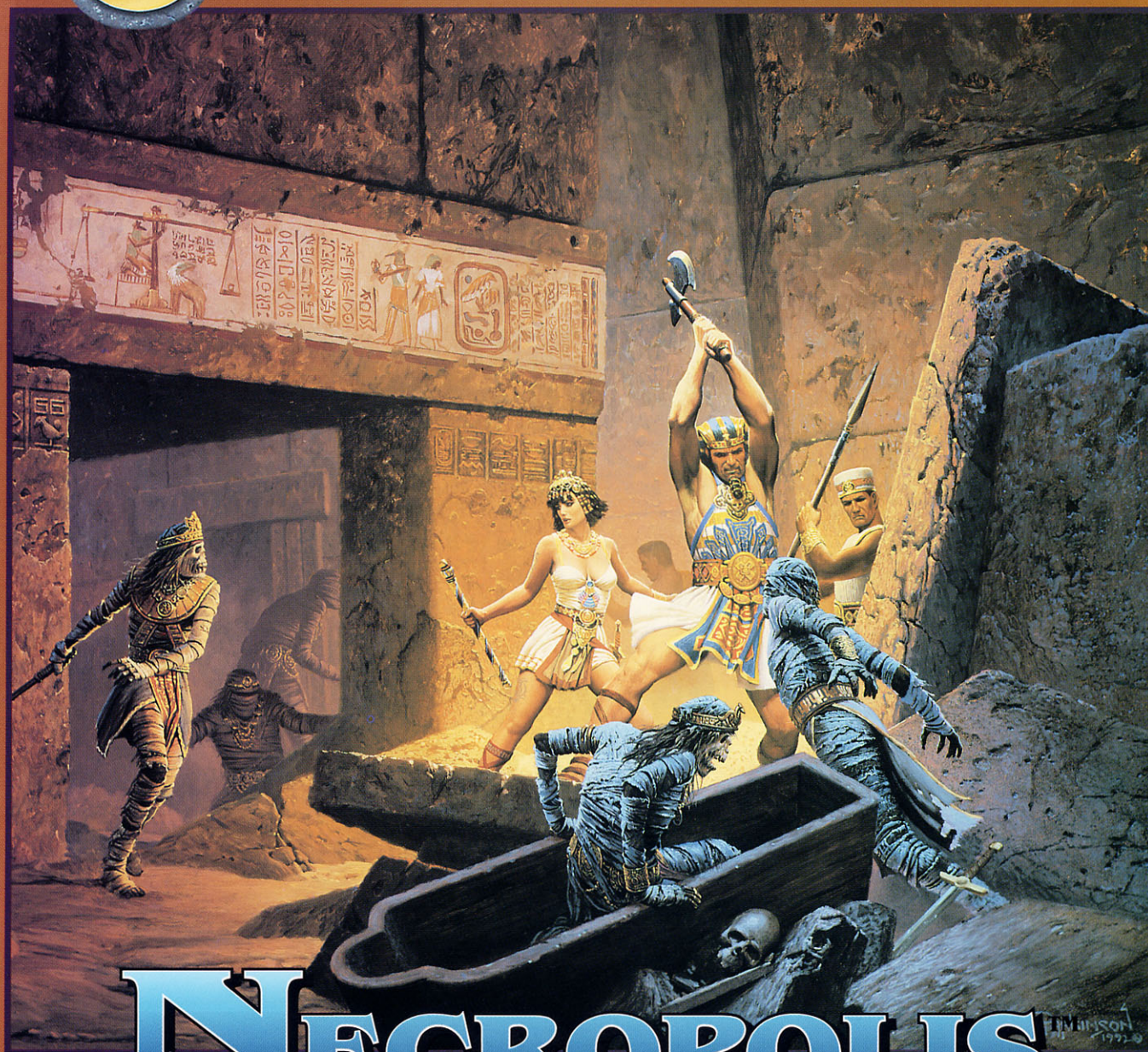
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