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The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming



72

TWILIGHT: 2000™

Sabre Rattling

Allen Ray Garbee

DARK CONSPIRACY™

Last Stop

Michael C. Labossiere

SHADOWRUN™

Prey for Death

David Perry

plus—

SHADOWRUN™

CYBERPUNK®

2300AD™

SPACE: 1889™

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STAR WARS®

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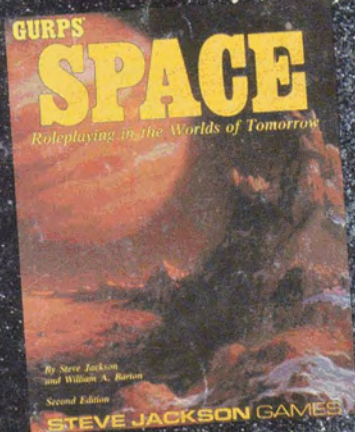
PAUL JACOB

GURPS

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Any place . . .

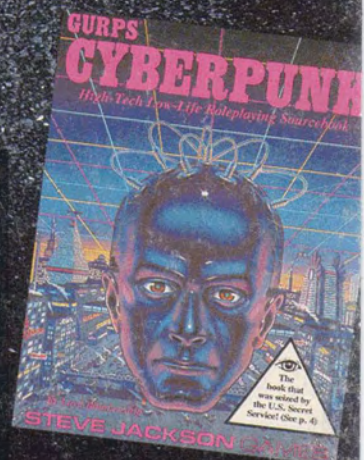
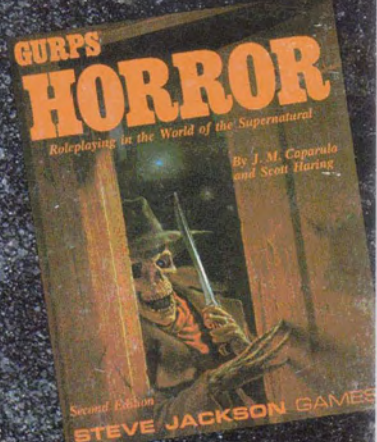
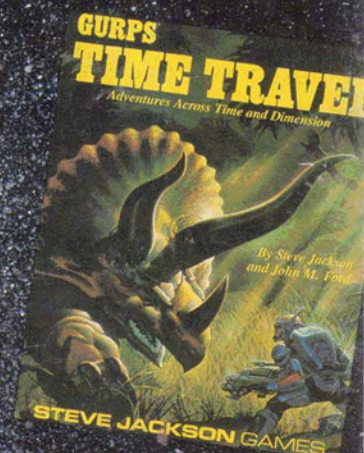
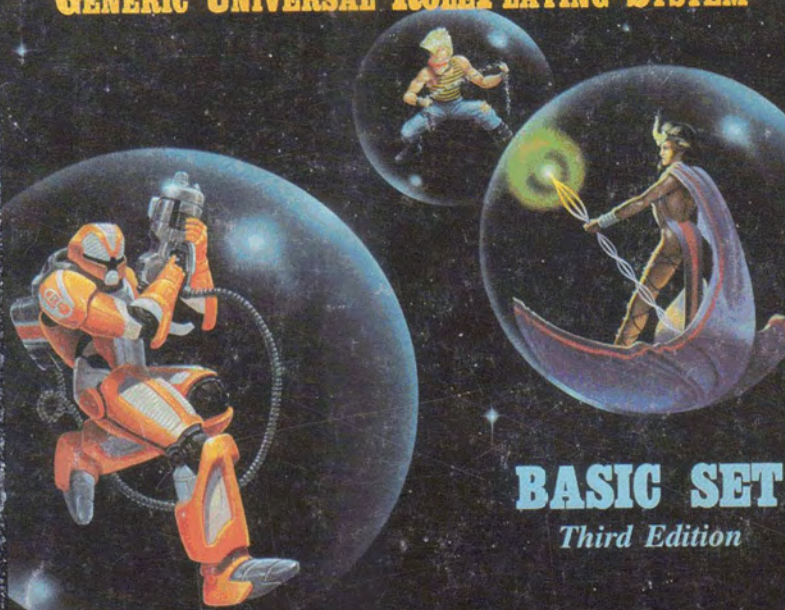
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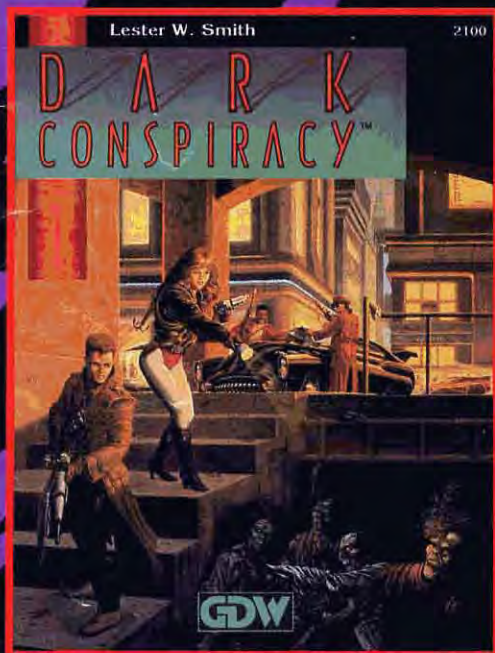
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DARK CONSPIRACY

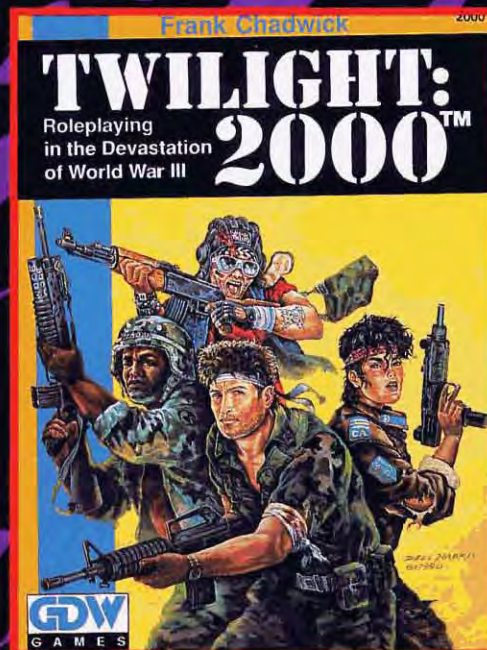
When an ancient, brooding evil is released from its dimensional prison, humanity's worst nightmares come to life. What is the link between this eldritch, lurking horror and the alien visitors from another star system? Set in the near future, the world of **Dark Conspiracy** is fraught with peril and challenge. Can you turn back the forces of darkness? **GDW: 2100**



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Challenge

Issue 72

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ABOUT THE COVER

This month's cover, by Paul Jaquays, shows your friendly neighborhood human flesh- (and bone-) eating ravager emerging from his folder pod into our world. Unfortunately, he was in such a rush to get to the office this morning that he skipped breakfast. Lunchtime (if he can hold out that long) should be an adventure.

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WHAT THE NEW YEAR WILL BRING

By Frank Chadwick

As you read this, **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** will have been in your hands for several weeks and the **Traveller® Referee Screen** should be in the stores any day. While we've been anxious to provide as much adventure and background "color" as possible for the New Era, we all agreed that it was essential to get the technical aspects of the game locked down first. **Brilliant Lances** made a real start on this and **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** finishes it (at least for now). As you read this I am hard at work finishing **Path of Tears** (the Star Viking sourcebook) while other busy hands work on **Smash and Grab** and the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide**, all with lots of great background and adventure material. There are a number of other projects already under way for release further down the road, but we'll tell you more about them in later issues.

Suffice it to say that everyone at the Workshop is involved in **Traveller** in a big way. We told you when we released **Traveller® The New Era** that our aim was to make **Traveller** our flagship game again, and that's exactly what we've done. We also expect to increase the coverage of **Traveller** in **Challenge**, mostly because we've got more material that we want to present than we can fit in the games we've got scheduled in the near future.

We've also been running a consumer survey among **Twilight: 2000™** players for almost a year (many thanks to all of you who sent in your GPS survey sheets) trying to determine which direction we wanted to take the game. We had lots of ideas, but we weren't sure which ones would be most popular with the people already playing the game (who are the ones who count the most). Almost all of the ideas found some adherents, but most of them also had a fair number of people who weren't interested in them at all. One game concept, though, had a very high number of respondents who loved the idea, and almost everyone else liked it to a greater or lesser degree. That game supplement idea is called **Armor 21**. It stands for armor in the 21st century. Here's what it's all about.

Europe is unified and locked in a global trade war with the US and Japan. Parts of the Middle East are still radioactive from Iraq's abortive attempts at nuclear blackmail. The world is short of raw materials, particularly oil, and the Nigerian wells and oil reserves may mean the difference between economic survival and collapse.

The game covers conventional and unconventional (covert) warfare between the US and EEC in

central Africa over Nigerian and Angolan oil. The campaign scenario is an excuse to explore the nature of warfare two to three decades down the road. The obsolete tanks are M1A3s with 140mm electrochemical guns. Newer vehicles mount hypervelocity rail guns and active electromagnetic armor, but the real killers are helicopters and commando teams with laser designators.

We've already done a lot of the conceptual work (and the hardware can almost all be designed using **Fire, Fusion, & Steel**), but there's still a lot of background and scenario work to do. Look for it later this year, sometime after **East Europe Sourcebook**.

All this activity on **Traveller** and **Twilight** doesn't come without price, however. For the last year, **Dark Conspiracy™** has been stumbling along without a firm hand at the wheel, and has really shown it. To be honest, while we are very happy with the game itself, the support material went in a different direction than the game was originally aimed. This is not the fault of the people writing the support material at all—it's just what can happen when there isn't a firm guiding vision for the game. I think the last couple projects we did for **Dark Conspiracy—Empathic Sourcebook** and **Proto-Dimensions**—were outstanding, but customer interest in the whole line has declined and those two products haven't seemed to turn that around.

So what are we going to do? We can't manage major renovation of the game line and still devote the time and attention to **Traveller** and **Twilight** that we want to. On the other hand, we still have a fair number of loyal **Dark Conspiracy** fans who we don't want to just abandon. Besides, the idea behind **Dark Conspiracy** is too cool to just throw away.

So here's the plan. We're going to retire the line for a while. The material already in print will stay in print while quantities last, but won't be reprinted, and we won't be doing any new **Dark Conspiracy** free-standing products. However, we have a fair quantity of really good stuff that has never been published—whole additional proto-dimensions, additions to the Empathy system, more Dark Races—that we're going to publish in **Challenge** over the next couple years. While we do, we're going to keep looking at the best way to bring **Dark Conspiracy** back in a new format, once we have the time to do a really good job with it.

Oh, yeah! Did I mention the **Space: 1889™** movie and TV series coming from Anders International in Reston, Virginia? Oh, darn! Out of room. Maybe next issue.

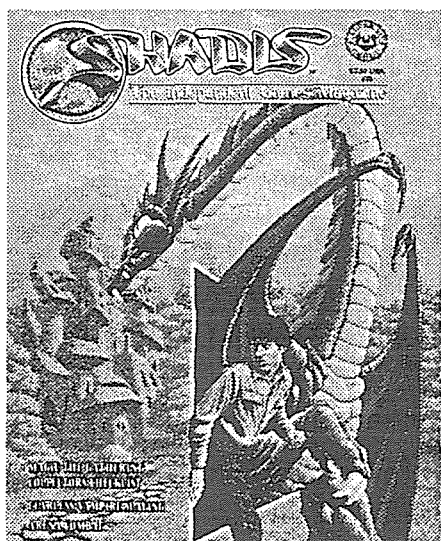


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Here's what we having coming up in our next two issues:

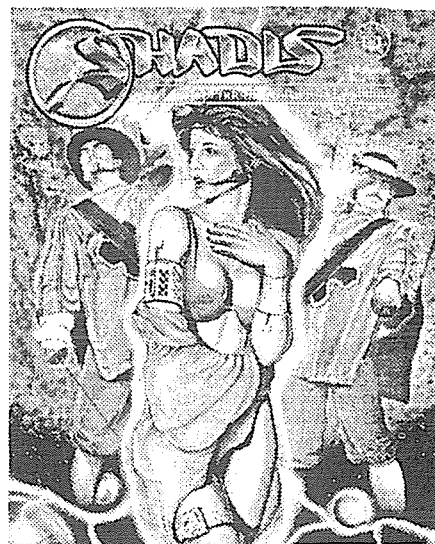


Issue 10 Nov/Dec:

- **Magic the Gathering Collector's Checklist and Compendium.** Includes variant rules and rule clarifications.
- **Arena Combat Game:** A campaign setting/board game that can be used with any FRPG. Includes rules for running fighter stables, gambling etc. Comes with a pull-out game board and counters.
- **Book 'Em Starbuck:** Find out how police techniques will evolve to thwart, hi-tech criminals of the future.
- **Vampire Slayers!:** Gary Gygax, creator of D&D™ authored this informative article on Vampires and how to eliminate them.
- **96 Big pages so there is too much other material to list here!!**

Issue 11 Jan/Feb:

- **Time Travel Campaign:** A complete time travel system and campaign backdrop for any sci-fi RPG. Includes equipment lists, GM ideas and a complete adventure.
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Advanced Infantry Weapons

By Hans-Christian Vortisch

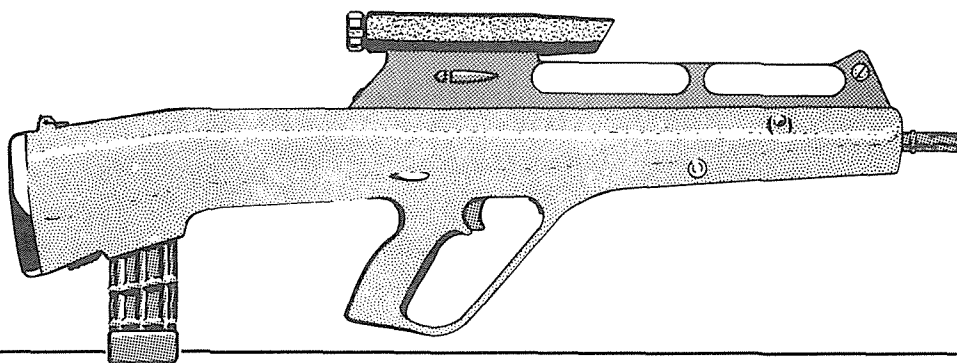
Steyr ACR

Another product of the NATO ACR competition, this is a bullpup configuration flechette gun of Austrian manufacture. It fires plastic-cased, fin-stabilized, hardened darts (flechettes) at very high velocities. These projectiles have extremely good penetration and long range. An integral sight with variable settings from 1.5x to 3.5x is standard. It cannot fire normal 5.56mmN ammunition. The gun is used by the Austrian Army and some Yugoslavian partisans which maintain loose contact with the Austrian troops.

Round: 5.56mm SCF
Weight (Empty): 3.2 kg
Magazine: 24
Price: \$750 (R/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Steyr ACR	3	2	1-1-Nil	4	24	1	2	75

5.56x45mm Synthetic-Cased Flechette
Loaded Magazine (24): 0.3 kg, \$20
Case (1500): 7.5 kg, \$750 (R/—)



Colt M16A4 ACR

Like the G11, this is a result of NATO's Advanced Combat Rifle program. The Colt entry was basically a product-improved M16A2 with an adjustable telescoping stock similar to the M177/M4 carbine series, redesigned handguard with heat shielding, heavy barrel with new muzzle brake, ambidextrous controls and an integral Leitz Wildcat 3.5x optic sight. The scope can be replaced by a carrying handle incorporating iron post sights. The M16A4 was especially designed to fire the 5.56mm duplex round, which features two smaller-than-normal bullets point-to-tail. This increases hit probability (and in effect doubles rate of fire), but also significantly reduces effective range. Standard ammunition is usable.

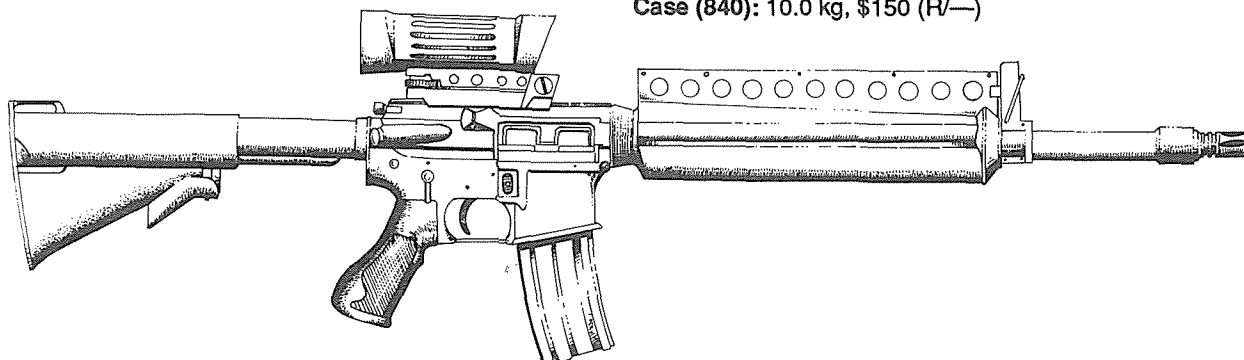
Editor's Note: The author's treatment of duplex rounds differs from that used in *Dark Conspiracy*

Round: 5.56mmN
Weight (Empty): 4.0 kg
Magazine: 20/30
Price: \$550 (R/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
M16A4	5	3	1-Nil	4/5	20/30	2	4	55
with duplex ammo	10	2	1-Nil	4/5	20/30*	2	4	30

*Each round of duplex ammo fired consists of two bullets (e.g., a single burst consists of 10 bullets, although only five cartridges were fired).

5.5x45mm NATO Duplex
Loaded Magazine (30): 0.5 kg, \$15
Case (840): 10.0 kg, \$150 (R/—)



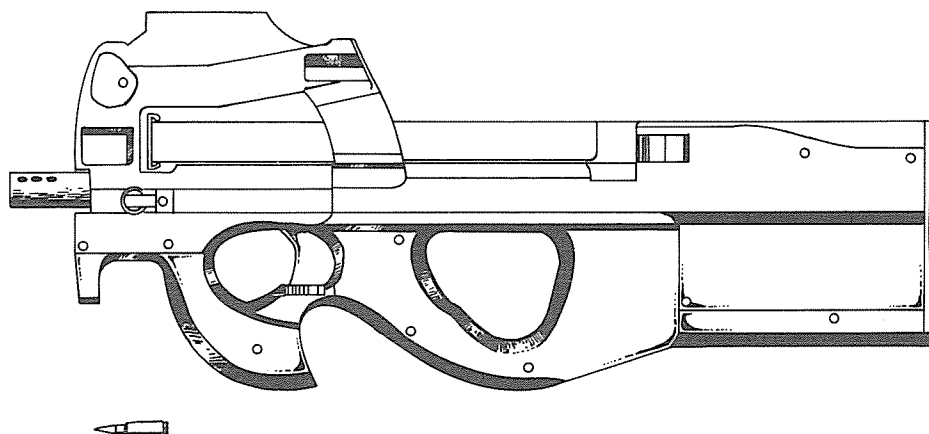
FN P90 PDW

The requirement for a personal defense weapon to replace handguns, submachineguns and carbines in use with vehicle crews, HQ staff and noninfantry-type troops was identified by NATO in 1989. The Belgian *Fabrique Nationale* developed the P90 especially for this purpose. This gun is of an advanced design featuring an all-plastic outer shell, bullpup configuration, nonmagnifying optic sight and a 50-round clip feeding from the top. It fires the new 5.7×28mm round of ammo which was developed solely for the P90. A special sabered, high-velocity round with superior penetration is also produced. Lightweight and easy to handle, it also has limited low-light capability built in the optics. The P90 has been in production since 1992 and is used by Belgium, Saudi Arabia and several special forces.

Round: 5.7mmFN
Weight (Empty): 2.8 kg
Magazine: 50
Price: \$650 (R/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
P90 PDW	10	2	1-Nil	3	50	2	7	30
with HV ammo	10	2	1-1-Nil	3	50	2	7	40

5.7×28mm Fabrique Nationale
Loaded Magazine (50): 0.4 kg, \$25 (HV ammo, \$225 (R/—))



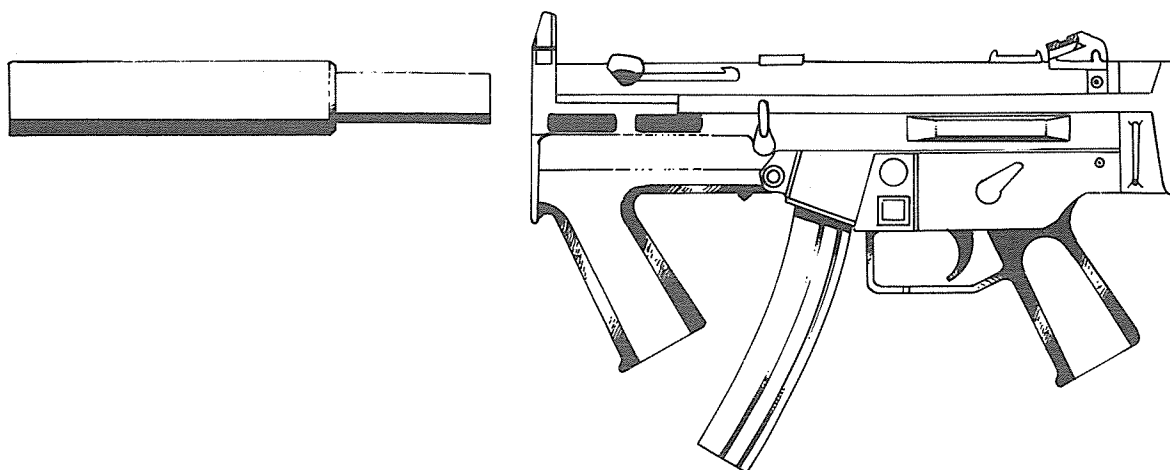
Heckler & Koch MP 2000

The MP 2000 was developed to specifications of the US Navy SEALs and several other special forces. It combines the best aspects of the MP 5 series into a single package and also adds some new ones. General layout is similar to a somewhat streamlined MP 5K, with various new features: removable sound suppressor, collapsible buttstock, luminous sight inlays for low-light fighting and new plastic magazines (which won't work with the MP 5). It has selective fire capability, including three-round bursts. The silencer is incredibly effective, even with standard ammunition. Prototypes were first seen in the early 1990s, but the gun was not mass-produced until 1994. It is used by the US Navy SEALs, US Army Special Operations Forces, German Army Fernspah troops and the German GSG 9, among others.

Round: 9mmP
Weight (Empty): 2.8 kg (with silencer, 3.6 kg)
Magazine: 30
Price: \$950 (R/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
MP 2000	3/10	2	Nil	2/3	30	1	2/6	30
with silencer	3/10	2	Nil	3/4	30	1	2/4	20

Loaded Magazine (30): 0.44 kg Ω



SABER RATTLING

BY
ALLEN
RAY
GARBEE

Jane Smith, a former co-worker now highly placed in a Western national security agency (CIA, MI-6 etc.), contacts the player characters with a job offer. Recent information indicates that the former Soviet biological weapons program (*Biopreperat*) has not been totally dismantled. Worse, intelligence sources indicate that the research-and-development facility outside Rostov-on-Don is now controlled by a right-wing militia. Smith explains that Western governments are reluctant to interfere in Russian affairs, especially after the fiasco in the Balkans. The Russian government is powerless to fight the political clout of the right-wing coalition. What is needed is a third-party group to reconnoiter the laboratory's facilities and eliminate any biological threat. Are the player characters up to the challenge?

SUPPORT

To aid the PCs in this difficult and politically sensitive mission, Smith's government will pay a base fee of \$10,000 plus \$1000 a day per person, and provide any and all Eastbloc/European weapons and munitions. Moderate amounts of cash are available for transportation purposes. The details of their transit to Russia is up to the PCs, though flying into Moscow is probably not high up on the list.

The flip side to the generous pay and total independence from micro-management is total deniability. All serial numbers have been removed from equipment. As much as possible, "generic," commonly available equipment is provided. If the PCs are apprehended, they are on their own. The West will make no effort to retrieve the PCs or even acknowledge their existence—to do so would cause extreme political embarrassment in the world community.

LABORATORY

The *Biopreperat* labs in Rostov-on-Don are located in the heart of the light industry area of the city. The buildings

are locked. The labs and offices have been stripped of equipment. There are approximately 20 large (three-meter by three-meter) crates stacked on the loading dock. They contain common lab equipment found in any biology/chemistry facility, along with two personal computers. In the shipping/loading dock office is a clipboard with the following papers: instructions on loading delicate scientific equipment, a road map with a route marked to a mining facility outside Rostov and a copy of the Red Army's NBC defense handbook with a bookmark in the chapters on decontamination and medical treatment.

MINE

The mine is an abandoned mangane mine dating from the great industrialization efforts of the '50s. Unprofitable, it was closed and occupied by the right-wing extremist mercenary group called the Cossacks after the fierce raiders of the Russian steppes. It consists of barracks buildings, elevators, engineer offices, a vehicle park, ore cracker with tailing dump and a little-used rail yard. The Cossacks have converted the mine into an operational military base. The vehicle park holds the brigade's equipment (mostly trucks and jeeps). The tailing dump makes an ideal firing range, and the barracks buildings fulfill their original function. The mines have become a series of storage bunkers for weapons, excess equipment, ammunition and, most recently, thanks to Col. Boris Chilykan, the location of a biological weapons lab. The exact layout of the mine is up to the referee. Efforts to enter the base will meet a competent, well trained security force, with a 300-man parachute battalion to back it up.

THE TRUTH

While the brigade has most of the lab's equipment, it lacks two critical items—formulas of biological agents and the creative intellect to develop it. Col. Chilykan has been unable to convince any of the project's former members to return to work.

As things stand, Chilykan has Rus-

sia's most expensive chemistry set! While the PCs could wreck the equipment (assuming they find it), they should realize that everything here can be replaced fairly easily. The only remaining step is to get out and give their report to Jane Smith.

ORIGINS

In 1991, the breakup of the Soviet military began in earnest. Units based in Eastern Europe for the last 40 years returned to a rapidly disintegrating state. The soldiers found a system unable to provide the most basic housing and welfare. Many units lived in tents through the fierce winter. Competing nationalist "defense forces" sprang up in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The closure of inefficient industries and political upheaval of the failed 1991 coup left many officers and men unable to find work after being discharged. Runaway inflation of the ruble rapidly devalued the gains the few employed persons tried to secure. Simultaneously, there was rapid growth in both the number and the power of the hard-line nationalist parties opposed to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's democratic reforms.

These factors, similar to conditions in the post-WWI German Weimar Republic, led to the formation of various private "militias" serving the needs of political extremists, the mafias, daring opportunists and small areas trying to preserve a small amount of order in the rising tide of intolerance and ethnic violence. Originally, these militias were little more than gangs armed with automatic weapons and a bloodthirsty political ideology.

A turning point occurred in late 1992. A group of hard-line Russian extremist parties formed an alliance against the reform-minded Russian government and its support of the West's "New World Order." A major spin-off of this alliance was the establishment of the Cossacks Brigade, under Gen. Vladimir Filitov—an ex-Soviet infantry commander. The Cossacks were a paramilitary unit formed to further the right-wing nationalist coalition's goals. The



Duerfeldt '43

brigade's first operations were in Serbia, where it operated against Croatian and Bosnian forces. It was also a highly visible telegenic sign of "Slavic unity."

Following its Serbian operations, the Cossack brigade received offers from other hard-line nationalist regimes to aid them in various operations—as assaults, garrisons and large-scale counterinsurgency work. The Cossacks soon became a regular sight in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and occasionally South America.

TO&E

The brigade uses a modified Soviet triangular organization. Capitalizing on the near-universal basic military training provided by the former Soviet conscription policies, all squad-, platoon-, company- and battalion-sized formations use essentially Soviet organizations. The brigade is composed of three battalions. The first is a motor infantry battalion, the second, a conventional leg infantry battalion, and the third, a composite air assault/light infantry battalion. Brigade headquarters consists of a headquarters company providing staff, intelligence, radio and basic administrative functions, along with a platoon of ex-Soviet Spetsnaz special forces troops.

In the Eastern European sphere, Cossacks are equipped with typical Russian equipment: AK-47 assault rifles, RPG-7 antitank grenade launchers, SPG-9 recoilless rifles, PK and DshK machineguns, 82mm mortars, AGS-17s and typical vehicles, such as GAZ-66 trucks and GAZ jeeps. The brigade headquarters has a pair of Mi-4 helicopters used for shuttling officers, equipment and occasionally the Spetsnaz platoon.

HISTORY

The Cossack brigade operates extensively throughout the world, typically in battalion or company strength.

The brigade's most famous (or infam-

ous) operation was the motor battalion's pursuit and annihilation of Liberian leader Flight Lt. Alexander M'bwanté and his followers (under Col. Boris Chilykan), during what became known as the "Gbarnga massacre." The Cossacks operate from a secure, semi-official base in southeastern Russia. Nationalist elements in the Russian government provide airlift/air evac services, spare parts and a limited resupply (by diverting government stores "lost in transit").

The Cossacks keep a "black list" of people or organizations that have betrayed or grievously injured the brigade. Primarily, the black list carries anti-Slavic people or groups, though several Western mercenary groups (which earned their success at the Cossacks' expense) are also listed. The black list is a reminder to the members of the brigade of unfinished business with those groups and individuals.

PERSONALITIES

The following is a description of the key officers of the Cossack brigade. All information can be considered accurate and has been verified by at least two independent sources.

Gen. Vladimir Filitov: Gen. Filitov, an ex-Soviet infantry officer, commanded a motor rifle regiment in Afghanistan. His experiences there shaped his outlook as to the superiority of the Russian people. His primary concern is the brigade's well-being. To this end, he has taken a hard stand on pay and provisions with his political patrons. Often, Filitov's hard-line stands work to his detriment, as his political "masters" debate whether he is too independent for the coalition's use.

Col. Stephen Gorki: Gorki is an ex-GRU intelligence officer. Following the breakup of the Soviet Army, Gorki joined the brigade on the advice of a friend. Information about Gorki is scarce, stemming from his GRU past. What is known is that he is a sadistic, thorough intel-

lectual. The best physical description of Gorki is that of a "short, bald man wearing glasses." Gorki serves the brigade as an effective intelligence operative and as second in command to Filitov. The Spetsnaz platoon is under Gorki's personal command, befitting its GRU origins.

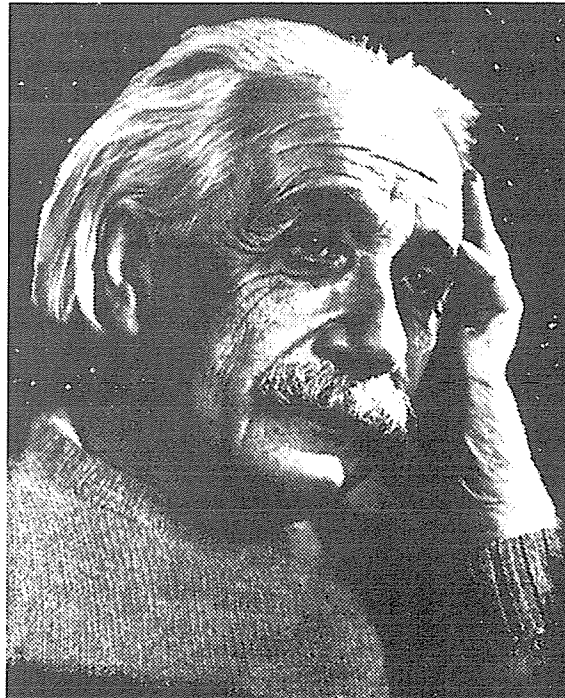
Col. Boris Chilykan: Chilykan, another ex-infantry officer, served with Filitov in Afghanistan as well as taking part in the withdrawal from Eastern Europe before being discharged. He is disgusted at the state of Russia in the world today and believes that the hard-liners are Russia's last hope for a return to strength. Chilykan ordered the death of Liberian leader Alexander M'bwanté and his followers after they had surrendered under a guarantee of good treatment. He is highly unstable and prone to violence. A prime candidate to succeed as commander of the brigade, he is held back by three things: Filitov's relative youth and connections, Col. Schmidt's abilities (see below) and his own blood-thirsty streak. Rumors suggest that Chilykan may be plotting to seize power by overthrowing Gen. Filitov, but such a possibility is discounted by those who know the general.

Col. Jan M. Davidoff: Davidoff is an ex-Soviet armor officer, who joined the Cossacks for lack of anything better to do. A true mercenary in every way, he owes his loyalty to the brigade and its paycheck. At heart, the closest thing to motivation Davidoff possesses is a desire for the brigade to acquire some armor. As such, he may take large risks if he believes it will result in capturing tanks or other AFVs.

Col. Richard Schmidt: Schmidt is an ex-East German special forces officer and a perfect example of a politically motivated soldier. Upon the fall of the German Democratic Republic, Schmidt fled to the Soviet Union and fell in with the hard-line elements in the state security apparatus. Schmidt had a minor role in the 1991 coup against President Gorbachev's government. He joined with the right wing to gain safety from the arrest and trial of the other coup members. Schmidt runs the parachute battalion in a typical Prussian hard-line manner. (In private, with friends, he will even refer to the third battalion as "mein fallschirmjäger truppen.") He is an excellent tactician and strategist, and would be an obvious candidate for command of the brigade were it not for his Teutonic origins. Schmidt is the model of an Aryan recruiting poster, something his rival Chilykan is quick to pick up on. Ω

Additional Adventure Ideas

The Cossacks can be used in a variety of situations, as garrisons for high-value targets, counterinsurgency missions against the PCs or groups hiring the PCs. The Cossacks can become a regular encounter for opposition or information, depending on how the PCs approach it. Conversely, **Command Decision** referees seeking a different type of game could deploy a battalion of Cossacks to oppose some third-party intervention, such as the US Marines or UN peacekeepers (use your imagination here—troops could be from Ghana, Pakistan, Italy, Canada, Vietnam, Indonesia or France, just to name a few!). "So you should encounter only light opposition from local militias...." Of course, if the PCs really succeed against the Cossacks, expect their names to be added to the black list, resulting in a visit by the Spetsnaz platoon at some inopportune time.



Albert Einstein never subscribed to Grey Worlds.

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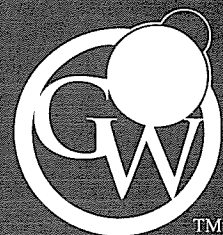
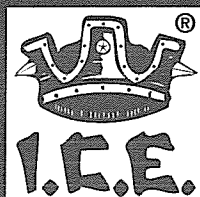
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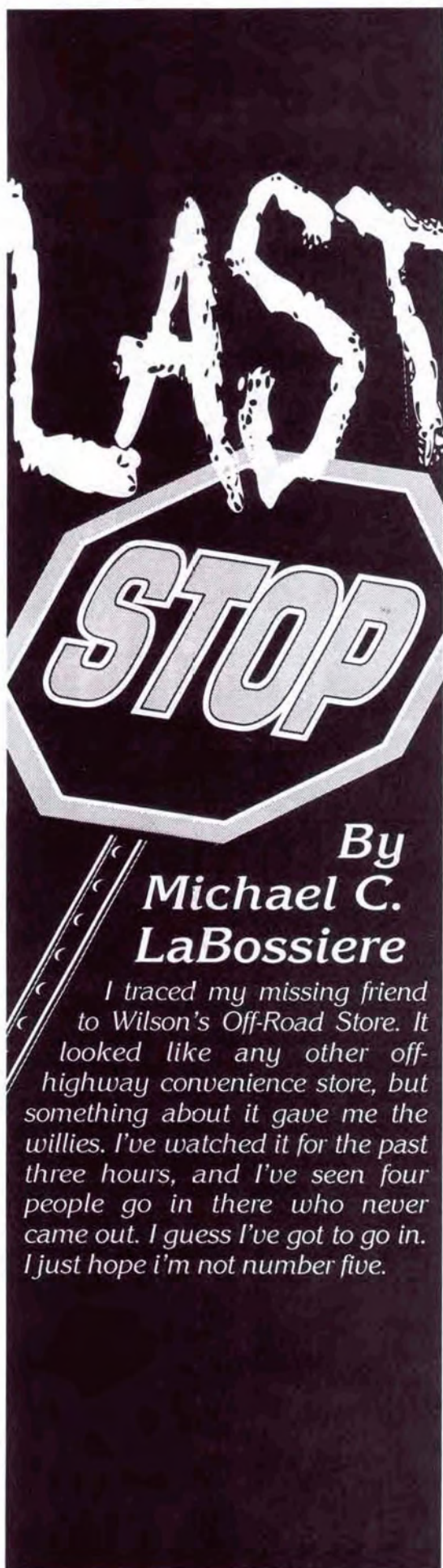
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By
Michael C.
LaBossiere

I traced my missing friend to Wilson's Off-Road Store. It looked like any other off-highway convenience store, but something about it gave me the willies. I've watched it for the past three hours, and I've seen four people go in there who never came out. I guess I've got to go in. I just hope I'm not number five.

This adventure can be set almost anywhere that has functioning highways. A group of insectoid extraterrestrials has taken over an off-highway convenience store and is using it as a base for scientific experiments on humans. The aliens capture travellers who they deem fit for their experiments and who can be captured with minimal risk. It is up to the PCs to expose the aliens' operation and put a stop to it.

A friend or relative travelling to visit one of the PCs calls from a pay phone in Slaterville. After telling the PC how long he (or she) has left to travel, he says he is going into the store to buy some coffee. This is the last the PC hears from him. When the person fails to show up, the PCs are likely to want to investigate.

INVESTIGATION

If the PCs decide to go looking for the missing friend/relative, they will find the following information at each source they check.

State Police: The state police will report that a vehicle matching the missing person's was found. If the PCs investigate, they will find that it is not the friend/relative's vehicle. The police will list the person as missing, if he has been gone over 24 hours. An officer will say to the PCs, "I'm sorry. We do all we can, but there are so many missing people these days that we're swamped. Off the record, we've been hearing some odd stories about Slaterville. You might want to look there. If you find something out, don't hesitate to give us a call."

Morgues/Hospitals: If the PCs check these places, they will find a few people who match the missing person's description, but he won't be in any of these places.

Trucker Grapevine: If the PCs check the local highway rumor mill (by going to a trucker bar, for example), they will, provided they get the truckers to talk, learn that there have been an unusual number of disappearances in and around Slaterville. Many of the truckers say they now avoid the place, but others say it's just a rumor, nothing more. If the PC's friend/relative was the sort of person who would be remembered (very attractive, very odd-looking, etc.), one of the truckers might remember seeing him going into Wilson's Off-Road Store.

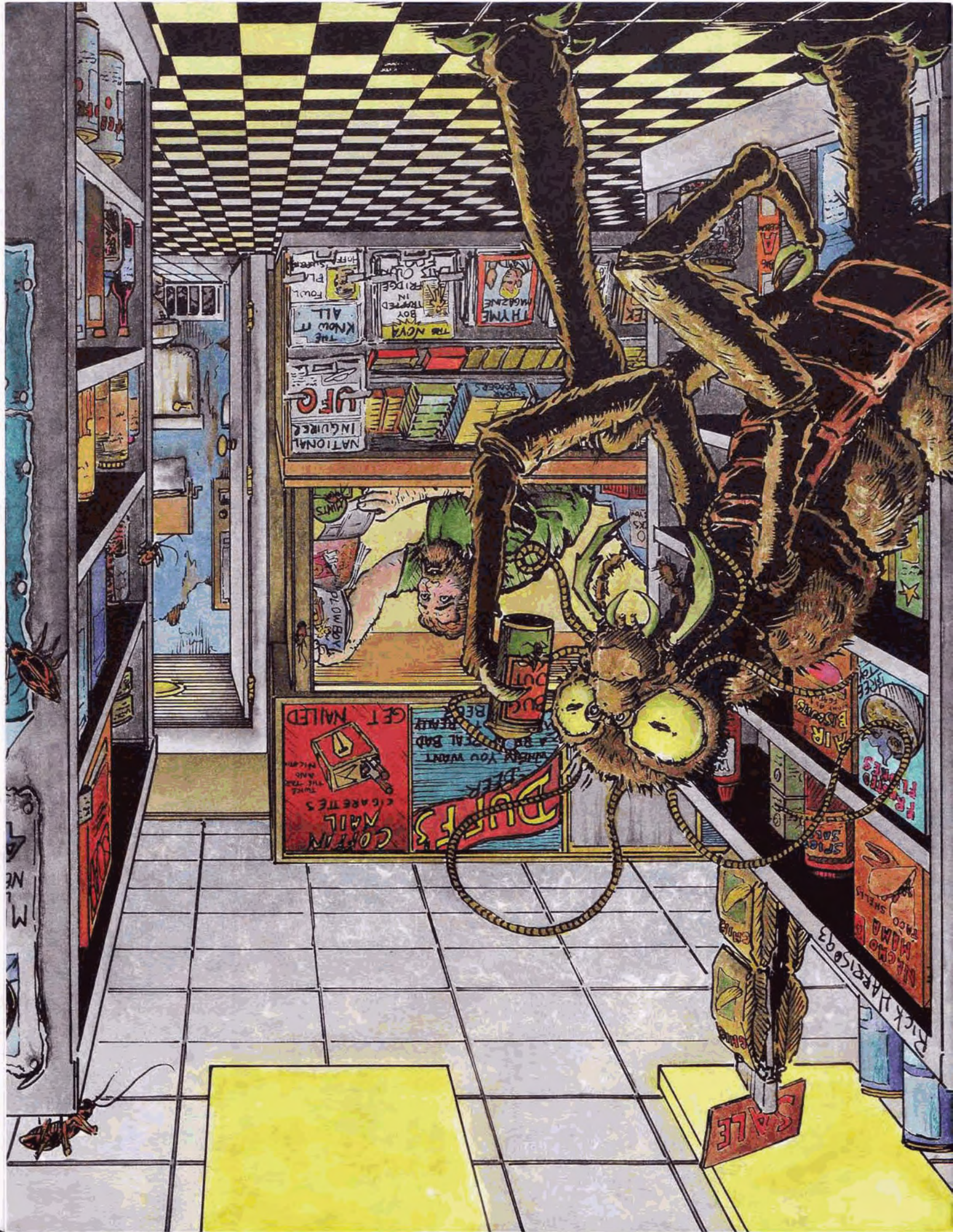
SLATERVILLE

Slaterville is a typical off-highway town. It consists primarily of gas stations, convenience stores, motels, hotels and truck stops. Due to the current conditions in the US, the town is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, and most of the buildings are made of reinforced concrete. Slaterville is fairly peaceful since it is on a functioning highway, but there have been occasional raids by outlaws and gangs. Most of the time, these people drive into town, throw a few Molotov cocktails at the buildings, shoot up some signs and leave.

Virtually everyone who lives in the town works in one of the businesses. There are few children, and they all go to school in a nearby community since Slaterville doesn't have any schools. It also lacks a police station, fire department and post office. It does have a few mailboxes, however. The people are fairly suspicious of outsiders, but they are usually polite since their livelihood depends on the highway travellers who stop for food and fuel.

If the PCs ask about the missing person, no one will remember seeing him. If the PCs ask about the disappearances, the local people will either claim to have heard nothing about them or say that they are unfounded rumors. Successful use of Human Empathy or Psychology skill (the task is Average) will reveal that the locals are aware that something is wrong and that they are lying to the PCs. They are actually aware of the disappearances but are unwilling to say anything out of fear of losing business. Most will do their best to obstruct the PCs (by refusing to sell them food, gas or lodging) or mislead them (by saying that the disappearances really took place in nearby Carterville), provided it does not put them in any danger. Some may aid the PCs if they are convinced that the PCs can handle the situation without ruining the town's reputation. The average people in town are just that, average, and are Novice NPCs. They should not (unless enraged to mob action) be of great hindrance or help to the PCs.

Unfortunately for the player characters, there is a group of Igors who are employed by the aliens. Most of them work at the store, but others are under cover at other businesses. These Igors look for victims and occasionally take people (from their motel rooms, for example). They also have their eyes open for any suspicious individuals (like the PCs). If they become suspicious of the PCs, they will try to drive them away (by harassing them, vandalizing their vehicle, etc.). If



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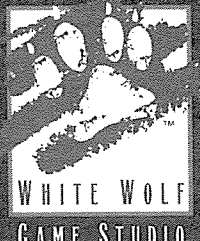
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they think the PCs are getting too close to the truth, they will attempt to kill the PCs.

WILSON'S OFF-ROAD STORE

The store looks like almost any other off-highway convenience store/gas station on the surface, but beneath it is a den of alien evil. The owner of the store, Bubba Wilson, was captured by the aliens, and he offered to let them use his store as a base of operations and to aid them in their activities if they would let him live. The aliens agreed and soon set up shop under his store. They have been harvesting humans for their experiments and food ever since.

All the rooms in the store are monitored by hidden TV cameras (a Difficult: Observation task to spot) which are linked to a viewer in the aliens' living area. There will always be an alien watching the viewer.

Pumps: A bank of standard fuel pumps, including diesel. The pumps are full-service (which is very odd in these times), but the gas prices are as low as self-serve. The full-service routine gives the Igors a chance to look into the vehicles to see how many people are present. There will be at least two Igors working the pumps at all times.

Ice: A sign on the ice machine indicates that it is out of order.

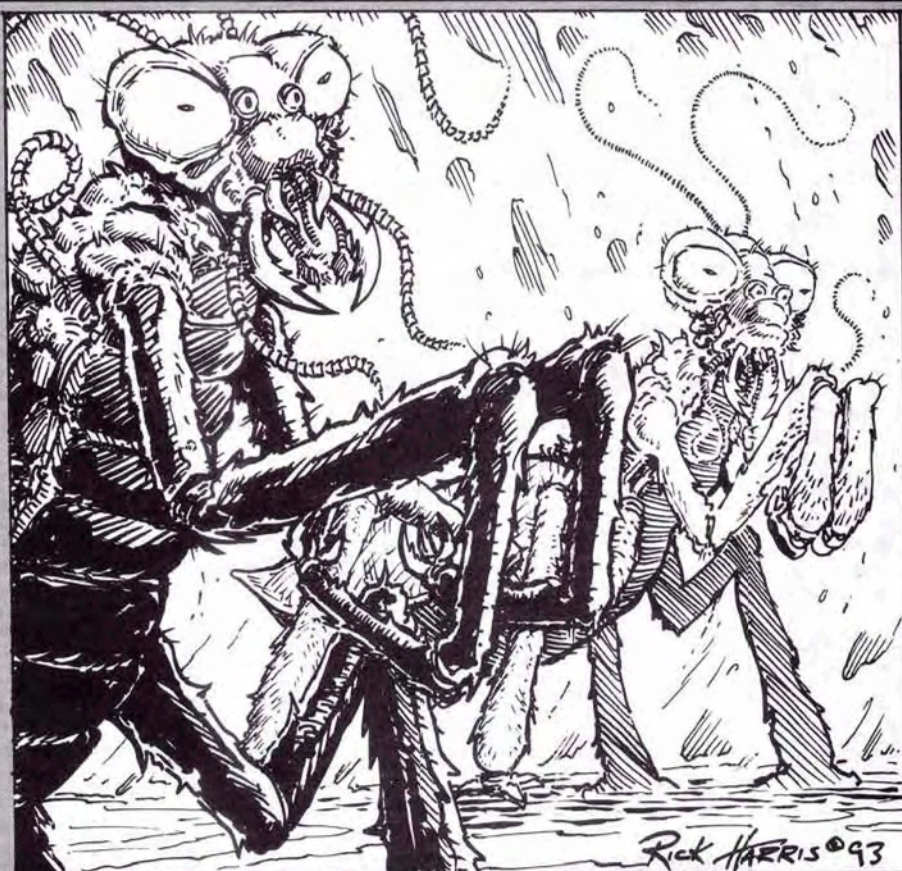
Store: The interior contains the usual overpriced snack foods, drinks and so forth. Astute PCs (those who make an Average: Observation roll) will note that the shelves are set up so as to block the view of the interior of the store from the outside.

Office: The office has the service window (bulletproof) behind which always sits one bored-looking Igor. The office contains some old, tattered furniture, as well as the safe. The safe contains a surprising amount of money, as well as items of jewelry, watches and so forth. Many of these items can be traced to various missing individuals. There is a locked trap door hidden under the stained rug. Spotting it is a Difficult task using Observation skill.

Restrooms: The restrooms are fairly nasty: stained seats, damp floors and so forth. The walls have thick panels set in them (soundproofing) which seem odd. Set into each room's floor is a trap door. A door can be spotted by making a Difficult: Observation skill roll. When the aliens wish to capture a victim, they lock the bathroom door using an electric locking mechanism. They then unlock the trap door, and the victim falls through it. The door is then unlocked to ready it for the next victim. If the victim

avoids falling into the trap (a Difficult task using Agility if the person is not expecting trouble, Average if he is), an alien will enter via the trap door to attack. Only one alien can enter a bath-

room, due to its small size. If the victim is especially troublesome, the Igors will rush to help. The aliens generally take their victims at night and select victims who are alone or groups when they are



Type II Insectoid ETs (Chiikaga)

Strength: 6
Constitution: 6
Agility: 4
Intelligence: 6
Special: Armor value 1

Education: 6
Charisma: 1
Empathy: 2
Initiative: 4

Move: 4/12/20/30
Skill/Dam: 7/1D10
Hits: 20/40
Appear: 1D6

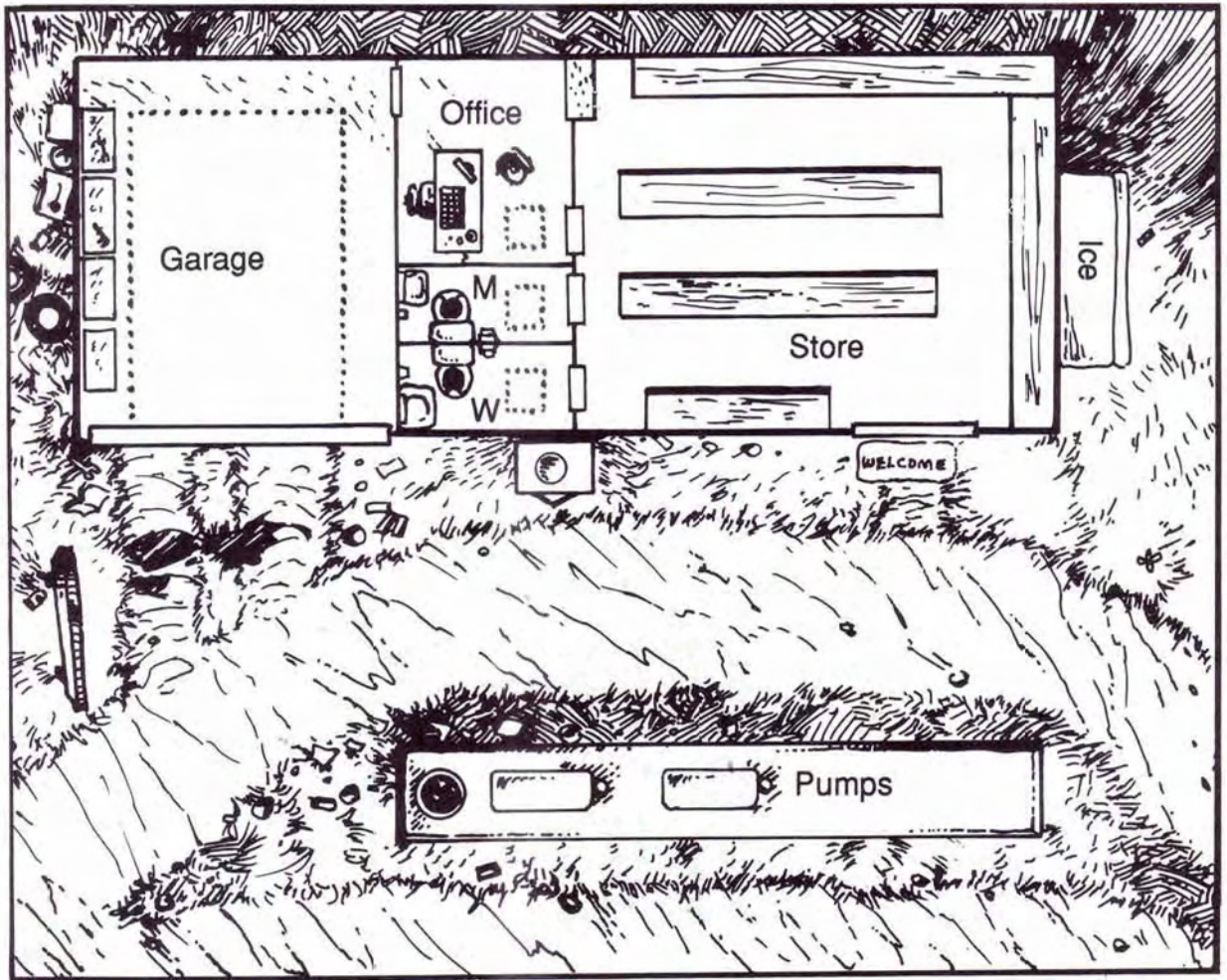
The Type II insectoid ETs, known as Chiikaga (what their name for themselves sounds like in English), are related to the more common insectoid ETs. They are not as advanced as their cousins, but are physically tougher. Like their cousins, they consider humans an excellent source of food. Unlike their cousins, they see that humans are potentially useful and desire to find an effective way of using humans as troops.

Chiikaga inevitably live underground when on Earth, typically under an abandoned or conquered human structure. They build primarily with organic materials that they process themselves. Their lairs are very unpleasant places for humans to be, for they are vile and coated in slime (which keeps the organic walls fresh).

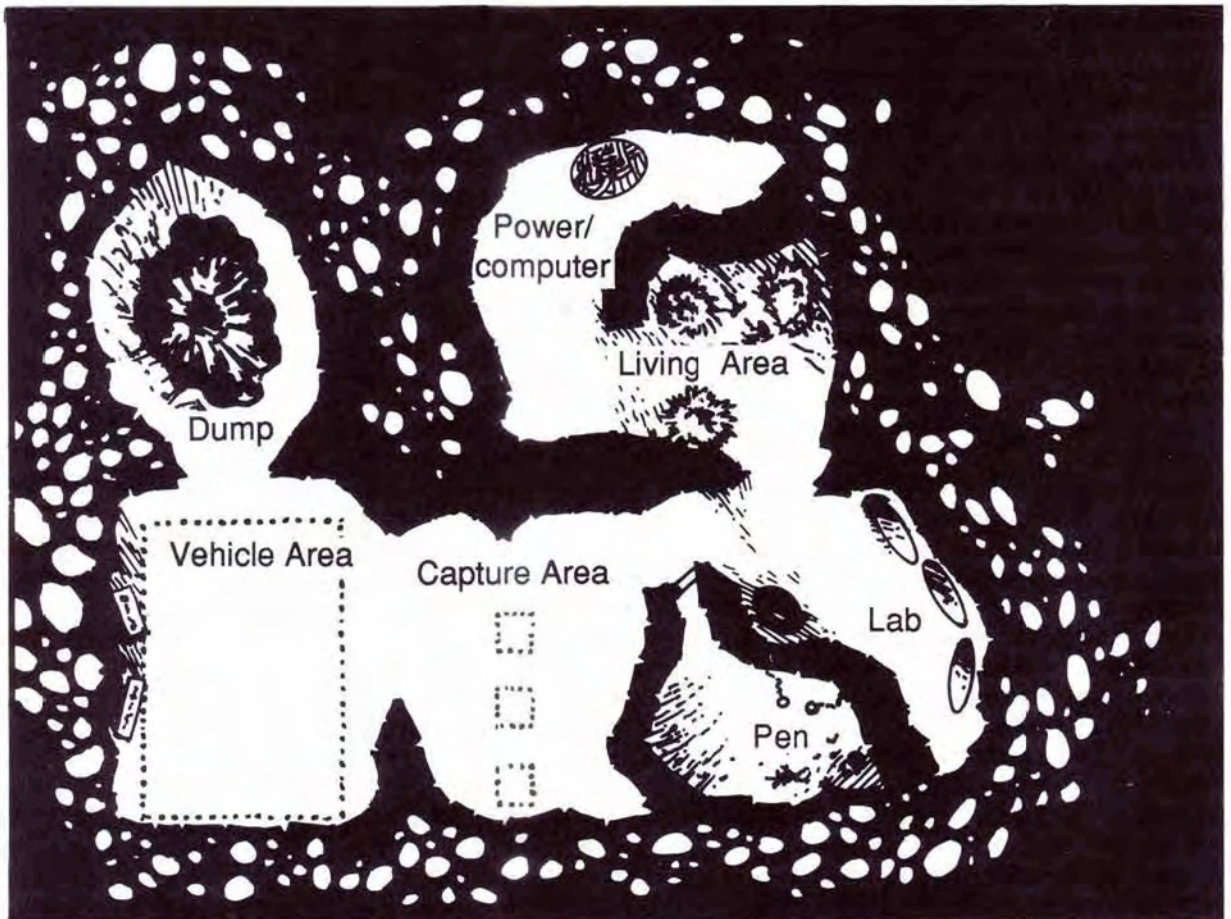
While they are Dark Minions, they are hostile to their insectoid cousins and have fought wars with them in the past, generally over the issue of who gets to exploit and feed on various populations of other worlds. These hostilities have continued on Earth. Unlike their cousins, the Chiikaga are not well established on Earth. So far, they only have a few secret outposts in human cities and towns, and they have yet to become involved in corporate activity to the degree their cousins have.

Physically, the Chiikaga are horribly repulsive to humans. They walk on four legs, while using two arms for manipulation. Their bodies are composed of hard, chitin-like material which oozes a thick slime at all times. Their heads are rather small (the brain is in the main body), and they have a wicked array of biting, grinding, sucking and chewing organs. They also have two main eyes that detect only motion and a set of smaller eyes that are as good as human sight. Their only redeeming feature is that they can be killed.

WILSON'S OFF-ROAD STORE



BENEATH THE SURFACE



confident they can capture all of the victims at once. They also avoid taking the obviously wealthy or powerful, since that will draw undue attention.

Garage: The garage is a greasy, oily mess with tools scattered about. Service is terrible here and is likely to leave the vehicle worse off than when it was brought in. The garage contains a hidden lift plate (a Difficult task to spot using Observation) that is used to lower victims' vehicles for disposal. The lift is operated by a control box set into the wall. Unlike the rest of the place, the box looks new (an Average; Observation task to notice this). There are always at least two Igors here, generally smoking cigarettes and drinking beer.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The subsurface was hollowed out by the aliens using their advanced technology. The walls are made of a thick, chitin-like material and are coated with a slimy, foul-smelling substance. The place is dimly lit with red lights, and an alien scent pervades the air.

Vehicle Area: This is where the vehicles end up that are lowered from the garage. There are tools in the room for cutting and disassembling vehicles. The Igors are quite good at dismantling the cars. The parts of the victims' vehicles are taken into the dump and disposed of.

Dump: The aliens, aware of the amount of waste material (bodies, vehicle parts) their operation would generate, dug a pit to dispose of it. The dump is a deep shaft dug in the earth with reinforcing poles of alien material set into its wall. The pit is about 10 meters deep and contains human bones, rotting corpses, auto parts and small scurrying creatures not of this earth which feed on the remains. The dump site smells of gasoline, oil and rotted flesh.

Capture Area: This is where the victims end up if they fall through the trap doors. The victims fall onto soft, squishy material which cushions their fall. There will be at least one armed alien per victim present to subdue the humans. A subdued human is stripped naked and dragged into the pen.

Pen: The walls of the pen are composed of the thick, slimy chitin-like material. The door is made of steel and is set into the walls. It is kept locked and is guarded by an alien at all times. There are currently six people here, including the missing person the PC is looking for. The people are in terrible condition due to the terror of the situation and the fact that the aliens don't

feed their captives. At the referee's discretion, some of the victims may have been modified: grafted limbs, surgical modifications, cyborg parts, etc.

Lab: This chamber is filled with weird-looking, semi-organic DarkTek laboratory equipment. It is here that the aliens conduct their experiments on humans. Their research is aimed at producing a human-based fighter to use in their battles with other ETs. They are working with grafting cloned organs and limbs from their own race to humans, as well as cyborg modifications. So far, they have been unable to produce a controllable fighter. Most of them went mad and had to be destroyed. At the referee's discretion, the lab might contain one or more such experiments. These beings would be as likely to attack the PCs as the aliens if freed.

Living Area: This is where the aliens sleep and feed. The aliens feed primarily on the brains and central nervous systems of higher animals (including humans), and they prefer their meals as fresh as possible (alive). The PCs may run into the aliens while they are feeding, which would be a horrible scene to witness.

Power/Computer: This room is a horrifying tangle of partially living computer and power plant components, some of which were once part of human beings. The computer is not terribly advanced or powerful, and is used primarily to store data from the experiments.

RESOLUTION

The aliens will continue to operate and expand their operation (by taking over more businesses and houses) unless they are stopped. If the PCs defeat them, they will abandon their operations in Slaterville for a while, but will eventually try again. If any of the aliens escape, they will rejoin others of their kind and seek revenge. If all of them are killed, a four-being team will be sent in to determine what happened, and they may learn of the PCs' involvement and seek revenge. Those the PCs rescue will be quite grateful (once they recover) and may be able to aid the PCs later.

The referee may wish to continue the action by having one of the aliens' more dangerous experiments escape. It would then be up to the PCs to track the person down and stop him. The individual would have various grafted limbs, as well as cyborg parts, making him a dangerous opponent. While the person would be insane, he would possess a great deal of cunning.



Igors

There are 15 Igors in the town. See page 176 of **Dark Conspiracy** for details. They are armed with a mix of knives and handguns, and six have shotguns. They are cowards on their own or if outgunned, but are "brave" when they outnumber and outgun their victims.

Bubba Wilson

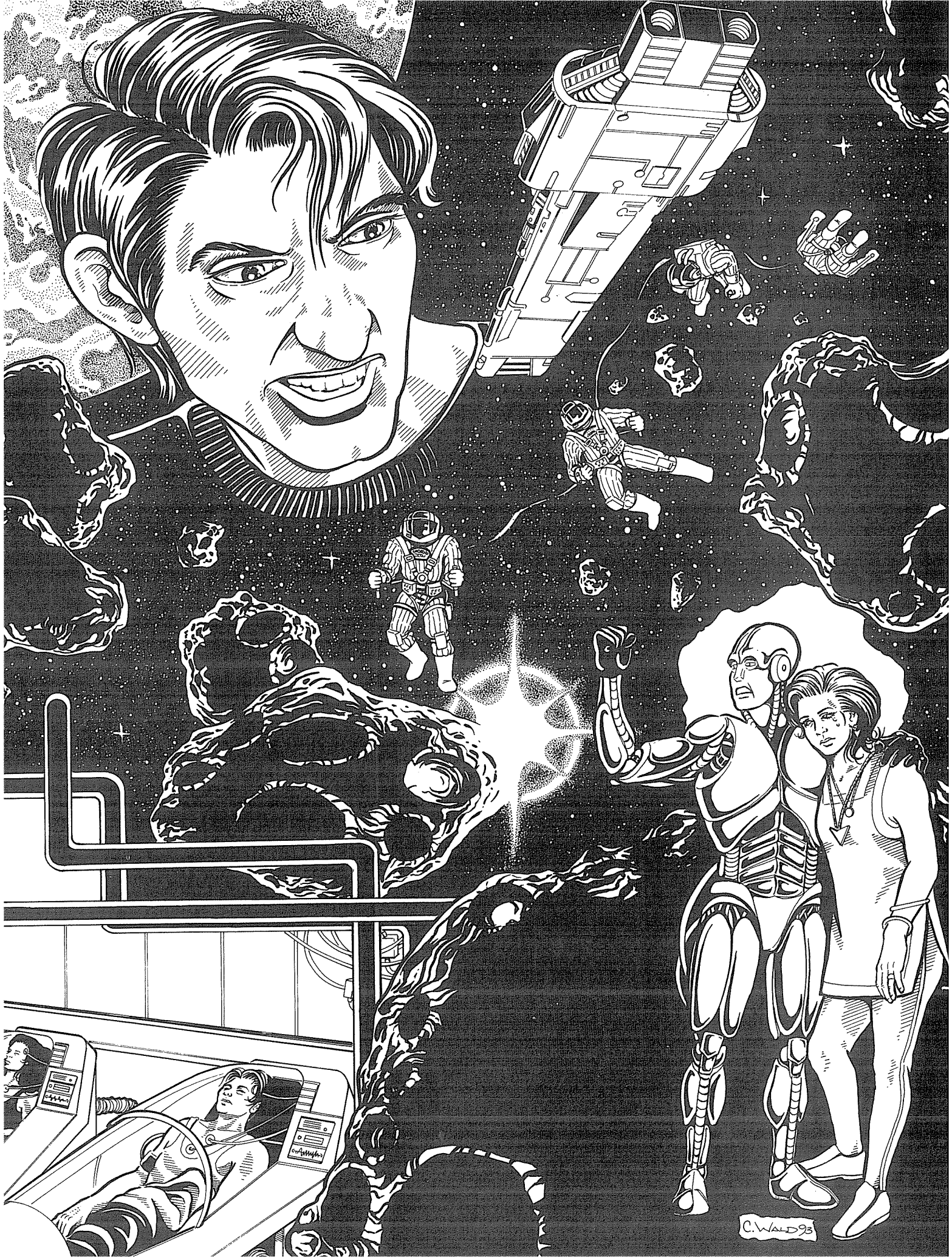
Level: Experienced.

Skills: Small Arms 4 (Pistol), Small Arms 5 (Rifle), Forgery 4, Streetwise 4, Vehicle Use 4 (Wheeled Vehicle).

Physical Description: Wilson is an obese man with a scraggly beard and a balding head. His eyes constantly move about, as if he is always looking for something. He always seems slightly nervous, as if he is being watched.

Personality/Notes: Wilson is a former cop who left the department just before coming under investigation. He then returned to full-time management of the convenience store he owned. Greedy, selfish man, Wilson was only too glad to work for the aliens. They abducted him when he was in the woods burying an elderly woman who didn't have as much cash on her as Bubba would have liked. He is utterly without scruples and will do anything to further his own profit and enjoyment. He is generally in the store at night, so he can loot the bodies of the aliens' victims.

Weapons: S&W Model 29/16.5 (always carried under his jacket), Mossberg M500 (kept in pickup or in the office when he is there). Ω



FORESIGHT

BY KERRY MOULD

This adventure is designed as a bridge from **MegaTraveller** to **Traveller: The New Era**. Tasks and equipment have been kept generic to avoid any rule conflicts between the two games. The adventure takes place in 1129, before the outbreak of the Virus, and provides one way for gamers to transport their favorite characters 70 years into the future to 1201. It starts on Vincennes/Deneb 1122, one of only two TL16 worlds in the Domain of Deneb. The PCs have come to this world in the course of their adventures and are currently between jobs. While relaxing in a local startown bar, they come across this ad in the local trade paper:

Wanted: Recovery Team. A private base has been seized by criminal elements. A team of specialists is immediately required to liberate the facility for the legal owner. Only the finest need apply! Proven combat experience is required (Imperial service preferred). Toppay guaranteed; repatriation bond and survivor's insurance included. Personal equipment can be provided. Zero-g combat, intrusion and weapons skills are a must. A transportation allowance or ship will be provided to insert the team. Permanent employment is possible, depending on performance. Contact Comcode A-F396-02H5.

PREPARATIONS

Dr. James Holden is the founder of the Foresight Group, whose members believe that a Short Twilight is upon us. To prepare for the worst, Holden built a secret retreat called the Redoubt, where he and his family will sleep out the bad

times in low berths. Unfortunately, another member of the group, Paul Brennan, found out about the Redoubt and decided his own survival was worth killing for. He tried to murder Dr. Holden and has now taken over the Redoubt. After six months, Dr. Holden has recovered from the trauma and is now determined to destroy Brennan and reclaim his retreat.

Applying for the Job: When the PCs contact the comcode listed in the advertisement, they are told to transmit their résumés and references, then wait to be contacted. After a week, they are invited to a private apartment in the Markel Metroplex. They do not know who the patron is or anything beyond the information in the ad, and all contact has been by voice only. They are welcomed to the apartment by a robot, led to the living room and invited to sit down. Once seated, a hologram of a man appears, and quizzes them on their abilities and views on numerous topics, including cyborgs and psionics. During the interview, Dr. Holden (pretending to be a robot) will read their surface thoughts as they answer the questions. If they answer truthfully, and positively, he will come forward and introduce himself. He informs them that their references have checked out and their team has been selected for his mission.

Briefing: Dr. Holden has been betrayed by Paul Brennan, an associate. Six months ago, during a meeting of a secret society known as the Foresight Group, Brennan and five armed accomplices burst in, took the group hostage and demanded that Holden give them the access codes to his personal ship and the location of his secret retreat. Dr. Holden refused, and

Brennan proceeded to execute 12 members of the group before Holden broke down and gave him the information. After downloading the only copy of the information into his hand computer, Brennan murdered the remaining members who had witnessed his crime. He left Holden to the end. After shooting Holden, the six disappeared.

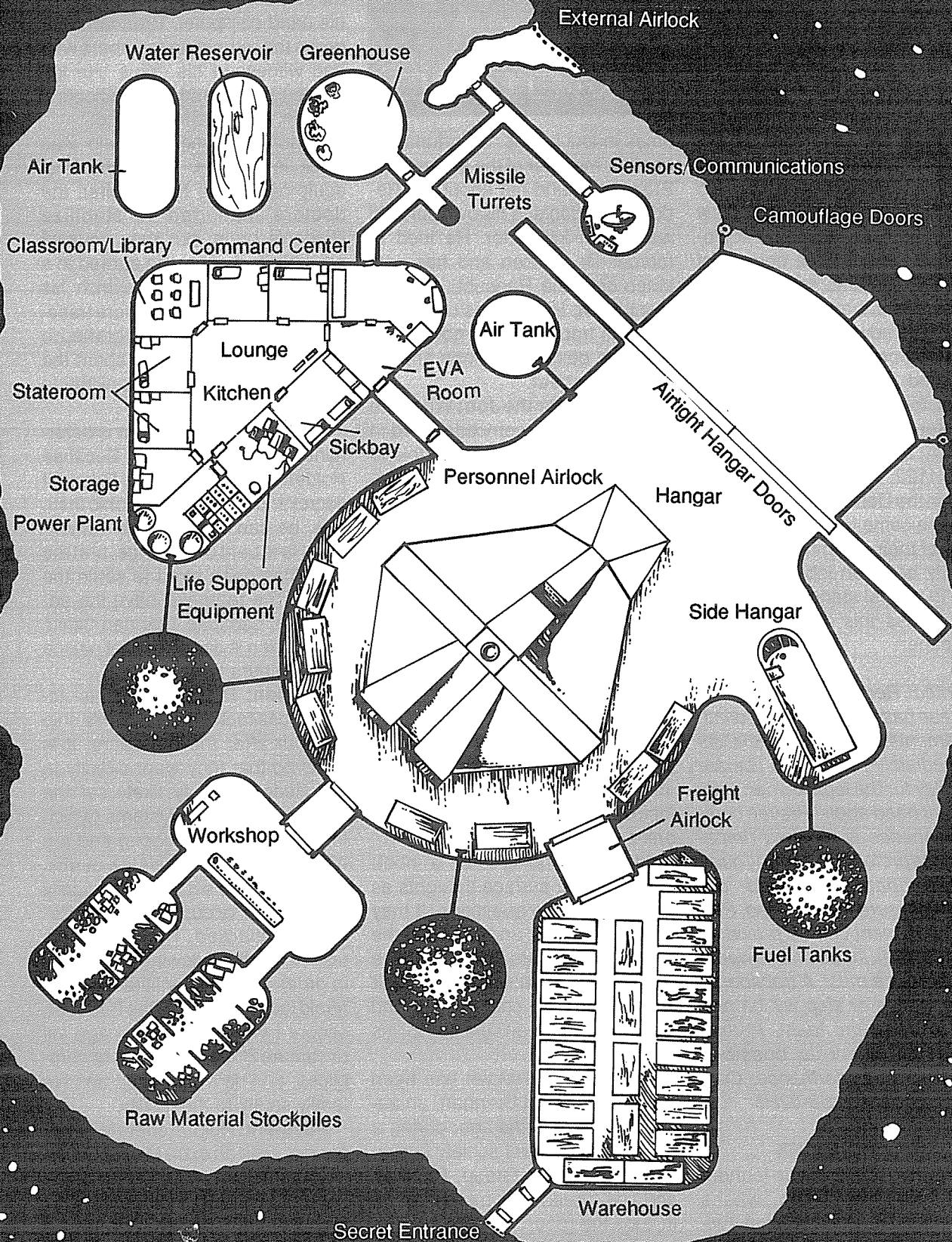
Fortunately, medical help was quick in arriving. Using the best equipment TL16 had to offer, the doctors managed to stabilize Holden's brain, but they couldn't save his body. His wife agreed to a full body cyborging, in which his brain and spinal column were transferred to a robot body and grafted to the circuits. Holden has spent the last six months in rehabilitation learning to adapt.

Now recovered, Holden is determined to get Brennan. Because Holden wants to keep the Redoubt secret and protect the Psionic Institute, he can't involve the authorities. He is bent on revenge, and the team has been hired to settle the score. The team will have the advantage, because Brennan thinks that Holden is dead and that no one knows where he is.

Mission: Brennan and his accomplices took off in Holden's ship an hour after the massacre. It is believed that they went directly to the Redoubt. They likely set the automatic security systems (which include numerous robots) and are hibernating in the base's low berths. The berths are set to automatically retrieve the occupants if the Redoubt is attacked. The PC team is tasked with the following objectives, in order of priority: infiltrate an asteroid facility known as the Redoubt; secure it with minimum damage; kill or capture Brennan and his accomplices; and deliver Holden and his family safely to the facility.

Payment: Holden offers MCr100 per man with an extra MCr50 for the team leader, and MCr100 per criminal captured alive. Holden is willing to go as high as MCr200 each if the PCs can convince him their abilities warrant it. If the team has a ship capable of carrying the team, Holden and the other seven mem-

REDOUBT



Redoubt

Located in the Quebraco system, just jump-3 from Vincennes, the Redoubt is hidden among hundreds of other asteroids in the system's inner belt. It contains a ship, and enough technology, supplies and information, to survive a Short Twilight and the rebuilding of civilization in the Domain.

Camouflage Doors: These carefully balanced doors are cut from the surface of the asteroid and can only be detected by close examination.

Airtight Hangar Doors: The main doors are large enough to accept Holden's ship and allow the hangar to be pressurized.

Hangar: A dome 42 meters in diameter, the hangar has a 2000-ton capacity travelling crane attached to its roof. The crane is used for ship repairs and to move cargo containers, like the 18 stacked around the edge of the hangar. Sitting in the middle of the hangar is Dr. Holden's jump-4 TL16 scout ship.

Side Hangar: Jutting out from the main hangar, this space is used to store the Redoubt's standard 20-ton lifeboat.

Air Tank: This tank is used to prevent wasting any precious air. Before the hangar door is opened, all atmosphere is pumped into this sphere for storage.

Freight Airlock: This airlock is large enough for the crane to carry freight containers through.

Warehouse: The 72 containers, stacked three high, contain supplies, equipment and spares for 10 years.

Secret Entrance: The camouflage doors and airlock can only be operated by psionic switches. Only three people in vacc suits can cycle through the airlock at one time.

Fuel Tanks: The three 6750kl tanks of refined hydrogen fuel supply the ships and the asteroid's power plant.

Workshop: A robotic fabricating unit dominates this room. It contains files on Third Imperium technology and can fabricate virtually any item if provided with the correct raw materials. Tools and diagnostic equipment fill the rest of the room. The track for the travelling crane runs through the workshop to the stockpiles.

Raw Material Stockpiles: Supplies of common and specialized raw materials are stored here.

Personnel Airlock: These doors lead to the personnel section and are heavily armored.

EVA Room: This room is filled with decontamination equipment, a changing area and vacc suit storage lockers. The Redoubt's four Super Guard robots are normally stabled here.

Command Center: Similar to a bridge, this room houses the workstations, computers and controls for all station functions. An arms locker occupies one corner.

Stateroom: Similar to a basic starship stateroom, these double-sized rooms are lavishly appointed and very comfortable.

Classroom/Library: A university-class library and sophisticated teaching equipment offer courses on thousands of subjects. Holographic projectors can be used for instruction or entertainment.

Storage: The day-to-day supplies, including food and other consumables, are contained here.

Power Plant: This room contains the three 15kl fusion plants and 10 6.75kl battery banks. Standard procedure is to run one plant at full power to recharge the batteries, which then supply the asteroid's needs.

Life-Support Equipment: Modular components form a system fully capable of extended life-support functions.

Sickbay: Advanced medical and diagnostic equipment and a modern robot surgery can deal with most medical problems, including producing any required drugs. Eight low berths line the rear wall.

Kitchen: A modern food preparation center.

Lounge: Retractable fixtures allow it to be used as a living room, gym, games room and more. It is the main living and recreation area.

Missile Turrets: Concealed by camouflage doors on the top and bottom of the asteroid, the triple missile turrets are mounted on telescoping booms for a 360-degree field of fire. They are controlled from the command center and each have a 300-round magazine.

Sensors/Communications: These passive sensors and tight beam comm systems allow the asteroid to observe its surroundings without giving itself away.

External Airlock: This allows access to space without opening the main doors. Concealed in the bottom of a wide crack, it is totally hidden from view.

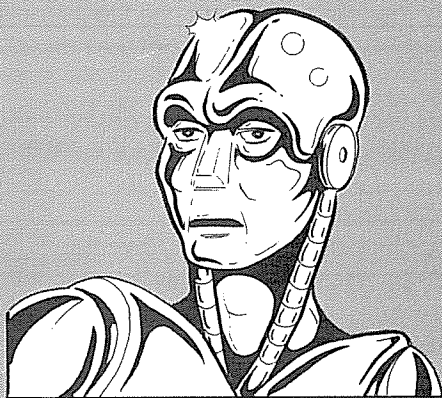
Greenhouse: This robotic facility supplies the base with fruits and vegetables, while the asteroid's air is recirculated over the plants for freshness.

Water Reservoir: The reservoir serves as a backup in case of failure in the closed-loop recycling system.

Air Tank: Like the water reservoir, the air tank serves as a reserve supply of air.

In order to protect the asteroid from colliding with other asteroids, six thruster plates are installed, one in each direction of the three axes. The asteroid's computer tracks all other asteroids in the vicinity and projects their courses. Minor course corrections by the computer, sometimes weeks in advance, prevent collisions.

bers of his family, he will charter it at the going rate. If not, he will lease a ship with an all-robot crew. This is a success-only contract, and penalties will be assessed for excessive damage to the facility. If Holden is really impressed with the team's performance, he may offer permanent employment.



JAMES HOLDEN

Scientist, CCCAB0, age 51, 9 terms, Cr unlimited. *Skills:* Psi-12, Special (Precognition)-12, Telekinesis-6, Telepathy-12, Broker-2, Computer-1, Genetics-4, History-2, Medical-4, Navigation-1, Neural Weapons-1, Pilot-1, Vacc Suit-1, Zero-G Env-1.

Only a trusted few know that Dr. Holden is psionically gifted. He possesses the rare power of precognition and can literally see into the future. His precognition is erratic, however, and generally shows events that will have significant effects, never those affecting just a few people. He has used his gift to amass a tremendous fortune through high-risk speculation. With a healthy bankroll accumulated, he turned his attention to his true love, the study of psionics. Two years ago, he had a horrifying vision he couldn't ignore—a superweapon that would consume the shattered remnants of the Third Imperium and its trillions of citizens. The vision was unspecific, but he knew he had to act to save his family and friends. He established the Foresight Group within the local chapter of the Psionic Institute, and dedicated it to preparing for the apocalypse. Holden has a wife, two daughters, a son, a daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. Six months ago, after the murder attempt that nearly succeeded, he faked his own death and assumed the role of one of the family's household robots. His condition has not affected his psionic powers.

Equipping the Team: An advance on their pay in the form of personal equipment can be provided to the PCs if necessary. Extensive business contacts will enable Holden to provide virtually any equipment requested, in spite of Vincennes' law level. The team will need at least combat armor, backpack propulsion units, PLSS, comm gear and weapons.

Practice Makes Perfect: Holden has an exact holographic simulation of the interior of the Redoubt set up in his empty hangar at the Vincennes Downport. The PCs will have a week to make their plans and practice their tactics on the simulator before they depart. Holden will also provide a Security robot and a Super Guard robot (*101 Robots*, pages 33 and 34) for the team to study. They are similar to the ones that guard the Redoubt.

GETTING THERE

Once the PCs have completed their preparations, they will depart for their destination (Quebraco/Deneb 1420, jump-3 from Vincennes). Holden will program the destination and lock it so no one else knows where they are going. An underdeveloped system, Quebraco is only TL4 and does not have any ships. The only starport is a bare patch of rock on one of this water world's few islands. The locals live on vast floating plants and rarely trade with outsiders. The system has two unremarkable asteroid belts and four gas giants. A lack of exploitable resources has made this world a backwater which has little contact with the rest of the sector.

Arrival: In order to hide from the Redoubt's sensors, Dr. Holden will recommend arriving in the sensor shadow of one of system's four gas giants. That will allow the PCs a chance to refuel the ship and scan the system while remaining hidden. On arrival, they will find the system deserted, with the automatic beacon of the system's class E starport as their only sensor contact.

Hide and Seek: After they arrive safely, Dr. Holden will show them the location of the Redoubt. It is an unremarkable asteroid at the fringe

of the thickest cluster in the inner belt. Unfortunately, the easiest approach is also totally exposed to the Redoubt's sensors and weapons. Dr. Holden will recommend a course which stays in the sensor shadows of the gas giants, moons and other asteroids. Such a course will take the ship right through the middle of the planetoid belt, and the pilot will have to be very careful to avoid colliding with any of the dozens of the large asteroids. But, even with these maneuvers, the Redoubt's location means the ship will only be able to get to within about 50 kilometers before being exposed. Fortunately, the Redoubt's sensors have been calibrated to ignore the dozens of one- and two-meter-wide mini-asteroids that fly past it every week, so the last 50 kilometers can be crossed with vacc suits and thruster packs.

A Shot in the Dark: Traversing the last 50 kilometers will be a dangerous task. The PCs must precisely calculate their exact course and speed in order to intercept the asteroid. If they are off by just a few meters, they could fly right past it and off into space. If there is one PC who has a high zero-g or vacc suit skill, he can slave the rest of the suits to his and lead the group across. If none of the PCs feel they have high enough skills, the navigator can program a course, and the computer will direct the attempt from the ship by tight-beam transmission. Dr. Holden will come with the group, while his wife and family remain on the ship.

ASSAULT

Getting Aboard: Dr. Holden foresaw a time when he would have to sneak in, or out, of his own Redoubt. Because of this, he installed a secret entrance and tunnel into the warehouse. Dr. Holden will show the PCs to the entrance and open the hidden door. The camouflage door and airlock can only be operated by psionic switches, and are protected by 10-digit codes known only to Dr. Holden. This was done to prevent the entrance from being used by boarders, as the PCs are doing. There is not a lot of room in

the airlock, so the PCs will have to come through in groups of three. The tunnel leads to a corner of the warehouse concealed by cargo containers piled three high. There is an area roughly three meters square outside the tunnel. There is 0.75-meter gap between the containers and two meters between the top containers and the roof which allow access to the rest of the warehouse. The area has obviously not been disturbed in quite a while.

Security: As Dr. Holden described in the briefing, the Redoubt has an automatic security system. Once the computer is alerted to their presence, it will use the security robots and its antihijack system to try and stop them. The Redoubt has eight security robots on random patrol, four Super Guard robots on standby, and a High Security Guard robot (101 Robots, page 36) in reserve. The computer will use the robots first to try to stop any intruders. If that fails, it will use the grav field, knockout gas, other robots and strategically placed lasers (location and number up to the referee) to stop boarders.

Dr. Holden will be able to warn the PCs about most of these measures, but he won't know about the High Security Guard robot the criminals brought with them. He also doesn't know that the criminals have changed the computer's orders to shoot on sight.

Criminals: As expected, Brennan and his five accomplices are in hibernation in the Redoubt's low berths. The computer is programmed to wake them if the security system is activated. They have used the frozen watch method of hibernation, which takes up to six hours to initiate, but which allows the occupants to be awakened within five minutes. After Brennan and the others are awakened, it will take them another five minutes to get out of their berths, dressed and armed. After that, they will join the robots in attacking the team.

CONCLUSION

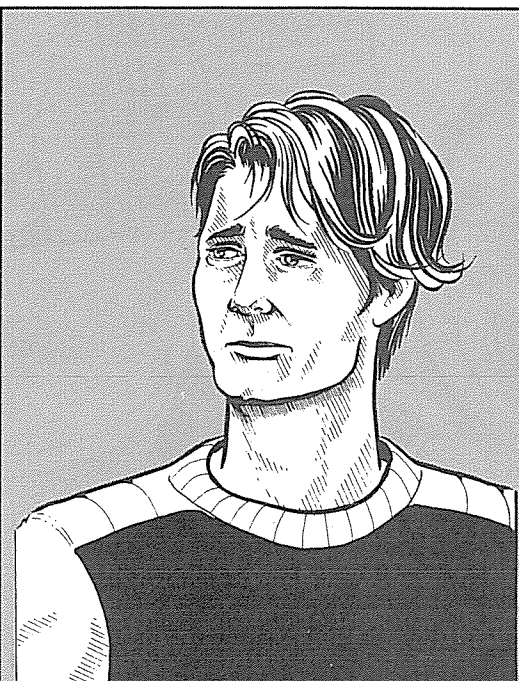
After the PCs manage to fight their way to the command center, Dr. Holden can take over the secu-

rity system using his secret override codes activated by psionic switches. With the security system on the PCs' side, the rest will just be mopping-up operations. Once the criminals are dead or captured, and the Redoubt is secure, the ship can be called in and Holden's family transferred to the asteroid.

Repairs: If significant damage was done to the Redoubt during the operation, Holden may ask the PCs to stay and assist in repairs. If replacements are required, he may dispatch the PCs on a buying trip rather than take the time to fabricate new parts or waste stockpiled supplies.

Payoff: Assuming all objectives were met, Holden will live up to his promises and pay the team members their agreed fee. If Holden was killed in the assault, his widow will pay the team members and demand that they leave immediately. But, if the assault went well, with minimal damage, Brennan was captured alive, and Holden survives, the team members will be offered permanent positions as family retainers. Extra low berths can be brought from the warehouse and set up in the lounge, and the PCs can join the family in hibernation. Holden has predicted that 1201 will herald the beginning of a New Era, and the low berth's timers will be set to wake them on 001-1201.

Leaving: If Holden chartered a ship to transport the group, he will erase all memory of the destination and Redoubt from the ship's computer and robot crew. It will then be sent back to Vincennes. If the group came aboard the PCs' ship and they will be staying, Holden will help them hide it on the moon of one of the gas giants and bring them back in the lifeboat. If the group decides, or is told, to leave, Holden or his wife will insist that all information on him and this mission be destroyed. Their autopilot will be set to fly them home and then erase itself. Clever player characters will probably be able to find their way back again, since they know the number of gas giants, planetoid belts, starport type and maximum jump radius from Vincennes. If they



Paul Brennan

Rogue, 668643, age 26, 3 terms, Cr none. *Skills:* Psi-9, Telepathy-1, Brawling-1, Handgun-1, Pilot-1.

Brennan was abandoned by his parents when they discovered he had psionic powers. A disturbed individual, he grew up in the underworld of the Kehmed Metroplex and has developed a selfish paranoid attitude. He trusts no one and will betray anyone he dares. Dr. Holden recognized his untapped abilities. He convinced him to come to the Psionic Institute and develop his telepathic powers. There, Brennan was drawn to the Foresight Group and its apocalyptic views. In one of the group's meetings, Dr. Holden offered to share his vision with the group. Brennan was overwhelmed and lapsed into a coma for two days. After that, he became even more unstable, going on and on about "The End." He became obsessed with his own survival. Then, in one of many training sessions, he read Dr. Holden's surface thoughts and discovered the existence of the Redoubt. With the help of five criminal friends from his past, he brutally murdered the other members of the Foresight Group and fled to the Redoubt in Holden's ship.

do come back, then they will find that the Redoubt has been moved and is now lost in a whole system's worth of asteroids. Ω



Scenario Generation

By Clay Bush

These tables are designed to get you started running adventures in the New Era.

The following provides an episode, not a campaign. A role-playing campaign requires a continuing theme, which you will develop with your players.

Dice tables stimulate your imagination, and can push you out of ruts. These quickly sketch out an adventure. The results give you something to think about; don't rely on them to think for you. Filling in the gaps between the results and adding missing elements makes the adventure your own.

And no player can possibly predict the course of your adventure merely because they have read these tables!

A. DETERMINE STARTING CHARACTERS

Generate the characters normally. The mix of skills and careers will flavor your preparations for the first adventure. Permitting players to send you a copy of a character they have generated on their own will minimize use of joint gaming time.

B. WORLD TYPES

Choose a starting milieu. The New Era provides three within the old Imperium: a Star Viking expedition, a pocket empire of 2-10 worlds, and a fledgling world that is just re-entering space or rediscovering interstellar travel. The layout of these tables assumes a pocket empire setting, but the other adventures could be jump-started by selective use of these tables.

Core World: The hub of a pocket empire, possessing the ships that connect the member worlds. It need not be Hi Pop to use salvaged materials or to exploit other worlds' resources. TL9-12.

Trade Partner: Regular contact with core world. Core world emigration is limited, and the population of these worlds depends on what natives are present. TL6-9.

Frontier World: Irregular contact with core world. The world has some resource the core world values. The frontier world may consider trade with the core world to be priceless, nice-to-have, or insignificant. TL0-8.

Unexplored Space: A world outside any trade sphere. Whether from a pocket empire or a Star Viking expedition, the players are to survey and re-contact the system.

Fledgling World: A world re-entering space. The players repair a starship, are the world's astronauts, or man the first interstellar ship out of the shipyard. All worlds are unexplored. TL7-9.

C. TRAVEL PLANS (D6)

1: Core world only. The adventure starts and ends on the core world. Travel off-world comes later.

2: Start at core world, and follow trail to frontier world.

3: Proceed directly to frontier world at start of adventure.

4: Start at core world, and follow trail to unexplored world (based on discovered records or on evidence that antagonist has been there).

5: Core world adventure. After resolution, antagonist's sabotage causes misjump to frontier or unexplored world. Local repair is required there.

6: Roll again on above, and add stop-over at trade partner world. Multiple results of 6 can result in multiple stopovers.

These tables do not describe stopovers, and assume they are uneventful resupply, trade and shopping events. Referees should detail them in (or for) later adventures.

D. EQUIPMENT SEARCH AT START (D20)

01: Only possessions gained during character generation.

02-05: Above, plus food.

06-08: Above, plus goods from one specialty shop.

09-10: Above, plus can visit one contact.

11-15: Above, and patron provides transport.

16-18: Above, and Patron provides food.

19: Above, and patron provides base camp.

20: Patron provides anything asked for.

Most adventures start with a shopping trip. A prepared equipment list is better for a starting adventure, but it does require preparation by the referee.

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited."

Plutarch

E. STARTING EVENT (D10)

01: Barroom brawl.

02: Attempted robbery.

03: Released from brig/jail/prison.

04: Prevent assassination or murder.

05: Released from hospital.

06: In conference room with confidentiality statements and briefing packages.

07: Shanghaied. Roll 1D10.

07.1: Own family arranged.

07.2: Romantic rival arranged.

07.3: Significant other's family arranged.

07.4: Company moving to prevent adverse testimony.

07.5: Have desperately needed skill.

07.6: Mistaken identity: Re-roll above.

08: Exiting jumpspace in system.

09: In ship orbiting mainworld.

10: In ship or station orbiting frontier world. Speakers are saying, "Warning. The engineering cooling system has failed. You have 30 minutes to reach minimum safe distance. Warning..."

The above favor starting with an action sequence. One PC may be the target or involuntary participant in the above, and the other PCs his/her friends.

F. STARTING PATRON/ALLY (D20)

- 01: Brainless twit running through family fortune.
- 02: Silly heiress who braves ridiculous danger because someone else always saves her.
- 03: Wealthy industrialist.
- 04: Financier.
- 05: Famous inventor.
- 06: Retired corporate official with connections.
- 07: Corporate official.
- 08: Hereditary noble.
- 09: Wealthy minor ruler seeking gain.
- 10: Planetary ruler.
- 11: Charitable organization.
- 12: Religious organization.
- 13: Military organization.
- 14: Paramilitary organization.
- 15: Political organization.
- 16: Emigration organization.
- 17: Expansionist organization.
- 18: Subsidiary.
- 19: Corporation.
- 20: Cartel/Combine/Zaibatsu.

Individuals are acting on their own. Organizations will have one or more contact people, but any part of the organization can assist.

G. GOAL CONFLICT (D6)

- 1: Congruent.
- 2: Contributes.
- 3: Complementary.
- 4: Side issue.
- 5: Cross purposes.
- 6: Directly opposed.

This relates the players' goal to that of whatever group they are a part of, be it company, nation or world. It affects how their group and its opponents will react to their goal. Adds spice to the plot outline.

H. ANTAGONIST ENTERS (D6)

- 1: Holding desired item.
- 2: PCs one step behind in search (following).
- 3: Competes in seeking (equal).
- 4: Grabs item before PCs do*.
- 5: Unexpectedly takes from PCs*.
- 6: Pushing patron to recover for him*.

*On 4-6, the PCs do not know there is a competitor until this event happens.

CORE WORLDS

At tech levels 9-12, the capital worlds of pocket empires are the likeliest to have robots. Robots become feasible at TL 11, and can become widespread economically at TL 12. Adventure details should reflect that this world is the hub and capital of its region, and that it has the highest active technology level.

I. Core World Adventure (D10)

- 01: Seek blackmail material.
- 02: Seek evidence of coup plot.
- 03: Investigate rumored business conspiracy.
- 04: Seek design plans.
- 05: Seek formula.
- 06: Seek missing scientist/technician.
- 07: Recover defector for trade world government.
- 08: Vendetta. Visit 1-3 locations and avenge patron.
- 09: Seek kidnapper and victim.
- 10: Seek missing person. Not told he/she eloped.

I2. Antagonist (D10)

- 01: Terrorist.
- 02: Military coup plotters.
- 03: Freelance spy.
- 04: Cult leader.
- 05: Security agent of government-in-exile.
- 06: Monopoly.
- 07: Political conspiracy.
- 08: The Mob.
- 09: The State.
- 10: Commune of unarmed hippies.

An action adventure depends on a suitable opponent to challenge players.

Gimmickry is often best used to establish the antagonist as a challenge.

When the adventure starts on the core world and travels to another, the core world antagonist is the theme. At the other world, the antagonist or confederates are the reason for being there, but that world's antagonist is the challenge. For example, arresting a conspirator is easy, but getting out of cannibal country is the real challenge.

I3. Events (D6)

- 1: Escorted around by robot. It cannot lie, but may not answer all questions.
- 2: An expert program will brief the players and then self-destruct.
- 3: Any PC who retired early receives bionic replacement parts.
- 4: Acquire mobile robot.
- 5-6: Receive artifact: armor, weapon, or other device.

Continued on page 29.

Looking for the Right Connection?

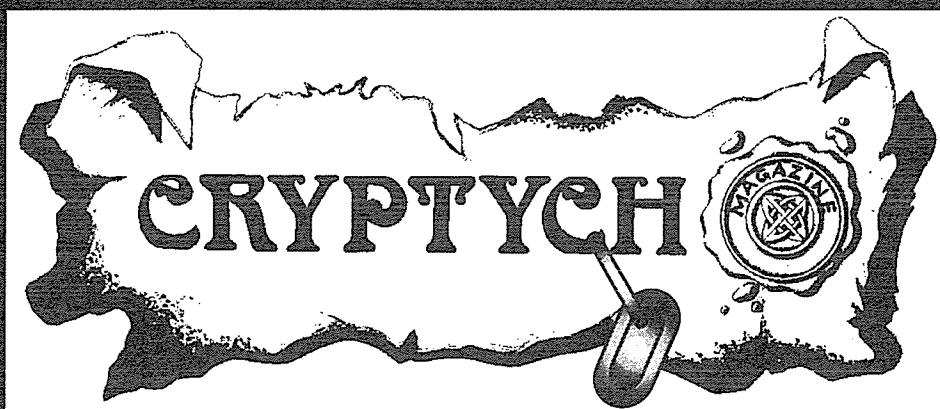
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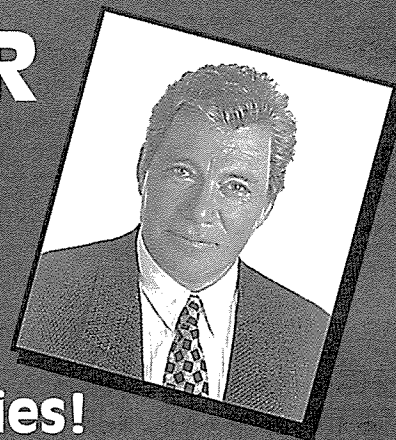
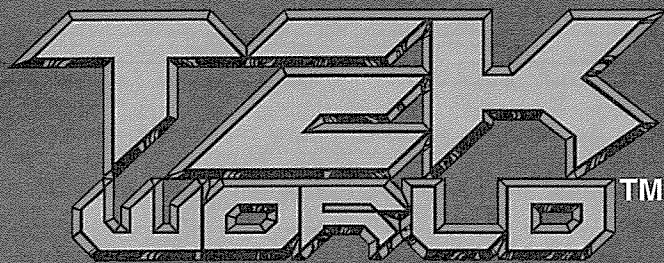
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FRONTIER WORLD

These worlds have irregular contact with the core world of a pocket empire. Tech level varies from 0 to 9, but even those at TL 9 usually have no starships.

These worlds are still recovering from the Collapse, and suffer from fragmentation. There are backwaters and thinly settled areas to explore.

Where one world government has formed in the last 70 years, it is not equally present in all areas. Regional differences remain, and some areas or peoples resent or resist "outside" dominance. Such (political, economic, religious, etc.) differences provide motives for nonplayer characters and reasons for adventures.

K1. Frontier World Adventure (D10)

- 01: Avenge explorer/representative.
- 02: Pay ransom.
- 03: Seek overdue party.
- 04: Seek source of black market goods.
- 05: Seek rumored Shangri-La in backwater.
- 06: Fact-finding mission to settled area.
- 07: Natural resource survey.
- 08: Open relations with known minor state.
- 09: Recontact backwater part of world.
- 10: Impersonate explorer/diplomat at conference.

K2. Antagonist (D10)

- 01: Terrorist.
- 02: Guerrillas.
- 03: Bandits.
- 04: Cult leader.
- 05: Local robber baron.
- 06: Another nation (à la French/English rivalry).
- 07: Minor race colony.
- 08: Robot(s).
- 09: Alien predator.
- 10: Missionary.

An action adventure depends on a suitable opponent to challenge players. Gimmickry is often best used to establish the antagonist as a challenge.

K3. Contact (D20)

- 01: Animal.
- 02: Beggar: knows word on the streets.
- 03: Street vendor: sees everyone who passes starport gate.
- 04: Ex-guide: wants money for medical treatment.
- 05: Broker: wants party to leave office as quickly as possible.
- 06: Retiree: glad to see faces from home.
- 07: Immigration official: seeks NPC.
- 08: Technician: expects favors to be returned.
- 09: Defector: wants to aid against those who exiled him/her.
- 10: Crime figure: wants profit, or credit for helping.
- 11: Merchant: wants advance information.
- 12: Doctor: wants more medicine.
- 13: Diplomat: wants mission canceled.
- 14: Politician: wants party's plans so he/she can hinder.
- 15: Sleeper agent: wants to be left alone.
- 16: Wife (of 10-15): wants transport off-world.
- 17: Missionary: wants transport to destination.
- 18: Scientist: involved through friendship.
- 19: Information broker: wants unmarked cash.
- 20: Relative of PC.

K4. World Political Situation (D6)

1: Government is stable. It rests on controlling one important export, and distributing wealth to supporters. Importing and maintaining high tech weapons for the loyal military units are the highest priorities.

2: A monotheistic sect dominates the government. The players are travelling in a region where this distances government officials from locals.

3: A fundamentalist movement in the hinterlands is beginning to challenge the government's authority, because of its off-world contact and (relative) decadence.

("They have not one, but *three* shirts each! Yet some here still have none!")

4: Off-world trade has shifted from one region to another. Friction between the leading cities and their merchants causes obstruction and perhaps sabotage outside the dominant city's region.

5: One core world representative, tasked to support the leading government, is actually leading local troops to expand its borders.

6: The leading government is near collapse. A core world ship is in orbit, tension is high, and merchants don't want to accept currency for goods.

UNEXPLORED WORLD

The PCs' ship is the first to enter this system in decades—as far as they know. Most systems are uninhabited, but even these usually have some sign of pre-Collapse settlement. Some sites are craters, and others have the skeletal remains of their occupants.

Even now there is a small chance of encountering active biological or chemical weapons. That's why seeing living, spear-wielding natives can make unarmed explorers feel safer.

L1. Unexplored World Adventure (D10)

- 01: Natives have space travel, and attack.
- 02: Find ship in decaying orbit.
- 03: Find station in decaying orbit.
- 04: Relocate survivors' descendants to mainworld.
- 05: Relocate survivors' descendants to habitable world in another system.
- 06: Contact planet-bound natives.
- 07: Search starport.
- 08: Search area around crater where starport was.
- 09: Repair spaceship/starship discovered on world surface.
- 10: Engineer damaged systems, needs to land to make repairs.

L2. Antagonist

- 01: Cannibals.
- 02: Local robber baron.
- 03: Cult (fringe group).
- 04: High priest (established religion).
- 05: Automated defenses.
- 06: Unexploded bomb(s).
- 07: Biological/chemical agent.
- 08: Pocket empire (this is frontier world).
- 09: Minor race colony.
- 10: Alien predator.

L3. Aliens and Race Relations (D20)

- 01-10: Human world.
- 11-12: Human world with minor race colony.
- 13-14: One alien race colony and one human colony.
- 15: One alien race colony and two human colonies.
- 16: Alien race homeworld with subjugated human colony.
- 17: Alien race homeworld with restricted human colony.
- 18: Alien race homeworld with independent human colony.
- 19: Alien race homeworld.
- 20: Settlement empty: maintained by semi-intelligent animals and remaining expert systems. The system is failing, but has survived so far.

PRE-COLLAPSE INSTALLATION TABLES

With grav travel common, Imperial-period settlement usually occurred as free-standing installations or communities surrounded by green spaces.

The depopulation of the Collapse left many vacant installations on every habitable world. The adventure will end at such an isolated facility.

The facility is outside current settled areas. The antagonist has a base there, perhaps sharing it with other small groups. Whether it is outside a city or thousands of kilometers from settlement matters greatly to players who have to acquire transportation there.

The following tables are very rough, but will provide variety and keep you out of a rut.

M1. Surrounding Terrain (D6)

- 1: Desert.
- 2: Mountain.
- 3: Grass plains/tundra.
- 4: Woods.
- 5: River valley.
- 6: Special: Roll D6.
 - 6.1: Underwater: Antagonist and henchmen are hiding in an underwater community. They are operating at minimum power and with limited life support. The PCs will not encounter other people there besides antagonist, henchmen, and prisoners.
 - 6.2: Polar region: As above.
 - 6.3: Underground: As above. Facility was a prison, and has limited, strong entrances.
 - 6.4: Small island: As above. There are no locals, but animals may be encountered.
 - 6.5: Island: There are a few locals, but only one or two individuals would be encountered in the facility.
 - 6.6: If world is Hi Pop, Psionic Institute present. Otherwise, Zoological: The cages and walkways are distinctive (and secure). Most animal and plant species have died out, but reports of poisonous and carnivorous animals keep locals from visiting.

M2. Weather (D6)

- 1: Clear and sunny.
- 2: Mostly sunny.
- 3: Afternoon rain.
- 4: Overnight storm.
- 5: Constant rain.
- 6: Heavy storm.

The first thing players will notice when they arrive near the facility is the weather. This will affect scouting efforts.

M3. Original Population

- 1: 1000.
- 2: 5000.
- 3: 10,000.
- 4: 100,000.
- 5: 500,000.
- 6: 1,000,000×1D10.

M4. Surface Installation (D6)

- 1: One massive structure.
- 2: Primary building with 1-3 annexes.
- 3: Several large buildings.
- 4: One large building offset by several rows of small buildings.
- 5: 1-3 clusters of buildings.
- 6: A jumble of small buildings.

M5. Building Structure (D6)

- 1: Box shape, wider than tall.
- 2: Cylindrical tower with flat roof.
- 3: Cylinder towers with one flat roof.
- 4: Dome.
- 5: Pyramid.
- 6: Squat cylinder, with all access from the top: Unmoving escalators run from ground level to the entrance-way on top, by the landing platform. Use this table for primary building(s) and annexes.

M6. Presence of High-Speed Rail (D10)

- 01: Underground station.
- 02: Ground level station.
- 03: Elevated station.
- 04-09: No station.
- 10: Boat harbor.

Rail may provide another entrance to the primary building (1-3), and annex (48), or to another building.

N. ENCOUNTERS

Change encounters to "no encounter" or "empty" depending on isolation.

Several groups may be present if a city is nearby.

An installation in a distant desert may have no encounter except the antagonist and his party.

Residents may be unaware that antagonist is present in another part of the facility, or may not care what his business is.

Determine their reactions to the antagonist through the Reaction table on page 31.

Decide whether they know the antagonist is present by considering their reaction, that they are present, and what works best for the adventure.

N1. Ground-Level Encounters (D10)

- 01: Animal.
- 02: Gang in their hangout.
- 03: Private residence.
- 04: School or dojo.
- 05: Church (not in session).
- 06: Circus training here.
- 07: Restaurant.
- 08: Gymnasium.
- 09: Homeless person(s).
- 10: No encounter.

N2. Above-Ground-Level Encounters (D10)

- 01: Palatial residence of crime boss.
- 02: Burned palatial residence with remains from assassination.
- 03: Outlaws lying low, or counterfeiters.
- 04: Base for rebels/terrorists.
- 05: Winter residence for locals.
- 06: Monastery (20-300 residents).
- 07: Seminary (5-25 residents).
- 08: Solitary hermit.
- 09: Water storage.
- 10: No encounter.

N3. Below-Ground-Level Encounters (D10)

- 01: Empty offices.
- 02: Underground railstation to nearby city.
- 03: Bomb shelter.
- 04: Firing range: hidden base of small merc group.
- 05: Records storage.
- 06: Thieves gang.
- 07: Outcasts.
- 08: Cemetery.
- 09: Flooded level(s).
- 10: No encounter.

N4. Random Encounters (D10)

- 01: Scavenging junkman.
- 02: Scavenging technicians.
- 03: Police/security patrol.
- 04: Gang of youths.
- 05: Unarmed adolescent explorers.
- 06: Inactive cleaning robot (once only).
- 07: Inactive office robot (once only).
- 08: Broken weapon.
- 09: Remains in fire zone of an automated machinegun. Roll 1D6.
- 09.1: Machinegun was knocked out by grenade. May be repairable, some ammo.
- 09.2: Machinegun out of ammo.
- 09.3: Machinegun out of power, but some ammo.
- 09.4: Machinegun still active with 1-20 rounds left.
- 09.6: Machinegun active with 51-150 rounds left.
- 10: Tryst. Ω

REACTIONS

Die	Reaction
2	Violent. Immediate attack.
3	Hostile. Attacks on 5+.
4	Hostile. Attacks on 8+.
5	Hostile. May attack.
6	Unreceptive.
7	Noncommittal.
8	Interested.
9	Intrigued.
10	Responsive.
11	Enthusiastic.
12	Genuinely friendly.

THE FUTURE OF GAMING IS HERE

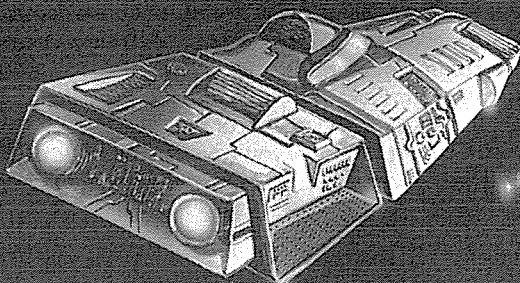
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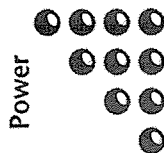
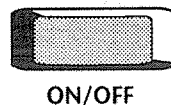
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COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: PUSH, AUTHORITY CIN/AURORA
RC GOVT HOUSE AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 01/VIII/1201

Coalition Secretary General Lon Maggart appeared today in a remembrance ceremony at the monument to the Twelve Traders, on the first anniversary of its dedication here at the Reformation Coalition Navy headquarters.

Maggart cited the Coalition's determination to spare no effort to recover or confirm the fates of all crews. He honored the crews by calling them "the first ripple of a wave of recovery and renewal that will sweep across human space, and which will know no shores. It was their willingness to face this danger that calls us to follow them, and it is they who will someday be remembered as those who first painted a new dawn across human history."

Insiders say that his remarks were timed to assist him in his struggle to pass the so-called "Ship Bill," intended to appropriate funds for two additional *Aurora*-class clippers for RCES forces. Citing budgetary limits, the Coalition Assembly has proposed deferring the purchase of the keels that will be laid down at Aubaine's Standard Astrotronics yard later this month. The options for these vessels would then be picked up by member worlds, presumably Oriflamme. That would make these the first *Aurora*-class clippers not directly controlled by RCES, a move which Maggart strongly opposes, and to which he alluded in his address today. "These traders did not go into the unknown piecemeal. They went out under one banner, and under one vision, and it is that same vision that calls us after them. Had they sailed away each for her own reason, or only for the benefit of an elite few, their loss would not move us, and their sacrifice would not unite us. History is made not by an aggregate of individuals, but by diverse people united by a vision that pares away their selfish appetites and calls them to actions beyond themselves, in the name of something greater than themselves."

At the conclusion of his remarks, Maggart laid a wreath on the Trader monument, "To the Dawn," which was dedicated a year ago today. He departed immediately, as he is scheduled to preside one week from today over the Assembly on the first anniversary of its establishment.

Among the assembled observers, Maggart's remarks were taken as criticism of recent unilateral operations undertaken by Oriflamme and other worlds on the trailing face. They were also clearly a response to the Centrist charges that Aubaine and its supporters are opposed to a Coalition Constitution, and seek, in the words of Count Bourgund of Oriflamme, "to preserve a flaccid assemblage of half-hearted governments, devoid of structure, devoid of vision, devoid of a future."

A Centrist-leaning dignitary present today was overheard to call Maggart's speech "more of that Aubanian pious preaching. This is real life, not Sunday school."

The clipper ships at issue in the Assembly will be the eleventh and twelfth clipper hulls laid down. These two building ways will be available following the delivery of *Thunderchild* and ex-*Ililek Kuligaan* to RCES.

The 12 trading vessels honored were dispatched in 1199 from various worlds around the periphery of the then Dawn League, with hopes that they would open up new starfaring contact in the Wilds of Diaspora. As the months went by without word from any of these ships, speculation grew increasingly strident, resulting in the dispatch of several armed rescue missions to recover the crews or to discover information about their fates. To date, portions of only three of the crews have been recovered, and five of the traders have never been accounted for.

COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: PUSH, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RC ASSEMBLY HALL, AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 07/VIII/1201

Ililek Kuligaan, renowned remnant, was called before the Assembly today to explain his refusal to have an RCES clipper named for him.

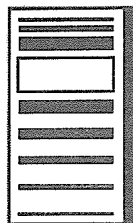
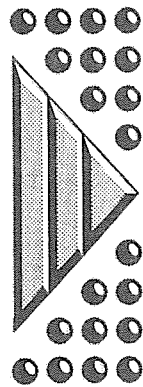
His remarks, for which the press was allowed access to the hall, were characteristically blunt.

"You can't name a ship after a living person, especially not me. You can say what you like about me after I'm dead, because I won't be around to make you a liar. But why make some poor kids wear my name on their sleeves when I might still do something to make them ashamed? You're better off naming it after someone who is safely dead. Dead, packaged, and marketed, of course.

"However, since you were so kind to name it after me, I claim the right to name it myself, and hereby change the name to *Immanuel Kant*. That way you can keep the initials, and you don't have to worry about him embarrassing you. He was a finer man than me, and also unlike me, Kant was so reliable that people used to set their watches by him. Having his name around will remind people to think about some important things.

"What things? Fortunately I have with me a quote from the good Herr Doktor.

"It says, 'Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or that of any other, never simply as a means, but also at the same time as an end.' What that means, for those of you who don't speak deathless prose, is: Give a damn about the people around you. We imperials forgot that lesson once, and we continue on at our peril if we ever forget it again.



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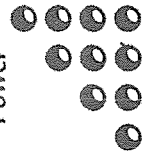
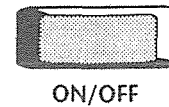
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Yes No



Security Card



"Thank you. I hope you people haven't blocked me in again."

The clipper, the sixth of the class built, will be delivered from Standard Astrotronics' Aubaine yards this month. It was named for Professor Kuligaan by a special motion in the Assembly earlier this year.

RCES MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: PUBINFO, DISTRIBUTION: UNLTD, AUTHORITY LCDR LUCAS
RCES HQ AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 12/VIII/1201

RCES has modified its deployment policy so that its *Aurora*-class clippers and their associated *Manta*-class fuelers will no longer be considered indivisible tactical units. Each clipper constructed has been delivered with a *Manta* fueler which, until now, has deployed, trained, and operated exclusively with the clipper it was delivered with.

Under the new policy, *Mantas* will be assigned to clippers on an as-available basis, to simplify maintenance, repair, and deployment scheduling.

This policy has come in response to the difficulty in getting *Gull* (TAILNO 20062F) repaired in time to deploy with mothership *Eos* (TAILNO 10062).

Rather than delaying the departure of *Eos* on her coming cruise, it was decided to give her *Eagle* (TAILNO 20071F), which had just returned with *Aube* (TAILNO 10071). New build *Manta*-class fuelers will be assigned tail numbers in the main series, rather than in a subsidiary series, and existing *Mantas* will be redesignated as opportunity allows.

RCES MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: NOTICE TO STARFARERS, DISTRIBUTION: MANDTY, AUTHORITY
CDORE MASSIE

RCES BASE ORIFLAMME (1235/ORIFLAMME, B846857-9), 17/VIII/1201

NOTICE TO STARFARERS

Hiver convoy is due to arrive Oriflamme within two weeks of 16/IX/1201.

ID callsign is CONDUIT PENNY 1-6. Authentication procedures are available to authorized craft.

Unless authorized, stay well clear of convoy CONDUIT PENNY 1-6, as they will be travelling under Wilds rules of engagement.

See also RCES Report 3: Interstellar Rules of Engagement, available at all RC-affiliated starports.

COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: PUSH, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RCES YARD AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 20/VIII/1201

The Coalition cruiser *Trigger* arrived in port today following an expedition into Diaspora.

Although the crew are still in debriefing and none have yet appeared in public, rumors are already circulating that *Trigger* has had a very difficult cruise. Stories of high casualties among the crew and of a pitched battle are being heard.

Notably, no lots of cargo have yet been downloaded from *Trigger* for Auction.

RCES Headquarters has made no statement as yet.

RCES MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: PUBINFO, DISTRIBUTION: UNLTD, AUTHORITY LCDR LUCAS
SAOSY AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 25/VIII/1201

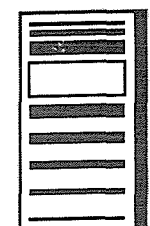
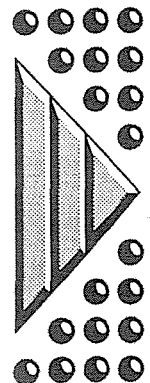
The Reformation Coalition Exploratory Service, in conjunction with the Standard Astrotronics Orbital Shipyard, Aubaine, announces the sealing of RS *Maggart*, the first unit of the Group IV *Aurora*-class clippers. RS *Maggart* was sealed on 25/VIII/1201 at the orbital building ways of Standard Astrotronics' Aubaine yard.

The ceremonial act of sealing a starship is the orbital construction equivalent of launching an ocean-going vessel or a spacecraft constructed on a planetary surface. It is traditionally considered to be one of the most significant milestones in the career of a spacecraft, as it is now capable of preserving life. It is at the sealing that spacecraft are traditionally christened with their names, following the obligatory pressure test. Once a ship is sealed, its interior spaces are no longer in vacuum, but are maintained by artificial life support, which allows the vessel's construction to proceed to completion in a "shirt sleeves" environment.

RS *Maggart* is the first of a class of greatly modified *Aurora*-class clippers, called Group IV. The Group IV is also called the "Stretch" *Aurora* because of its greater overall length, allowing the clipping of more multimission modules to the ship's open spine. This greater carriage capacity also requires the Group IVs to have a new engineering section to allow maneuver and jump at the same performance as the earlier members of the class.

RS *Maggart* is named for Burton L. Maggart (1110-1195), First Minister of Aubaine and one of the founders of the interstellar accords that led to the League of the New Dawn, and ultimately, to the Reformation Coalition. Burt Maggart was also the father of the current Coalition Secretary General, Lon E. Maggart.

RS *Maggart* was christened by Enlilli Maggart, wife of First Minister Maggart and mother of the Secretary General.



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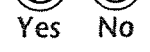


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No



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What is missing from this picture?

you

GDW



Worlds to be discovered, civilizations to be rebuilt and epic confrontations to be fought. Put yourself in the picture with

TRAVELLER[®]
The New Era

This scenario takes place on Futok (3140 Diaspora C594776-7) in the Khulam subsector detailed on page 104 of **Traveller: The New Era**.

This adventure is designed to be used with the Star Viking setting, but can be adapted for either Regency of pocket empire campaigns.

The PCs begin at a RCES briefing. Their case officer, Xavier Shaakaggan, will brief them on their next assignment. The world of Futok is one of the most advanced in the Wilds near Coalition space. Futok is also extremely well-suited for human habitation. Both of these factors got the attention of RCES.

Unfortunately (and there usually is an "unfortunately" when dealing with the Wilds), Futok lacks a central government. Futok is divided among multiple warlords. All these warlords officially oppose off-world contact. Previous RCES teams were met with hostility and resistance. In short, the warlords want nothing to do with off-worlders. They would prefer that Futok remain isolated.

The operative word here is "officially." While the warlords openly oppose off-world contact, most privately desire such contact and the trade it would bring. The problem is that such a decision is not entirely theirs. The real power on Futok is a TED named Rikhard Iila. Iila is the power behind the thrones of the warlords on Futok. Rather than seize control of the planet himself, he has chosen to manipulate others. The end result is the same: Iila is preventing RCES from achieving its mission on Futok.

Iila's power over the warlords derives from control of relic technology. Somehow, he has gained access to a seemingly limitless cache of high technology. Over the years, he has doled out this technology to the warlords. Being paranoid, the warlords use this technology to defend themselves against one another and to maintain their power over the local peasants who would prefer a more equitable power-sharing arrangement. In return, the warlords defer to Iila in policy matters, such as contact with off-worlders.

This arrangement has made Iila wealthy and powerful. No warlord op-

Traveller: The New Era

The Awakening

By James Maliszewski

Despite what we'd like to believe and despite what many history books say, the Star Vikings didn't achieve what they did alone. Sure, a lot of their best work was smash-and-grab operations that required little or no aid from the local peasants. After all, overthrowing TEDdies was all in a day's work for RCES.

Still, don't be fooled. The Vikings weren't superhuman or invincible heroes without weaknesses. They needed help occasionally, just like you or me. In fact, the Star Vikings achieved many brilliant successes because they acknowledged their weaknesses and turned to those who had strength. If that's not an improvement over the Last Imperium, I don't know what is.

poses him for fear they would lose their source of relic technology. Iila himself is powerful, but not powerful enough to defeat all of the warlords were they united against him. Fortunately for him, the years since the Collapse have ingrained paranoia as a defense mechanism in the minds of Futok's rulers. There is little real hope of a grand alliance against Iila.

There is some consolation, however. Not all of Futok's peasants are willing to be cowed by Iila's power and the warlords' cowardice. A previous RCES team made contact with Sannash Memling, a rebel leader. Memling appealed to the Coalition to do something for her people. She knows most of Futok's warlords are not evil, simply frightened. Iila's power over them is great, but not absolute. If a Star Viking team could aid her in showing this to the warlords, the people of Futok might help themselves.

Memling adds that, without her help, there is little or no chance of the service succeeding on Futok.

Shaakaggan points out that RCES has little choice in this matter. Futok's situation precludes simple smash-and-grab operations; Iila is too powerful. At this stage in the Coalition's growth, the resources do not exist for a full-scale assault against Iila. If Futok is to be liberated and become an ally of the Coalition, there is little choice but to accept Memling's offer.

FUTOK

Shaakaggan orders the PCs to travel to Futok. Once there, they can

set down in a wilderness area far from the local power centers. Under Iila's direction, Futok now has a class C starport and a few old spacecraft. As such, the PCs must avoid revealing their presence to Futok's warlords.

On the surface, the PCs should journey to the village of Ellinika. Ellinika is the base for Memling's rebel band. In the village, they can make contact with Memling. Having done that, they are then to proceed according to whatever course of action they and Memling decide.

ELLINIKA

Ellinika is a smallish, rural village nestled in a mountain range on the northern continent. Although rustic, Ellinika is not primitive, at least not by the standards of the Wilds. The peasants of Ellinika are mostly farmers and live a TL-4 existence. They have access to certain technologies, particularly those useful in farming. They have no electricity, however.

The Ellinikans are friendly and, by the standards of the Wilds, they may strike the PCs as downright welcoming. They will be curious about the PCs and where they came from. Yet none of them could be described as "prying." They are just starved for news of the outside world. Ellinika is isolated, and its major source of information is the local warlord's tax collectors who come every harvest.

When the PCs ask about Memling or the rebels, they will be directed to Graeme Taamazon. Taamazon is the closest thing to a leader that Ellinika has.

TALKING WITH TAAMAZON

Taamazon is an ancient farmer. He is 85 years old and claims to have served in the navy of Margaret's faction during the Final War. He will gladly reminisce about the Last Imperium and its glories. When he learns the PCs are off-worlders, he will become positively ebullient.

Taamazon will tell the PCs that Memling is not in the village. She and a small scouting party went into the forest near the mountains to spy on the local warlord's troops. The warlord maintains a small outpost near Ellinika, and Memling has considered raiding it for some time. Taamazon gives the PCs directions to the base, as well as Memling's likeliest path to it. She is somewhere along this path, he explains.

INTO THE WOODS

Taamazon's directions are clear and correct. Any PC with Tracking skill will immediately recognize signs of human passage through the area recently. An Average: Observation roll will discover a spent chemical laser cartridge on the ground. Clearly, someone has been here. Using either Taamazon's directions or Tracking skill, the PCs should be able to follow the path they have discovered.

As they continue, have each PC make an Average: Observation roll. Success indicates that the PC has noticed a group of six soldiers camouflaged in a stand of trees ahead. A further Observation roll will show they are laying in wait, not for the PCs but for a second group of people whom the PCs can see further ahead.

What happens next depends on what the PCs decide to do. The six soldiers are the local warlord's troops. The people ahead are Memling and her band. Of course, the PCs do not know that. Never having met Memling, they will not know what she looks like. Another possibility is that the PCs will fail to observe the hiding soldiers.

Whatever the PCs do, the soldiers will attack Memling's band. They will also attack the PCs once aware of them. If the PCs act in a way which Memling will interpret as friendly, she and her band will aid the PCs against the soldiers. Memling's band consists

of herself and three others. All wear no armor and carry TL-7 9mm rifles. The soldiers shoot to kill and will fight to the death.

WELCOME TO FUTOK

Once the soldiers have been defeated, Memling will thank the PCs. She will then ask who they are. Upon learning they are Star Vikings, she will be pleased. She knew RCES would come through for her. Memling asks the PCs what they think of her world and how they will help her. Naturally, most PCs will have few ideas yet. They are still unfamiliar with Futok.

Nevertheless, she will listen to whatever they have to say. She will also answer any questions they have and explain further the situation on Futok.

Rikhard lila is the major source of evil on Futok. Most of the local rulers are cowards; they fear for their lives and their petty fiefdoms. lila offers them the means to dispel their fear and to maintain control. As such, they support lila and bestow wealth and privileges on him. lila's relics are what give him power. They are also what must be taken away if his power is to be broken and Futok's rulers are to acquire open minds about off-worlders. After all, were off-worlders like Coalition merchants allowed on Futok, lila's monopoly would be broken.

This is why Memling believes that lila's source of relics must be found and either captured or destroyed. Capturing it is preferable because it would give the rebels an advantage. On the other hand, destroying would be a potent piece of symbolism, even if it would appeal to technophobes.

Memling explains that her purpose in these woods was to spy on the nearby military outpost. Memling believes that this outpost holds information indicating the location of lila's technology cache. If so, that information could then be used to find the base and attack it, thereby undermining lila's authority over the warlords. Memling asks the PCs to help her in this since most of her band is now elsewhere on the continent. Without their aid, she is doomed to failure, and without her, the Star Vikings will fail again on Futok.

ATTACKING THE OUTPOST

The outpost is located over a small peak in the mountain range. It is quite tiny, consisting of a guard tower and a central building. According to Memling, the central building contains computers that are free of Virus! This is where the information is stored.

Approaching the base is difficult. The eight guards on duty all wear BC vests and carry 9mm rifles and patrol the perimeter. There is a ninth guard in the tower armed with a CLC laser rifle. Somehow, the PCs and Memling's band must either defeat or get past these guards. All the guards shoot to kill and will fight rather than be captured.

The central building is small, being only a 10x5-meter structure. Inside are two more guards armed with CLC laser pistols. The outpost commander is likewise armed with a laser pistol. The guards will fight until killed or incapacitated, but the commander, Steffan Wolrad, will surrender if cornered.

SECRET INFORMATION

Obtaining the data held in this outpost requires some effort from the PCs. The computer is little more than a battle computer with additional memory. Most of the data in the computer is protected, however, and protected well. A successful Difficult: Computer test will find the file that Memling is looking for. Optionally, the PCs could interrogate Wolrad; an Average: Interrogation roll will get him to reveal the password to access the protected data.

The file Memling wanted is not what she was expecting. The file does indeed have bearing on the matter at hand, but not as Memling had hoped. The file details the local warlord's system of paying tribute to lila and obtaining relics from him. The system involves the warlord's sending a coded computer message to lila's headquarters. lila then replies and designates a place to meet his emissary. The emissary takes the warlord's "order" for relics and specifies the cost. Provided the warlord can pay, lila designates a second site for the exchange.

THE PLAN

Memling suggests the PCs could send

a message to lila, pretending to be a local warlord desirous for high technology. Then they could meet the emissary, overpower him, and learn the location of lila's cache of relic technology. Such a plan has serious problems, however. For one, no one knows the proper codes to contact lila.

Stefaan Wolrad knows, however. A successful Difficult: Interrogation roll will get him to reveal them. Failing that, a successful Formidable: Computer roll will allow the PCs to learn the code from the computer itself. A final option is for the PCs to send a message to lila without codes hoping that he either will not care or will sense a trap, but send emissaries anyway. This option requires a Difficult: Computer and Act/Bluff roll. Failure indicates that lila is aware of the PCs' deception.

THE MEETING

Whether the PCs succeed in getting the real codes, bluff and succeed, or bluff and fail, lila will respond affirmatively to their request. How his emissary reacts, however, will depend heavily on the PCs' success or failure in obtaining the codes. lila suggests that the PCs meet his emissary at an abandoned landing area near the outpost. He designates a time shortly before dusk to meet.

The emissary arrives in an air raft. The air raft holds her and four guards. The guards wear BW vests and carry CLC laser rifles. The emissary, named Nashu Klee, is unarmed.

If the PCs obtained the genuine codes or succeeded in fooling lila, Klee will approach the PCs immediately upon arriving. She will, however, ask the PCs to identify themselves and their relationship to the local warlord. She does not recognize the PCs as agents of the warlord. The PCs must think fast to trick her. A successful Average: Act/Bluff roll suffices.

If the PCs fail in this roll or if they fail when sending a false message to lila, Klee will be apprehensive. Her intention will be to have her guards attack and incapacitate the PCs. Since they have succeeded in getting lila to send his emissary, lila wishes to interrogate these people personally. Anyone who could do this is worth interrogating. Both Klee and her guards will surren-

der if cornered.

If, however, the PCs succeed in fooling Klee, they will have the upper hand. She and her guards will be unsuspecting and calm. If the PCs attack, they gain automatic Initiative in the first combat round due to surprise. As above, neither Klee nor her guards will die willingly. They will surrender if faced with death.

INTERROGATION

Provided the PCs are not defeated or kill Klee, they have another source of information. Klee will readily reveal the location of lila's headquarters if threatened. His headquarters are on a mountain near the center of this continent. The air raft contains the coordinates in its navigation computer.

Should Klee be killed, the guards will reveal the above information with a successful Difficult: Interrogation roll. If Klee and all her guards are dead, the air raft's navigation computer may be examined for the location. This requires an Average: Computer roll.

Finally, there is the possibility that Memling and the PCs may be captured by Klee and her guards. If so, they will be stripped of weapons and taken back to lila's stronghold as prisoners. The scenario continues as written, although the PCs' obstacles become different.

THE STRONGHOLD

The stronghold is atop a mountain tens of kilometers from the meeting place. Journeying there is uneventful. The easiest way to enter the stronghold is by means of Klee's air raft. If the PCs and Memling have been captured, they will have no difficulty entering; the problem will be escaping.

The stronghold possesses a landing area where numerous gravitic vehicles are located. When the PCs approach the stronghold, they will be instructed to land there. The landing area is guarded by three guards dressed in BW vests and armed with CLC laser pistols. The guards are expecting Klee; they will be suspicious of the PCs. They will question them and ask that they surrender their weapons. If not obeyed, they will attack.

If the guards are defeated, the PCs are then able to enter the stronghold.

From outside, the stronghold seems huge and lavish and recalls the glories of the Last Imperium. Inside is completely different. How the PCs proceed once inside will depend on whether they have been captured previously or not.

THE EMERALD CITY

If free, the PCs will be met with immediate resistance. A dozen guards armed with CLC laser pistols will assail them. These guards intend to capture the PCs since lila wishes to see them. What the PCs should immediately notice upon entering the stronghold is its lack of contents; it is extremely bare and looks like an abandoned warehouse. Except for the guards, the stronghold is mostly empty space, hardly what the PCs were expecting. There is a single doorway that leads into another part of the stronghold. See the next section if the PCs open that door.

If the PCs have been captured at any time, they will awaken in cells without weapons. They will be greeted by a humanoid being who is obviously a contoured robot. He identifies himself as Ulysses and asks the PCs why they have attacked the stronghold. Ulysses seems baffled by the idea the lila is evil or that his actions are immoral. Ulysses is convinced lila is a good and honorable man worthy of his service.

If asked, Ulysses will explain that he was created for use by Futok's government. Ulysses was intended to be the prototype of a series (Ulysses says "race") of explorer/soldier robots. During his training period, Ulysses was assigned to this automated manufacturing facility. When Virus hit Futok and the computer net with which he was interfaced, he acquired sentience. He awakened as a sophont and realized that humanity deserved his service. lila was the first human he met upon awakening, and he was greatly impressed with him.

lila claimed he was a scientist dedicated to helping the Futokans recover from the Collapse. lila asked Ulysses to help in this quest by giving him control over the automated manufacturing facility. He assured Ulysses that this was a noble endeavor, worthy of a sentient being. Ulysses agreed and

has been helping lila ever since by supplying him with high-tech items as needed.

PCs with skill in Psychology can tell that Ulysses is sincere. He wants to serve humanity (the facilitator of his awakening) and feels that lila is the best means to do that. If he could be persuaded otherwise, he might become a useful ally. PCs with the Computer Empathy psionic ability will have an even stronger sense of Ulysses' benevolent intentions.

Ulysses is the PCs' only way out of captivity. Convincing him to free them and oppose lila requires good role-playing by the players. Relying solely on skills rolls would be inappropriate for such an important portion of this adventure. The referee should be the arbiter of whether the PCs succeed in convincing Ulysses of the error of his ways.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

If the PCs enter the doorway, they will encounter Ulysses as described above. Ulysses will approach them and question their presence in the stronghold. He will then explain himself and ask that the PCs present themselves before his master, Rikhard lila. If the PCs are prisoners and have already spoken with Ulysses, the sentient robot will leave them and bring lila to them. It seems he is quite inter-

ested in them.

lila is not the usual TED. He is a short, balding man lacking in either physical strength or charisma. He is rather unimpressive in every sense. He greets the PCs pleasantly. He even congratulates them on their perseverance in the face of his troops. lila then gets down to business.

He says he could easily kill them (whether they are his captives at present or not), but will not. In fact, he will reward them for their skill if they agree to help him. He admits that he has long used his influence with the warlords to hamper off-world contact. He is ready to change that view under certain conditions.

If they agree to smuggle relic technology into the Coalition for him, he will pay them Cr200,000 in gold and whatever high-tech items they desire. They must agree to keep their "transfers of technology" to themselves and never tell anyone of his automated facility. Of course, they must go AWOL from RCES and steal their ship. But isn't that a small price to pay for wealth and power? After losing two contact teams, RCES will not send another to Futok for some time.

What the PCs do is up to them. If they agree, the referee will have to adjudicate this situation. They may well agree as a ruse, but that is another matter. They may also refuse. If the PCs refuse, lila will order six guards

to attack and kill them. He will also ask Ulysses to make sure that the guards succeed. If the guards are defeated, Ulysses is supposed to finish the job. lila will flee the scene.

Throughout the combat, Ulysses will watch this battle curiously. If the PCs previously debated with the robot the morality of lila's actions on Futok, the referee should roll a Formidable: Willpower check of Ulysses each round. If he fails, he will realize that the PCs are correct. lila is an evil man who should be opposed. Ulysses will aid the PCs in their fight against the guards. If not, Ulysses will attack the PCs as instructed. Thus, the PCs' success depends heavily on their ability to convince the robot of lila's immorality.

ENDGAME

Assuming the PCs are successful in convincing Ulysses to oppose lila, they will have gained a powerful ally. Without Ulysses' aid, lila, though free, no longer poses a threat. It was Ulysses, not lila, who controlled the automated technology facility. Now that he has allied himself to the PCs, he can be convinced to use his powers to help the people of Futok. Ulysses only wishes to serve human beings whom he views as the beings who gave him sentience. He will gladly turn the automated facility over to the Futokans if he is convinced that is in their best interests. Under the guidance of Coalition diplomats, Ulysses will help the Futokans learn to deal with this new technology and off-worlders. Futok is far from recovered from the Collapse, but it is on the path to it.

Rikhard lila is still free, but he is unlikely to cause further trouble. The automated machinery used by the TED needs repairs and additional raw materials. Provided with both, the PCs will have succeeded in making a great discovery. Not only Futok, but the Coalition, can benefit from Futok's great cache of technology.

Finally, Ulysses will be free from lila's influence. He will be able to do as he wishes. He will be able to discover for himself the wonders and pitfalls of sentience. Like the world he now serves, he will have entered his own new era. Ω

Shannash Memling (Experienced NPC)

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon, Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Mechanic 9, Medical (Trauma Aid) 9, Navigation 10, Observation 12, Stealth 10, Survival 12, Tracking 12.

Motivation: *Heart Ace:* Memling is very just. It is her innate sense of justice that has caused her to oppose lila's rule. *Club 6:* Memling sees violence as the only means to end lila's control of Futok.

Rikhard lila (Novice NPC)

Combat Assets: Energy Weapon

Other Assets: Research 16, Physics 18, Robotics 18, Computer 16, Electronics 16

Motivation: *Diamond 9:* lila is greedy in the extreme. Personal gain is his only goal. *Diamond Jack:* lila is also a coward and will flee danger rather than face it.

Ulysses (Experienced NPC)

Combat Assets: Energy Weapon

Other Assets: Research 16, History 16, Psychology 16, Willpower 16, Computer 18, Electronics 18.

Motivation: *Heart 10:* Ulysses respects humans and wishes to serve them. They are his reason for existing. *Spade 8:* Ulysses' service to humanity knows no bounds. He will help however he can, no matter what the risk to himself.

Thanks to Kevin J. Brennan who inspired this adventure.

Traveller: The New Era

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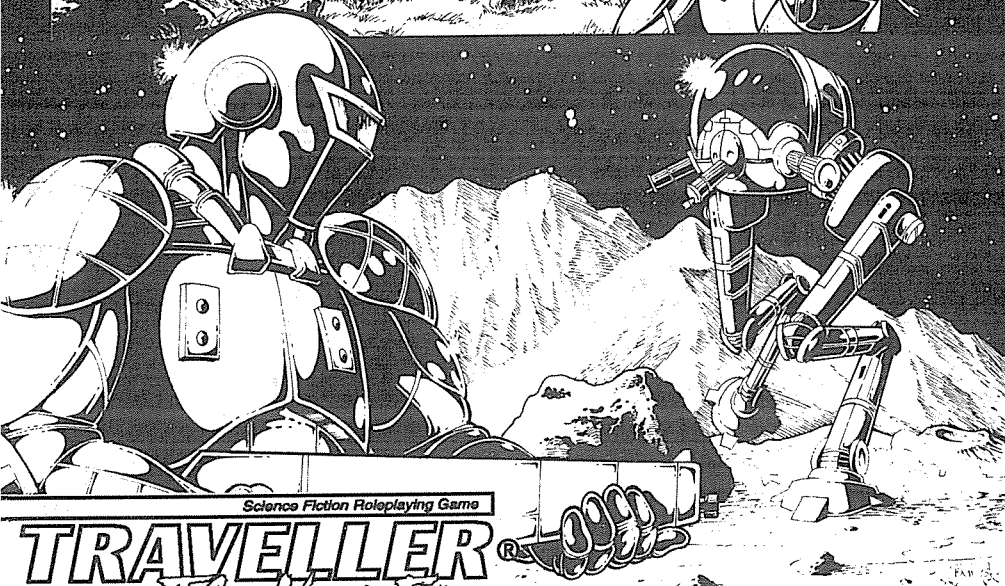
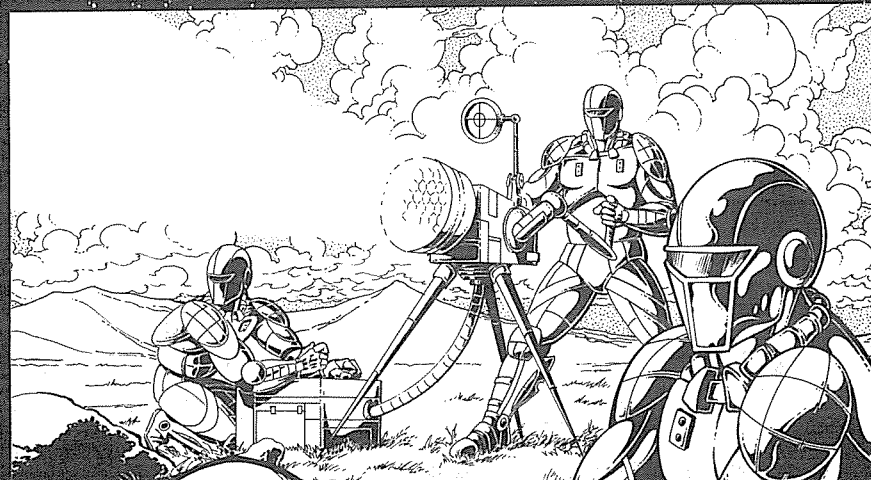
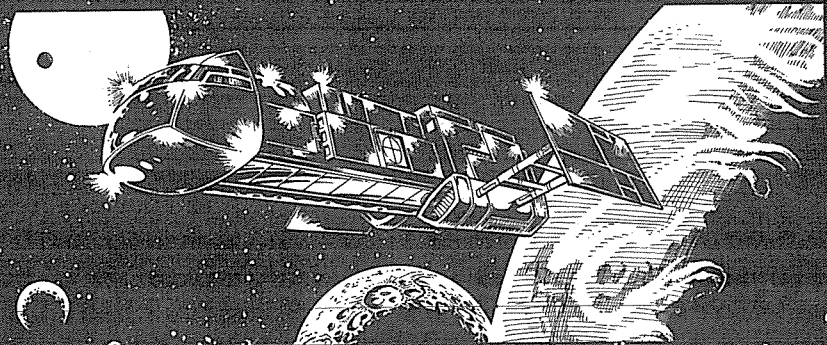
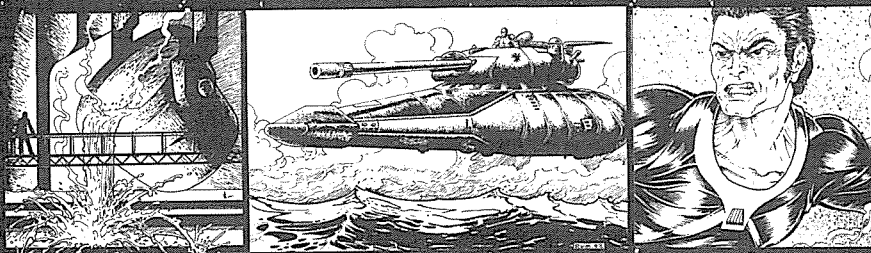
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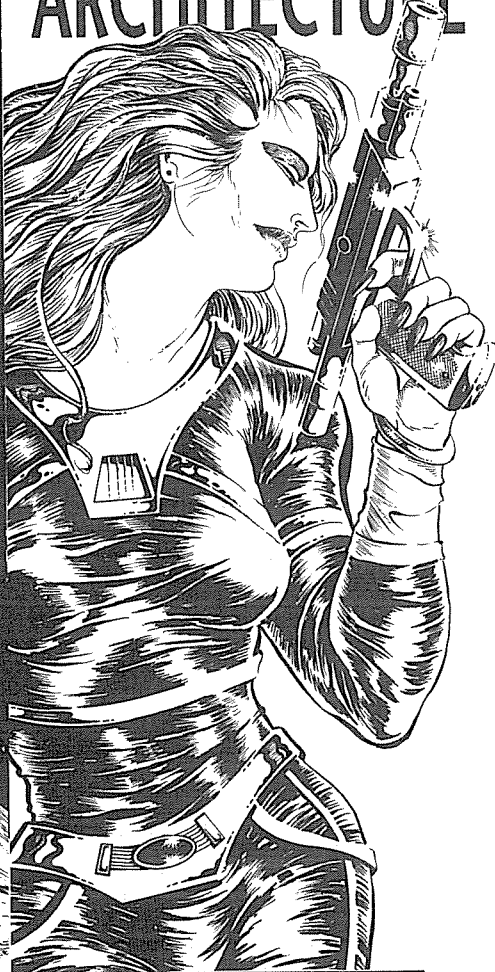
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Sublight/ Maneuver Drives

By Frank Chadwick and Dave Nilsen

Traveller uses jump drives and high efficiency plasma thrusters to move starships around. Both of these are very exotic technologies. But many players have asked about more conventional solutions to the problems of space travel. For the owners of **Brilliant Lances** (and the **Traveller** ship design rules), we present the following conventional (and a few quite unconventional) sublight drive alternatives.

ION DRIVES

This method of thrust is not really an alternative technology. It might better be described as a marginal technology. Ion drives can be freely added to any **Traveller** campaign without fear of doing damage to it. They are not discussed in the main section of the rules because most games will have superior technologies which will render them superfluous. That is not to say, however, that isolated pockets of intelligent life might not be forced to use ion drives, or that even an advanced space-faring civilization might not find some use for them.

Ion drives create thrust by electrochemically reducing fuel to a stream of charged particles (ions) which creates a very low thrust. Ion engines are usually made up of a large number of very low-thrust units mounted in clusters. The advantages of these drives are their endurance, low power requirements, and reliability. But the low thrust generated by this sort of drive limits its utility to moving low-priority cargos around inside a star system. Interplanetary trips by ion drive typically take months rather than days or weeks.

The fuels used for this system are known as "ionizates." This one term includes mercury, cesium, and a variety of liquified noble gases (argon, neon, krypton, etc.) The values given for this fuel represent an average since some of these substances would be heavier than indicated and others lighter. Ionizates are found as trace elements in most Earth-like atmospheres, but are more frequently gathered from gas giants and their moons, which sometimes boast large concentrations of noble gases.

Design: Each cubic meter of ion drive requires .03MW of power from a separate power plant and generates .003 tonnes of thrust, consuming .0000067 cubic meters of ionizates per hour. The drive masses 1 tonne and costs MCr0.013 per cubic meter of drive.

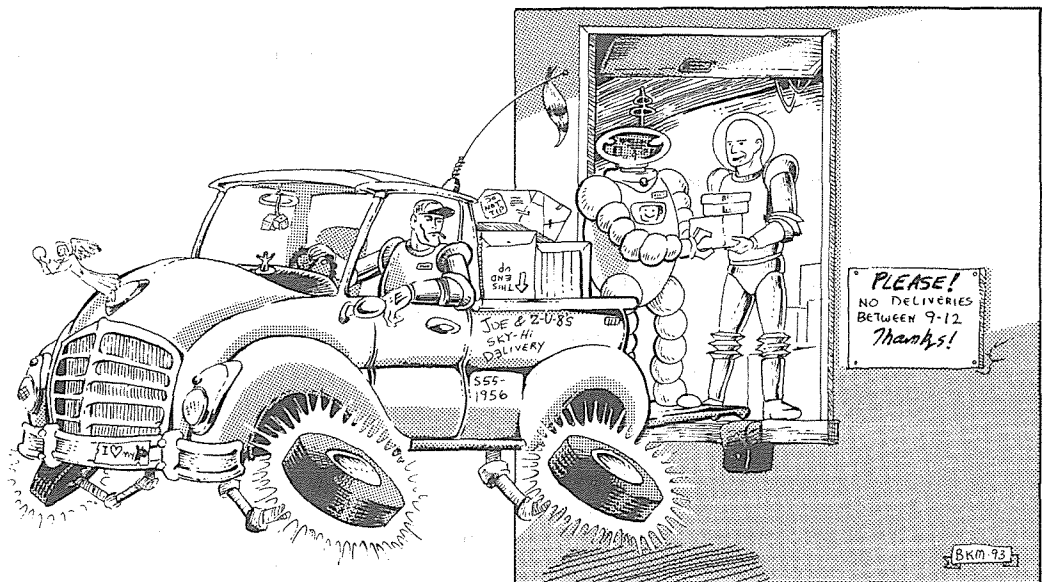
Ionizates mass 1.5 metric tonnes and cost MCr0.0001 per cubic meter.

Because of the low power requirements, ion drive ships are often equipped with large solar panels and draw on solar energy to power their drives.

DEAN DRIVE

Over 30 years ago, John W. Campbell popularized a supposed invention by a fellow named Dean. His invention, the Dean Drive, was a simple device which converted rotational momentum to linear momentum. Never mind that that violated the laws of conservation of momentum, he claimed he could do it. He wasn't able to convince the patent office, however, and never could provide a convincing public demonstration of the device, and so interest faded.

But had the drive worked, it would have had an extraordinary effect on travel, and is a perfect substitute for both CG and all thrusters. It is a reactionless means of efficiently converting electricity to thrust. The electric motor (or any other sort of engine) spins a dense shaft, thus creating rotary momentum. The Dean Drive (or, for purposes of the game, the Dean Converter) then changes this rotary momentum to linear momentum, or thrust. The standard illustration of a Dean Drive at work shows a cargo



truck unloading at a second-story window, its Dean Drive converting the momentum of its drive shaft to upward momentum.

Very nice. But why does this violate conservation of momentum? Think of the solar system as a closed system spinning with a fixed average velocity. Everything in it is spinning, although at different velocities, and each of the individual bodies has angular momentum. The sum of the angular momentum of all of the individual components of the solar system equals the total angular momentum of the system.

Now, suppose something changes velocity. Assuming that its mass stays the same, its momentum changes, since momentum is a combination of mass and velocity. Does this change the total momentum in the system? No, it doesn't, because the only way things can change velocity within the system is to change the velocity of something else at the same time. Remember, "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." So if a rocket accelerates in one direction, reaction mass (the rocket exhaust) is accelerating in the opposite direction, and with equal force, so the net change in momentum in the system overall is exactly zero. The sum of the momentum of all the bodies in the system is still equal to exactly the same total.

But that is not true with a Dean Drive. The Dean Drive manages to change the momentum of the object it accelerates without changing the momentum of any other component of the solar system (or the galaxy, or the universe), and thus alters the total momentum in the system, hence violating the law of conservation of momentum. For the Dean Drive to work, our current understanding of the physical universe has to be seriously flawed.

On the other hand, who is to say, especially in a science-fiction game, that our understanding of the physical universe *isn't* seriously flawed? Certainly not us, and in that spirit we offer the Dean Converter as an alternative to conventional thrusters.

Design: The Dean Converter is an extremely efficient reactionless drive which requires only electric energy to operate. Each cubic meter of Dean Converter machinery converts 1

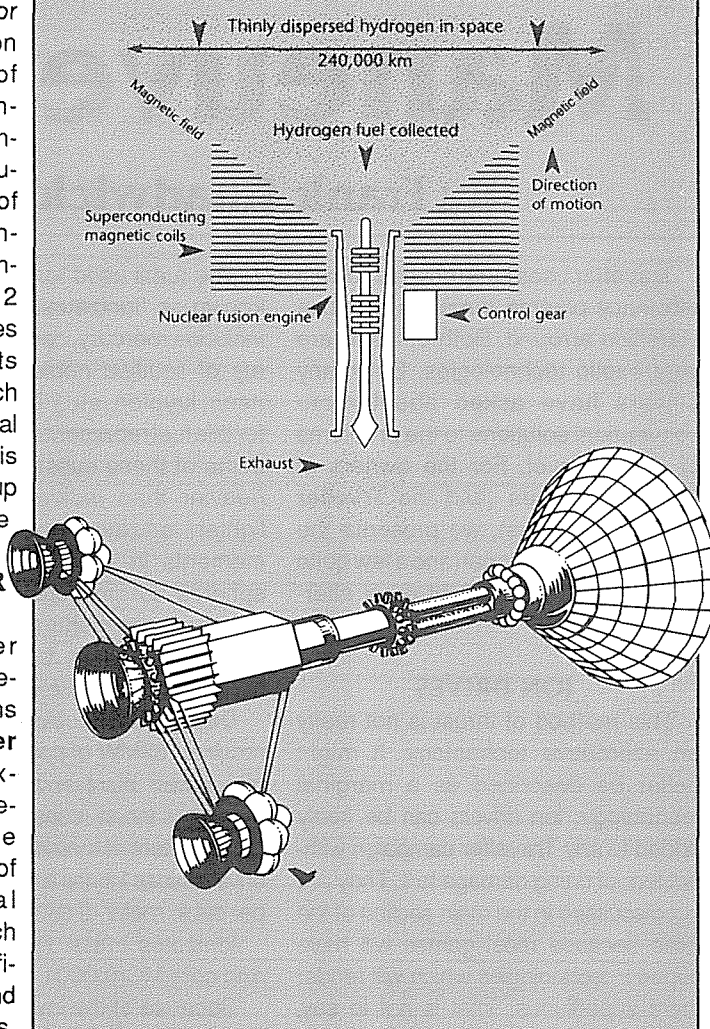
megawatt of power to 100 metric tonnes of thrust. There is no lower or upper limit on the size of Dean Converter machinery. Each cubic meter of Dean Converter machinery masses 2 metric tonnes and costs MCr0.1. Tech level of initial availability is left entirely up to the referee

THRUSTER PLATES

Maneuver drives in previous editions of **Traveller** were explained as related to the same body of theoretical physics which allowed artificial gravity and damper fields, which is to say manipulation of gravitational force and the strong nuclear force. Artificial gravity was defined as a force which could either push or pull and which acted on the gravitational field of a mass. Clearly, this would not be an efficient means of travel outside of a gravity well, and so a further advance was postulated which allowed the force generated by the drive to push on the actual thruster plates of the ship itself, propelling it through space and achieving a true reactionless drive.

The problem with this approach is that it runs into the same wall as does the Dean Drive (see above). A drive can be reactionless without violating the law of conservation of momentum if it moves a craft around without changing its velocity. ("Huh?" No, this is not a typo. Consider the jump drive. It moves a ship from point A to point B,

Bussard Ram



and does so without pushing it through the intervening space. It is a reactionless drive, but when the ship arrives at point B it has exactly the same momentum in the form of a vector as it had when it left point A. Thus, its velocity has not changed, nor has the momentum in the system overall been altered.) But a reactionless drive which changes the physical velocity of the craft shatters the law of conservation of momentum.

As indicated in the discussion of the Dean Drive, referees of science-fiction games should not be too shy about breaking the laws of physics. The *fiction* in the genre's name gives you license to do so. But the *science* in the genre's name requires you to at least know what you are doing and have a pretty good reason for doing it. In the case of reactionless drives in

general, the best reason is that the sort of campaign you are running requires a cheap, efficient, no-hassle way of getting from here to there. It is best suited to campaigns with a strong space-opera flavor. (Don't sneer; those can be the most fun sometimes.)

Design: Thruster plate technology becomes available around tech level 11 (due to the fact that it is tied closely to many of the other theoretical breakthroughs that occur at about that time). Each cubic meter of installed thruster plate drive generates 40 metric tonnes of thrust, masses 2 tonnes, requires 1 MW of power, and cost MCr1. Surface area (used by spacecraft only) in square meters is equal to thrust in tonnes ÷ 200.

BUSSARD HYDROGEN RAM

The Bussard ram (so called after Dr. Robert Bussard, who first proposed it in 1960) was once thought to be scientifically and technologically feasible. Greater knowledge of the workings of superconducting magnets and deuterium fusion now seem to have relegated the Bussard ram to the arena of science fantasy. Even if technologically feasible, Bussard rams are not generally used in the **Traveller** universe because jump drives make them irrelevant. This is because Bussard rams are drives designed to bridge the distance between stars at sublight velocities.

The biggest single problem in tackling interstellar distances is fuel. You have plenty of distance between stars in which to accelerate and get up to really healthy fractions of light speed, but as hard as it is to find room for several G-hours of acceleration, imagine trying to carry several G-years of fuel—then imagine slowing back down.

The Bussard ram beats this problem by using the thin interstellar atmosphere for fuel. What atmosphere, you say? You thought space was a vacuum? Well, for most purposes it is. There is insufficient atmosphere to have any measurable pressure, but there is the odd hydrogen atom floating around. The problem is gathering enough of "the odd hydrogen atoms" (one or two atoms per cubic centimeter of space) to constitute useful fuel for a hydrogen fusion rocket.

The answer is twofold. First, the faster the ship moves, the more volume of space it passes through, and thus the more atoms of hydrogen it can collect for fuel in a given amount of time. Second, if the ship has a sufficiently large fuel scoop, it can gather a larger volume of hydrogen. In round numbers, a ship needs a scoop area of about 35,000 square kilometers per metric tonne of ship's mass per G of constant acceleration, and needs to reach about 1% of light speed before it is scooping enough hydrogen for the ram to sustain a continuous fusion reaction. By way of illustration, this means that a fairly tiny ship, of about 1000 tonnes mass, would require a scoop over 2000 kilometers in diameter.

It is clearly not feasible to build a solid scoop that large, given the weight limitations of the craft. The answer is instead to use a network of superconducting magnets as the base of the scoop and use their magnetic fields as the scoop itself. That is, the ship's scoop is not a physical presence but rather a large magnetic field projecting from the front of the ship.

To accelerate the ship to 1% of light speed (3000 kilometers per second, or 180 **Brilliant Lances** hexes per 30-minute game turn) would require a separate drive, probably either a very fuel-efficient ion drive or a thermonuclear pulse drive.

Design: The Bussard ram uses a conventional fusion rocket coupled to an electromagnetic scoop. The fusion rocket is identical to the one noted on the self-contained thruster table above, with the exception that while operating in ramscoop mode, it consumes no fuel. Each cubic meter of installed fusion rocket requires one cubic meter of superconducting magnetic coils for the ram scoop. Magnetic coils mass 1 tonne per cubic meter and cost MCr0.5 per cubic meter. Surface area of the thruster in square meters

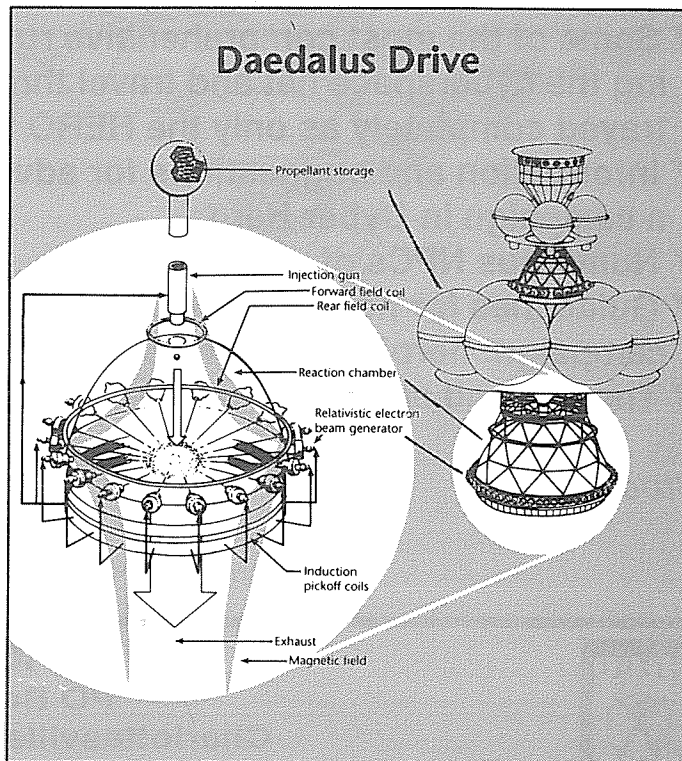
equals thrust in tonnes ÷ 200. Surface area devoted to the scoop is equivalent to 25% of the ship's surface area (i.e., all of the surface of hit locations 1-5).

DAEDALUS THERMONUCLEAR PULSE DRIVE

The Daedalus drive was first proposed by the British Interplanetary Society in the mid-1970s, and in its simplest terms consists of a fuel tank and an ignition chamber. Hydrogen fuel is fed into the ignition chamber and super-heated by lasers or high-energy electron beams. The resulting thermonuclear explosion pushes the ship forward.

Fuel is in the form of pellets. Each fuel pellet masses about 1.5 grams and consists of a mixture of deuterium (heavy hydrogen) and helium-3, all enclosed in a superconducting shell. The detonation of a single fuel pellet produces between 15 and 20 tonnes/seconds of thrust.

The ignition chamber and supporting electronics (electron guns and magnetic fields which protect the ship as well as directing thrust) give the engines a lower thrust-to-mass ratio than a conventional fusion rocket, but provide fuel efficiency about one order of magnitude higher. For long interstellar voyages, fuel efficiency is critical.



CYBER HEROTM

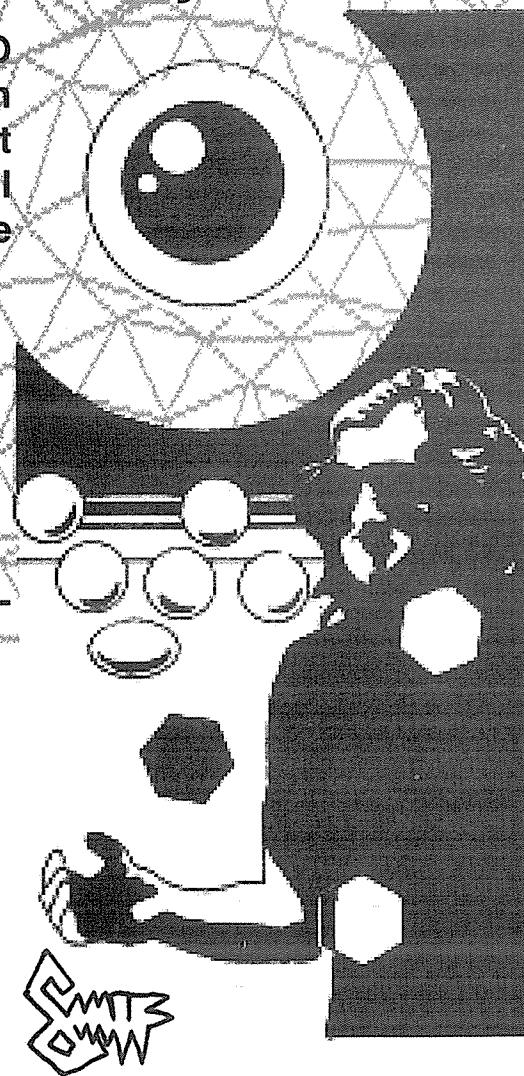
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Design: Daedalus drives are available at tech level 9 and above. Each cubic meter of engine masses 1 tonne, generates 1.5 tonnes of thrust, and consumes 0.0005 tonnes of fuel per hour. Price is MCr0.5 per cubic meter of engine. Surface area of the ignition chamber in square meters is equal to tonnes of thrust ÷ 200. Because of the exacting manufacturing requirements, fuel for the Daedalus drive costs 100 times as much as conventional hydrogen fuel.

SOLAR SAILS

Solar sails are extremely leisurely ways of moving around in a solar system. Solar sails are extremely large, lightweight reflective surfaces which rely on the physical pressure of photons in sunlight for thrust.

The almost-universal first instinctive reaction to solar sailing is that the sail can only carry the craft away from the sun, but in fact the sail can be used to tack (to borrow a yachtsman's term) and use thrust to move back toward the sun. How is this possible?

The solar sail is not a stationary object with straight-line vectors. As it is an object in the solar system, it is in

orbit (although it may be a very distant orbit) around the sun. As the sail can be angled, it can be used to either add to the orbital velocity or decrease orbital velocity. As orbital velocity increases, the sail assumes an orbit farther away from the sun, and so moves away from it. As orbital velocity decreases, however, the sail assumes a closer orbit and so actually moves toward it. In both cases, however, movement is gradual due to the extremely low thrust generated by the sail.

The pressure of sunlight on the sail inside the habitable zone of a star system generates 0.5 kg of thrust (or 0.0005 tonnes) per square kilometer of sail. As a square kilometer of solar sail, complete with its rigging, weighs 0.5 tonnes, or 1000 times as much as the thrust generated, and that is without any payload, it is immediately obvious that the sail generates minute acceleration. However, that minute acceleration is constant and free (with respect to fuel), and so is very economical for long voyages if you aren't in any particular hurry.

To calculate G-hours of thrust generated by the sail, divide the total mass of the spacecraft (including the

mass of the sail) by the sail's thrust in tonnes (square kilometers of sail area multiplied by 0.0005). The result is the number of hours of acceleration needed to achieve one G-hour of acceleration.

Thrust is multiplied by 10 in the star's inner zone and by 0.01 in the star's outer zone.

Solar Sails

TL	Mass	MCr
8	0.5	.001
9	0.4	.0005
10	0.3	.0004
12	0.2	.0003
14	0.1	.0002
16	0.05	.0001

TL: Tech level of first availability.

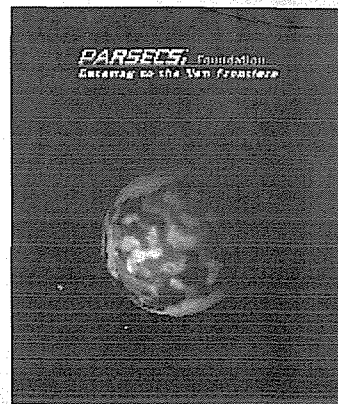
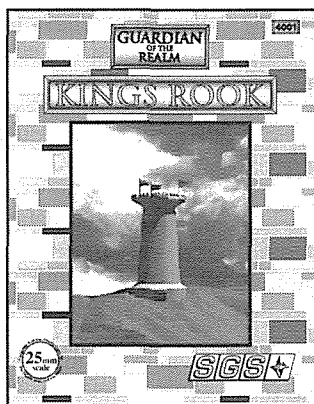
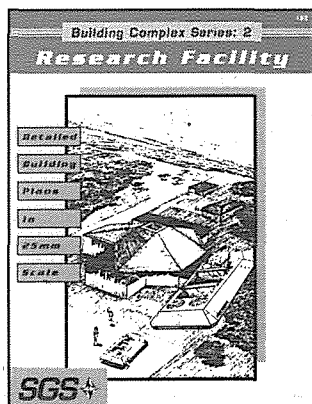
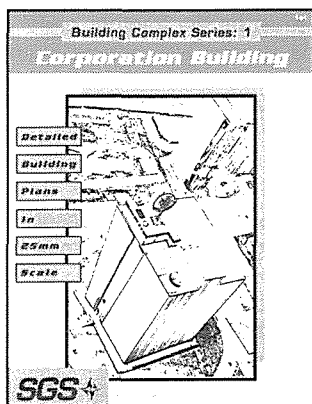
Mass: Mass, in tonnes, per square kilometer of sail surface.

MCr: Price, in millions of credits, per square kilometer of sail surface.

Vol: Stored volume of 1 square kilometer of solar sail is 10 cubic meters.

This article is excerpted from Fire, Fusion and Steel: The Traveller Technical Architecture.

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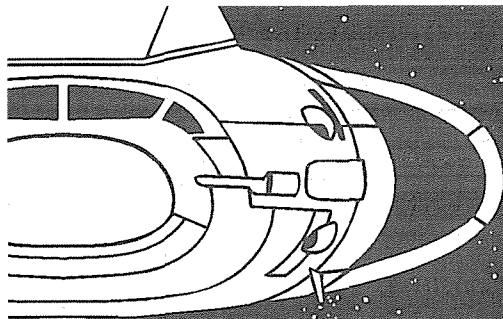
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Strap in, starjockeys. The topic for this season's tournament is planetary raiding and defense.

GDW will be sponsoring **Brilliant Lances** tournaments at this summer's major conventions (scheduling will be announced as details become firmer) to establish answers to these two interlinked questions: Who is the best **Traveller: The New Era** ship designer, and who is the best **Traveller: The New Era** ship commander.

There will be two classes in which we will select winners: Raiders, and Planetary Defense Vessels. A Raider is a starship which inserts small commando teams and equipment onto hostile worlds, and picks them upon the completion of their missions. Planetary Defense Vessels (PDVs) attempt to prevent this.

The soundness of your design and your mastery of space combat tactics will be tested against another entrant who will pit his or her design against yours. The winning Raider will be the ship which fared best against the competing PDV designs, and the winning PDV will be the one which best fought off the Raider entries. The PDV will be the only opposition to the Raider accomplishing its mission; there will be no other planetary defenses.

If you win, we'll give you the coveted **TOP LASER** plaque and publish your design and a suitably lurid and heroic account of your victory. If you lose, well, that's up to you.

Design parameters are as follows.

Raider

Raider must have jump-3 performance, fuel scoops, and fuel purification equipment sufficient to purify a full load of jump fuel in 12 hours.

Ship must be capable of landing on and taking off from a world with an atmosphere, either by airframe hull with or without contra-grav, or by streamlined hull with contra-grav. The ship may carry subsidiary vehicles, but these may not be used to fulfill the troop insertion or pick-up requirements; the raider must be able to do this itself.

Ship must have space for exactly 12 troops and at least 700 cubic meters/tonnes of cargo.

Success in the scenario is defined as follows: The Raider must be able to land on the world, take off again on the following turn, and safely jump. Hits on the Raider, particularly against its troops and its cargo space, are counted against it. Whether the mission is an insertion (carrying troops and cargo in, leaving empty) or recovery (coming in empty and carrying troops and cargo out) will be determined randomly at the beginning of the scenario.

Budget is MCr 200.

Planetary Defense Vessel

Planetary Defense Vessel (or vessels) need not be jump capable. If the budget is used to purchase more than one vessel, one of these must be the "mother craft" in which all of the others are carried. Vessel need not be streamlined, nor carry any refueling equipment (scoops or purifiers).

Success in the scenario is defined as preventing the success of the Raider. Hits on the PDV are counted against it.

Budget is MCr 140.

The following standards apply to both the Raider and Planetary Defense Vessel.

Maximum tech level is 12. No relic technology from higher tech levels may be used. Only standard "Imperial Space" technology may be used.

All crew may be carried two per small stateroom. A full load of fuel is included for free; however, all other consumable materials must be paid for out of the budget.

No more than 10% of the budget may be spent on expendables (missiles, drones, sensor decoys) that are used and not recovered during the course of the scenario—standard solid-fuel (EAPlaC) missiles are not recoverable for these purposes. Sand cannisters do not count against this ceiling.

Both players' starting positions will be randomized with respect to the target planet, so make your sensor and maneuver design decisions accordingly.

All designs must be submitted to GDW for approval (the deadline for this approval will be announced later). Submissions must include a fully detailed worksheet showing all calculations, including calculations for newlydesigned subsidiary weapons, if any.

Submitting a design constitutes granting permission to GDW to publish this design in its original or altered form in future GDW products.

Full details may be obtained by sending a SASE to "TOP LASER '94" at the GDW address, or over GENie (GDW.SUPPORT), AoL (GDW GAMES), or Internet (GDW.SUPPORT@GENIE.GEIS.COM) after March 15.

COLD FUSION

By Frank Chadwick

Cold fusion may never be available, or it may be available long before any of advanced forms of power generation mentioned in the previous article ("Sublight Drives"). Piezo-nuclear fusion, more popularly known as "cold fusion," was the subject of some controversial scientific research, and sensational news reporting, in 1989. As far as the public was concerned, it all began with a press conference in March of 1989 in Salt Lake City when Drs. Martin Fleischman and B. Martin Pons announced that they had discovered a cold-process for fusion.

The apparatus used a platinum anode and palladium cathode in a bath of heavy water. Electricity separated the deuterium (a heavy isotope of hydrogen) from oxygen in heavy water and then attracted the deuterium to the palladium cathode. The hydrogen then penetrated the palladium and under high pressure (hence the term *piezo*, or "squeeze") began to fuse, heating the cathode and giving off about four times as much heat energy as was used to run the machine.

Or so they reported. There was an immediate flurry of activity as skeptical researchers across the world made duplicates of the apparatus and hundreds of experiments were soon running, trying to replicate the results reported by Fleischman and Pons. They were, almost without exception, unable to produce any results. Fleischman and Pons were not physicists but were instead electro-chemists and were, it was speculated, unfamiliar with the rigorous experimental protocols necessary for controlling and measuring energy levels this small. The results they reported were well within the error margin of poorly calibrated instruments.

Within months, the verdict of the scientific establishment was in. The cold fusion process was a dead end. The US patent office refused to issue any patents on cold fusion, citing numerous experimental disproofs of the process. Prestigious scientific journals declined to accept further articles on the subject. Research funding disappeared. End of story.

Almost. The statement above—that attempts to replicate the effects experimentally were "almost without ex-

ception" unsuccessful—is significant. A few researchers, both in the United States and abroad, achieved results, and these results remained unexplained. A few scientists continued research on the process, with funding from various sources. Some private money was made available. Some researchers controlled discretionary funding and used it to continue cold fusion experiments. At some labs today, even as this is written, experi-

ments continue using funding diverted from other projects.

But the main source of funding has been Japanese. The powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) funded a three-year project beginning in 1992. Fleischman and Pons are now working in France at a special laboratory provided by IMRA Europe, the European branch of Toyota's scientific research institute. Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT) has also

PIEZO-NUCLEAR FUSION (PNF) POWER PLANTS FOR TRAVELLER

TL	Description	MW	Mass	MCr	Min Vol	KL/Hour	Fuel Type
9	PNF	0.40	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
10	PNF	0.50	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
11	PNF	0.60	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
12	PNF	0.80	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
13	PNF	1.00	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
14	PNF	1.25	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
15	PNF	1.50	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O
16	PNF	2.00	1	0.005	—	0.002	H ₂ O

MW: Power in megawatts produced per cubic meter of plant.

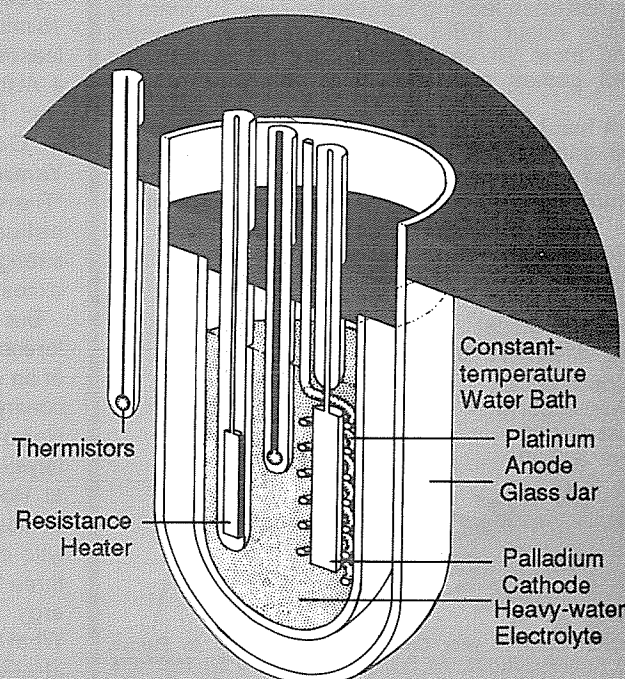
Mass: In tonnes per cubic meter of plant.

MCr: Price in millions of credits per cubic meter of plant.

Min Vol: Minimum volume, in cubic meters.

KL/Hour: Kiloliters (cubic meters) of fuel consumed per hour per MW output.

Fuel Type: Water.



Cold Fusion Apparatus

become a major player in the unfolding research.

Why had only a handful of researchers been able to replicate the results of the original experiment when the majority had not? Although the answer isn't certain, one possible explanation lies with the characteristics of the palladium cathode. Dr. Edmond Storm at Los Alamos, when examining the cathodes of a number of successful experiments, noted that the surfaces were smooth and unblemished, while the cathodes used in many unsuccessful experiments were covered with a network of hairline cracks.

Whatever the reason, by the middle of 1991 there had been over 40 successful replications of the original cold fusion experiment, and repeated successes brought more understanding of the procedures needed to replicate the results on a consistent and predictable basis. In the autumn of 1992, Dr. Michael C. H. McKubre of SRI International reported that 11 of the previous 12 cold fusion experiments at the SRI labs had produced excess heat. Critics remained skeptical, and pointed out that there could be no claim of fusion without fusion byproducts.

When deuterium fuses, it often produces tritium (a triple-heavy form of

hydrogen appearing only as a byproduct of nuclear reactions) and eventually helium-4 (a byproduct of deuterium-tritium fusion). Without tritium and helium-4 it is difficult to believe that fusion is taking place. Dr. John Bockris of Texas A&M has now reported detecting tritium in the heavy-water bath of a cold fusion device which reached 10,000 times the normal background concentration. Other researchers have begun to find tritium as well, and Bockris has reported from 2 to 100 times more helium-4 in the palladium cathodes of experimental devices than found in samples of palladium from the same production batch but not used in experiments. Helium-4 residue has also been reported by experimenters at the University of Hawaii, the University of Texas, and the Naval Weapons Center at China Lake, California.

Intriguing as these results are, they do not demonstrate conclusively that the helium-4 was actually produced by a fusion reaction. If fusion is taking place, it should be possible to observe the production of helium-4 while the reaction takes place. Dr. Eiichi Yamaguchi of NTT's Tokyo basic research lab has apparently done exactly that. He has taken a piece of palladium, coated on one side with gold, saturated

it with deuterium gas, enclosed it in a vacuum chamber, and run an electric current through it. After two or three hours, the palladium begins to heat up, generating excess heat for about 15 minutes, and then releases a burst of helium-4. At the Nagoya, Japan, cold fusion conference in October of 1992, Yamaguchi reported: "The amount of produced helium-4 gas was strongly correlated to the excess heat evolution."

But at the same conference, a demonstration of an even more revolutionary nature was made. Reiko Notoya of the Catalysis Research Center at Hokkaido University demonstrated an electrolytic cell which put out three times as much energy as it consumed. What made the demonstration extraordinary was that the cell did not use heavy water—it used

regular (or "light") water salted with potassium carbonate.

What's so extraordinary about that? Controlled fusion, as we understand it on Earth, requires deuterium to take place, as the principle fusion reactions are deuterium-deuterium and deuterium-tritium. Heavy water is water containing a high concentration of deuterium in place of conventional hydrogen. Light water, however, contains no deuterium, and so cannot sustain a conventional fusion reaction.

There seems to be little question that something is going on here. Light water reactions were first reported by Dr. Randall Mills, a private researcher living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Since then, and in addition to Notoya's repeated demonstrations, Bush and Eagleton of California Polytechnic have built and operated 19 light water cells and the Bhabha Atomic Research Center of India has run 29 different light water cells. But is it fusion?

Obviously it cannot be fusion as we expect to find it on Earth if there is no deuterium present. However, the light water cells use potassium carbonate as a salt in the water. If a hydrogen nucleus (a single proton) were to fuse with a potassium nucleus, the result would be calcium. Both Bush in California and Notoya in Japan have detected calcium in the electrolyte after the cell has operated for an extended length of time. The excess energy produced by the cell is greater than can be explained by mechanical or chemical reactions. It may not be fusion—but what is it?

Are we on the verge of a dramatic breakthrough in power-generating technology or will this latest round of experimental results turn out to be scientifically intriguing but of little practical value? It is impossible to tell, but it makes for an interesting optional power source with more than a little basis in fact.

The advantages of piezo-nuclear fusion are staggering. There are no bottom limits on the size of the device. It is lightweight, since it does not need heavy shielding (it is not "hot" in a radioactive sense). It is not dangerous. It can conceivably run off of water, without too much preliminary fuss. For campaigns that require very portable, very long-lived power sources, piezo-nuclear fusion is the perfect answer.

This article is excerpted from Fire, Fusion and Steel: The Traveller Technical Architecture.

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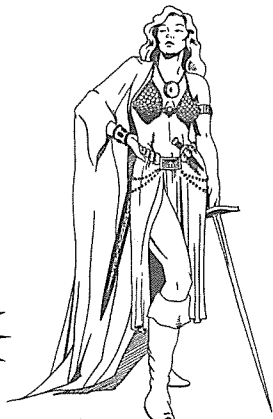
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My breath steamed in the cold night air, and the stitch in my side stabbed at me, but I knew I couldn't stop running. They were back there, following me, waiting for me to weaken, to slow, then they would be on me in a flash, and I would die.

I glanced back over my shoulder, my cybereyes turning the pitch-dark alley into a gray world. There! One of them!

I turned, hand diving under the jacket, slight resistance as the pistol came loose from the holster, swinging it up, my target realizing too late what was happening and fumbling for his own weapon in panic. The pistol roared twice, turning the alley bright as day for an instant as my target staggered and fell under the impact of the high-caliber slugs.

Triumph surged through me as I pelted down the alleyway. I'd gotten one of them! I was better than them. I could take them. Then something that wasn't there slammed my legs from under me, and I went head-first into the pavement.

I hit the concrete hard, blood flooding my mouth, my vision blurring. I looked up. A man who hadn't been there a second ago was looking down at me, light flickering and flowing around his hands.

"Good run, chummer," he said in a voice as cold as ice, "but you came up short of the finish."

Then there was a flare of light and then only darkness.

Even among shadowrunners, there are grades of menace. Some are feared not so much for what they can do as for what they are. And in the shadows, few are feared more than Mantis shamans.

BENEATH THE SKIN

Mantis is not like most insect totems. Mantis does not build a hive, for Mantis is not a group creature. Mantis is the solitary killer of the insect world, the lone, unstoppable hunter. Neither does Mantis transform her host into a likeness of herself—the changes Mantis brings are much more subtle than that.

Mantis shamans are picked by their totem for their similarity in outlook. Thus, Mantis shamans are always loners,

By David Perry

Shadowrun



people who care nothing for the goodwill or company of their fellow man, and usually possessed of a callous streak. Long contact with their totem emphasizes these aspects in the shaman and eliminates all of the normal social and compassionate traits.

After a few years of following their totem, Mantis shamans are merciless killers who care nothing for life: hollow men with no emotions, not even hate or anger left in them, people who shun all contact with their fellow beings. Mantis shamans retain their original physical form, but inside they are Mantis.

Mantis shamans are the perfect hunters. They have no emotions like fear, compassion or boredom to distract them from the hunt, and as the hunt is the only thing in the world that gives them pleasure, it is impossible to bribe them into giving it up. Once a Mantis shaman is on your tail, the race won't end until you are dead or she is. Ever.

TEAMWORK

Mantis shamans are not shadowrunners' ideal choice of teammate as everyone knows that they would, quite literally, kill you as soon as look at you. And they have no hesitation in abandoning or killing a teammate if it will gain them something. As the saying goes, "The only thing more dangerous than a Mantis shaman with you is a Mantis shaman against you."

Because of this, and because of their general disdain for other people, Mantis shamans prefer not to work in groups. Naturally, they prefer assassinations above all other forms of work.

Of necessity, the Mantis shaman will generally have two other pieces of street-muscle with her on an assassination, as protection and bodyguards. Use the Merc archetype from the *Shadowrun* book, but with only 24 points of skills.

The Mantis shaman regards these people as totally expendable, of course.

SAMPLE SCENARIOS

Some possible scenarios involving the Mantis shaman might include the following:

Firebrand: The PCs are hired to bodyguard Rythmatix Inc's latest hot, new rock group, Firebrand, for a week.

In addition to fending off screaming fans, over-inquisitive journalists and the odd psycho with a gun, the PCs must deal with a Mantis shaman assassin. The shaman has been hired by a rival entertainment corp which is planning a takeover and which wants to drive down the price of Rythmatix shares by destroying its most profitable band.

The Mantis shaman will strike at the height of Firebrand's next concert, from the middle of the screaming crowd for maximum cover. Her backup mercs will try to get backstage

Mantis Shaman

Gentlemen, let us dispense with the foolish pleasantries. You are here because you wish me to kill someone for you. Tell me who he is, so I can tell you my price.

Don't waste my time with negotiations. My price is not open to discussion. If you will not match it, go. And never dream of trying to cheat me if you value your life.

As Mantis shamans are insect shamans, they cannot be played by PCs. However, they make great NPC villains to put on the tail of your PCs when they anger somebody really powerful.

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 5
Strength: 1
Charisma: 5
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 5
Magic: 6
Reaction: 5 (+3D6)
Essence: 6

Skills

Conjuring: 5
Firearms: 3
Magic Theory: 4
Sorcery: 6
Stealth: 6
Bike: 2

Gear

Armor jacket (5/30), H & K variant (with laser sight, shock pad and AP ammo), Yamaha rapier, low-light goggles, Reaction +2 spell lock, two disposable grunts (see Teamwork, at left).

Spells

Increase Reflex +2: 5
Invisibility (Improved): 6
Manadart: 4
Powerdart: 5
Powerball: 4
Mask: 4
Treat: 5

Totem

Character: Mantis is the lone hunter who strikes from ambush to kill with lightning speed. Mantis prefers to wait in concealment and let his prey run to him, when he strikes and kills.

Environment: Jungle.

Advantages: +2 for combat and illusion spells, +1 dice for any reaction increasing spells +1 die for summoning jungle spirits

Disadvantages: Mantis is a killer, not a healer. Subtract 1 die for all healing spells. Also, Mantis has lost all connection with human emotions. Subtract 1 die from all social skills.

Because of Mantis' reputation, people will automatically distrust a Mantis shaman if they learn of his totem.



to kill the band if he fails and generally supply supporting fire.

If the Mantis shaman is killed, the rival corp will keep sending assassins every few days until they succeed. If the shaman can be captured alive and interrogated, he can reveal his employers, who can then be blackmailed into laying off.

(Or the PCs could just stick out the week and then buy shares in the rival corp and let the hit take place.)

As the assignment is for a week, the GM should test the PCs with a few minor encounters (psycho fan killer, go-gang riot at a concert, protection demands, etc.) before hitting them with the Mantis shaman.

Double-Cross: The PCs are hired by a corporate to assassinate the head of a local Yakuza clan which has been stealing data from the corporate mainframe.

The Yakuza Oyabun (see the Contacts section of the *Shadowrun* rules, page 213) is constantly guarded by two bodyguards and a Street Mage (use standard archetypes).

Unfortunately for the PCs, the corporation has no intention of news of this job getting out. When the PCs turn up for payment, they will be ambushed by the corporation's special assassination team—a Mantis shaman, two company men and a rigger (standard archetypes and equipment). Ω



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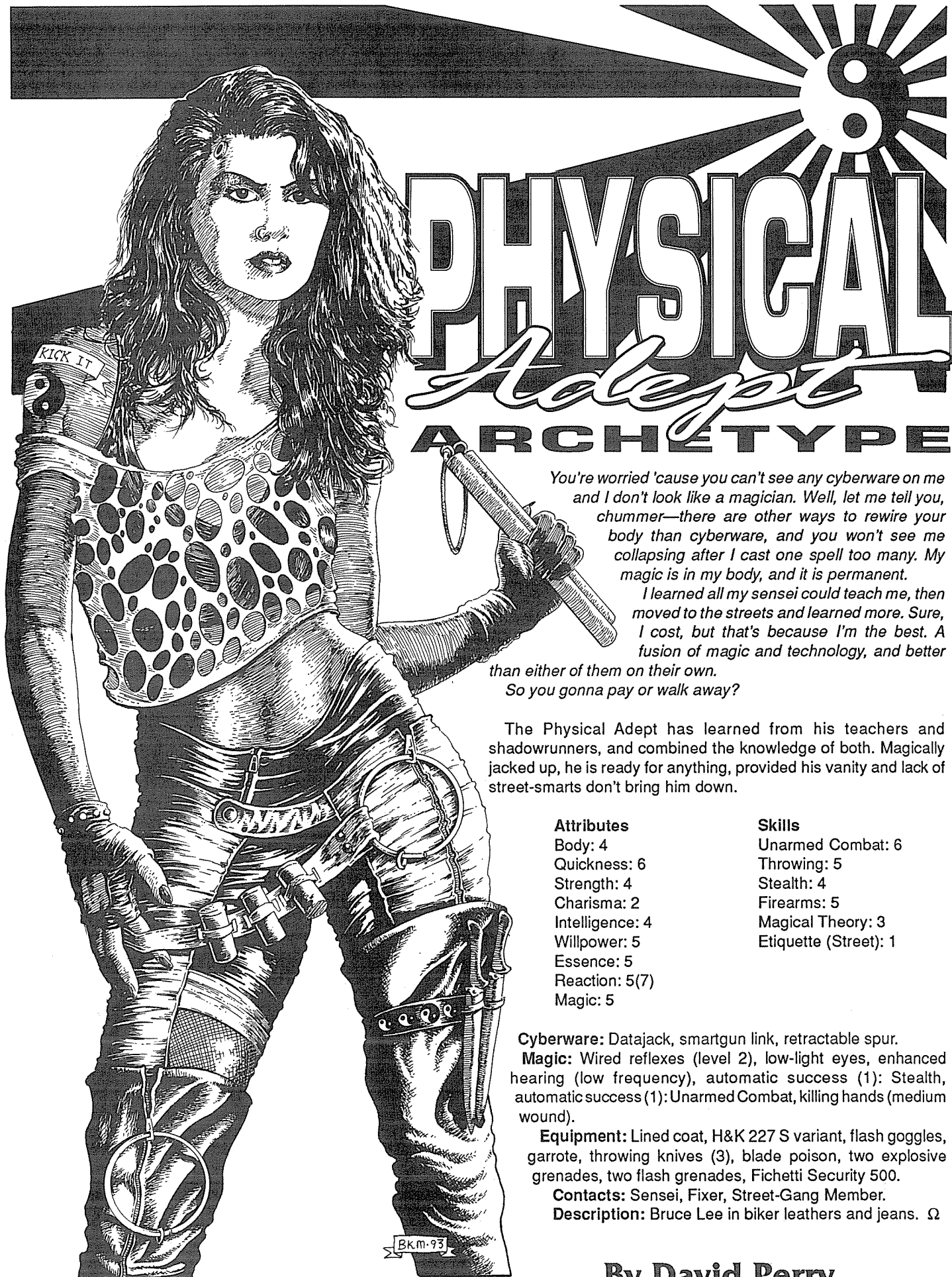
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PHYSICAL

Adept

ARCHETYPE

You're worried 'cause you can't see any cyberware on me and I don't look like a magician. Well, let me tell you, chummer—there are other ways to rewire your body than cyberware, and you won't see me collapsing after I cast one spell too many. My magic is in my body, and it is permanent.

I learned all my sensei could teach me, then moved to the streets and learned more. Sure, I cost, but that's because I'm the best. A fusion of magic and technology, and better than either of them on their own.
So you gonna pay or walk away?

The Physical Adept has learned from his teachers and shadowrunners, and combined the knowledge of both. Magically jacked up, he is ready for anything, provided his vanity and lack of street-smarts don't bring him down.

Attributes

Body: 4
 Quickness: 6
 Strength: 4
 Charisma: 2
 Intelligence: 4
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 5
 Reaction: 5(7)
 Magic: 5

Skills

Unarmed Combat: 6
 Throwing: 5
 Stealth: 4
 Firearms: 5
 Magical Theory: 3
 Etiquette (Street): 1

Cyberware: Datajack, smartgun link, retractable spur.

Magic: Wired reflexes (level 2), low-light eyes, enhanced hearing (low frequency), automatic success (1): Stealth, automatic success (1): Unarmed Combat, killing hands (medium wound).

Equipment: Lined coat, H&K 227 S variant, flash goggles, garrote, throwing knives (3), blade poison, two explosive grenades, two flash grenades, Fichetti Security 500.

Contacts: Sensei, Fixer, Street-Gang Member.

Description: Bruce Lee in biker leathers and jeans. Ω

By David Perry

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ALL THE SPARTANS

By Legion

The PCs are approached by an attractive, auburn-haired woman one day near their home. The lady introduces herself as Angela Christopher and explains that she has been sent to Night City by her employer to enlist the assistance of some resourceful people. After seeing the PCs on a news broadcast as the solvers (or instigators, as the case may be) of a recent incident in the city, and not knowing anywhere else to look, she tracked them down and decided to try to hire them.

Christopher claims to be an employee of a businessman in the San Francisco area who is interested in hiring people to end a gang war now raging there. She explains that her employer's son is involved in a harmless little "club" in San Francisco which is being pressured by a large gang to follow the gang leader's orders. The businessman, whose name is Walter Courtnall, will pay each of the PCs \$2000 euro (half in advance, the other half in escrow until the turf war is ended). Courtnall owns a lucrative real estate firm in the Bay area.

The PCs will be introduced to Courtnall and his son, Skip, a young man wearing a lot of exotic enhancements and sculpting. Skip's exotica are cat-like, and he answers to the handle Ocelot. Ocelot will introduce the PCs to Barracuda, the leader of his club (the Menagerie).

Barracuda will tell the PCs that a large gang called the Spartans is forcing other gangs in the San Francisco area to tow the line, building an underground empire. The fight started to get ugly when the Supers, a small local gang, stepped in to help the Menagerie and the Villains, another local turf-gang, out from under the Spartans' boots. The Menagerie members are thankful, but the Villains can't get over their hatred of the Supers to get on the right side in this gang war.

After his meeting with the PCs, Barracuda will arrange for them to meet, at different times and places, the leaders of the two other gangs, the Supers and then the Villains.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

The PCs' best plan of action to end the war will be to work out a truce between the Menagerie, the Supers and the Villains long enough to enable the three gangs to collectively fight the Spartans.

If, after meeting the leaders of the Menagerie and the Supers, none of the PCs thinks of it, have Ocelot suggest that the Menagerie, the Supers and the Villains form an alliance to deal with the Spartans as a bloc. Ocelot will volunteer to deliver the PCs' offer to the Villains personally.

A few days after their offer is delivered, the PCs will be notified that the Villains have agreed to meet the Supers, with the Menagerie and the PCs as mediators, in a local wrecking yard located in neutral turf in the combat zone.

MEETING

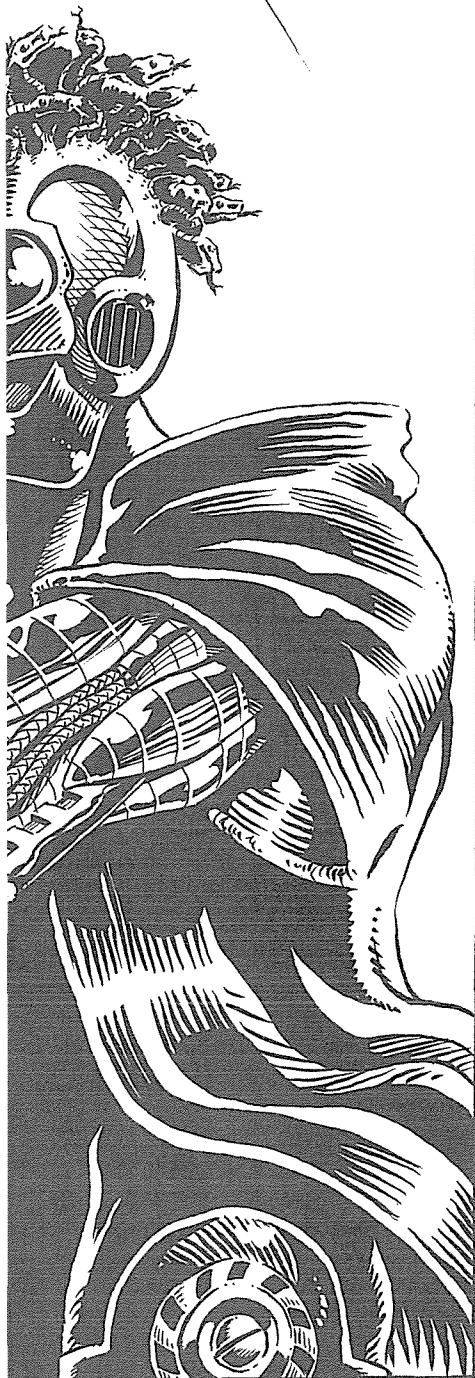
The meeting is attended by the leader of the Supers, Gladiator, and the leader of the Villains, Flamestrike, each accompanied by a small (five-man) entourage. Barracuda, with a small escort, is there with the PCs to mediate.

Having found out about this meeting from one of their finks on the street, a small group of Spartans has decided to crash the party on their own.

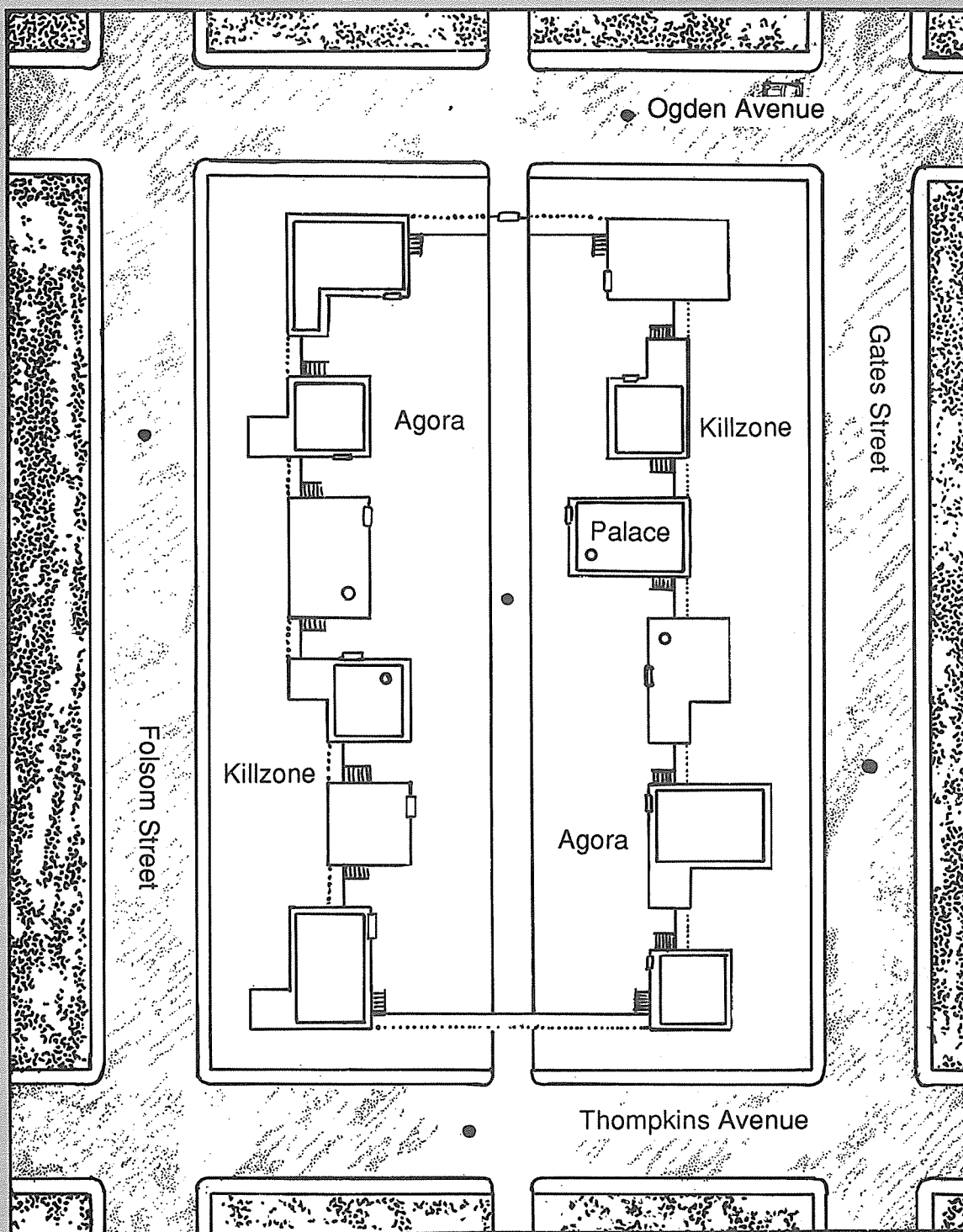
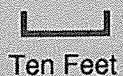
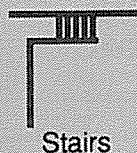
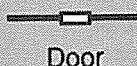
There are only about 15 Spartans in this phalanx, led by a junior lieutenant called Leonidas. They are typical members of the gang, as described below.

This intrusion ought to convince the Villains that the alliance is a good idea.

Play out the gang meeting. If the PCs don't present a good cause, then you may



TROY



want, in spite of the Spartans' attack meeting, to not have the Villains enter the alliance. This will make it a lot more desperate when the gangs finally attack Troy (see below). But then the Villains could always have a change of heart and show up late to help the PCs—after the attack has already kicked off, of course.

If the alliance is agreed to, and if the PCs don't think of this either, the Supers will ask one of the PCs to suggest that they plan and conduct an attack on the Spartans' home turf, Troy. The Su-

pers will go through the PCs to avoid a possible argument with the Villains.

SPARTANS

Typical names are Lycurgus (leader), Oedipus, Theseus, etc.

The Spartans are an extremely dangerous boostergang which has members in Night City and San Francisco, as well as "wannabe" Spartans in Los Angeles and the VanSeaTac Metro Zone. They started out as a small neighborhood turf gang in San Francisco. During the seven years of their bloody

history, they have grown into a virtual army of nearly 500, spread up and down the west coast of North America. There are almost 250 Spartans in San Francisco.

Initiates must be at least six feet tall and male to be given warrior status. Their ages range from 15 to 25.

The Spartans use poser gang-style indoctrination techniques to steel their recruits, and they work! The most notable thing about this gang is that members never withdraw from a fight, and they never surrender. Cops dread re-

sponding to calls involving Spartans.

For an organization of their size, they are without par in hand-to-hand combat. The *average* Spartan has the skill Melee at about +6. All Spartans also have Brawling or a Martial Art at a minimum of +5.

Each Spartan wears an ankle-length red cloak in public. Other clothes are always drab colors. All wear black leather boots in a variety of styles. They don't wear any earrings or make-up, and they despise fashionware implants.

The only vehicles they drive are motorcycles. These are always plain black sportbikes with no chrome or detailing of any kind.

The Spartans refrain from wearing any kind of nonpermanent body armor. They'll only use subdermal armor, skin weave or body plating. In the case of the latter, the front optic mount and sensory extension options are never implanted.

Some Spartans, including Lycurgus, have implanted linear frames. Their linear frame and body plating face plates are patterned after Grecian themes. Hoplite-style helmets and the heads of Medusae and Cyclops are common.

The Spartans wear a lot of implants and bioware. They use all of the cyber-weapon implanted body weapons, and they also use many of the neuralware options. Very few Spartans have cyber-optics or cyberaudios implanted, however. Cyberlimbs are only implanted to replace arms and legs cut off or ruined in fights.

It is strictly against the Spartans' code of conduct to use ranged weapons of any kind; hence, smartgun links are never worn.

Each Spartan carries a melee weapon at all times in addition to his implanted body weapons. Swords are most often carried, but tonfas, axes and monokatanas are also encountered in Spartan phalanxes. Pretty well anything goes as long as it's one handed.

The Spartans are into drug-running, extortion and information-brokering. They never work for corporations and have made a few enemies because of it. None of the corps have the guts to put a hit on the whole gang, though. They all fear the backlash to be expected from a failed attempt.

The gang has worked for the mob and the Yakuza on a few occasions in the past. Lycurgus doesn't like to "bark with the big boys" though, so the Spartans rarely do.

Lycurgus

Lycurgus founded the Spartans in

2013 in south San Francisco. Since that time, he has literally been cut to pieces in the gang's bloody climb up the power ladder on the west coast.

Lycurgus (even he's forgotten his real name now) is seven feet and 450 pounds of anger. He carries a four-foot, double-bladed axe that he swings one handed. His faceplate is patterned after a Medusa, and his head bristles with micro-motorized ornamental robot snakes.

INT: 7

CL: 9

ATT: 2

TECH: 5

BODY: 12

MA: 7

REF: 7

LUCK: 8

EMP: 2

Skills: Rank +10, Melee +8, Aikido +7, Intimidate +6, Streetwise +4, Leadership +6, History (Ancient Greek) +5, Athletics +5, Motorcycle +5.

Hardware: Body Plated Cowl, Faceplate and Torso, Linear Frame (Epsilon), left and right cyberarms with standard hands, left and right cyberlegs with standard feet, rippers in both hands.

MENAGERIE

Typical names are Tiger, Ape, Ox, Tortoise, Gazelle, Wolf, Hedgehog, Baracuda (leader), etc. The Menagerie is a boostergang. Members are all enhanced and biosculpted to look like animals. A bunch of rebel rich kids who can afford exotica, they are disparagingly called the "Zoo" by the other gangs in the city. This gang has 35 to 40 members.

Their small turf is in Golden Gate Park, around the Steinhart Aquarium.

They are one of the "pigs-in-the-middle" in the gang war.

VILLAINS

Typical names are Flamestrike, Omega (leader), Roller, It, Cornelius, Sonar, Deliverance, Phantom, etc. There are approximately 45 or 50 Villains.

The Villains are a poser/boostergang. Villains take on the personae of pre-2000 comic-book supervillains. The villains are the other "pigs-in-the-middle" in the gang war, but they hate the Supers so they lean more toward the Spartans. The Villains are opposed to whatever the Supers are in favor of as the two gangs are nemeses.

The villains' turf covers a few square blocks in Haight Ashbury, immediately south of the Golden Gate Park Panhandle.

SUPERS

Typical names are Behemoth, Gladiator (leader), Nemesis, Vengeance, Torpedo, Shockwave, Stresser, Brand, etc.

It is suspected that the Supers are a puppet gang of some corporation because of the extreme cost of all their enhancements. There are, however, only about 20 to 30 members in the gang. Gladiator wears an ArmorTech CADS Mk 2020-3, the latest model.

The Supers are a poser/guardian gang whose members take on the personae of pre-2000 comic-book superheroes and heroines. They will aid the PCs in the gang war.

The Supers are, in reality, a puppet gang. They were created by the Microtech corporation as a company strike team. Their trial run assignment is to break the Spartans' hegemony over the street gangs on the west coast of North America. No member of the gang will admit to this. Both the Supers and the Villains are fairly new gangs; each is only about a year old.

The Supers have even staked out a turf as part of their cover for the gang war. It is in Nob Hill around the Old U.S. Mint.

After the war is over, the Supers will vanish. They will be extracted by a couple of Microtech covert removal teams operating in the San Francisco area.

The Supers should move smoother and more "together" than the other gangs in the area. They aren't just another bunch of kids off the street, you know!

SCHLIEMANN HASN'T BEEN HERE

Troy is in the southeast corner of San Francisco's Mission District combat zone, not far to the north and west of the Highway 280-Highway 101 interchange. It is a residential city block which the Spartans have fortified by connecting the exteriors of all buildings to one another with barricades one-story high, except for one gate. All outside windows, doors, etc. have been covered with bricks, cinderblocks, boards or sheet metal. These barriers are topped by razor wire and patrolled by sentries. Imagine a crack-house that takes up a city block!

There are a number of access points to San Francisco's sewers in and around Troy. The Spartans have also opened tunnels down to the city sewer system so they can move in and out of Troy with impunity. Their tunnels resurface all

over the surrounding area of the combat zone.

There are approximately 100 to 125 Spartans in Troy at any given time. The remainder of the 250 or so San Francisco members will be out on various jobs throughout the metropolis.

Referees may describe the interior layouts of the houses that make up Troy as they see fit. Exterior features are detailed below.

Gate/Ramparts: This is the main and only entrance to Troy. Two large, sheet-metal-covered gates open onto what was once a back alley. It is set into the western rampart of the turf and is guarded by four Spartans at all times. The eastern rampart is patrolled by three Spartans, and each of the northern and southern sections are watched by one guard.

Killzone: The area between Troy's walls and the sidewalk is strewn with nails, used hypos and broken glass. The Spartans don't allow anyone to park vehicles on the four streets surrounding Troy. You can write off your 'Benz if you do.

Agora: The western half of this courtyard is called the "stable," and a number of motorcycles are parked there at all times. The eastern half is the "drilling area," where the Spartans train and discipline themselves.

Palace: This two-story, gray brick house is the private quarters and command center for Lycurgus, the leader of the Spartans. There is a sewer access break-in in the building's basement, just in case! There is \$5000 euro in cash and about \$3000 euro (street value) worth of drugs in Lycurgus' room which could easily be made to disappear before the police sweep through, if the PCs find it (a Difficult: Notice skill check).

ATTACK

If the combined forces attack Troy, they will have quite a fight on their hands. Regardless of the attack plan, about half the Spartans will escape the attack, but their power will be broken for a time.

The other half will have been killed, wounded or arrested by the police attracted by the huge battle taking place and arriving on the scene just as it ends (coincidentally).

With the arrival of 50 or so police (mostly SWAT and Cyberpsycho teams), Lycurgus will do the unheard of—call off the battle and order the Spartans to abandon the fight.

They will withdraw when they start to hear the sirens close by and when spotlights from gyros and AVs start to illuminate the area.

About half of the player characters' ally gang members will escape arrest, including all of the Supers. Many of the poor guys will be dead or wounded, though.

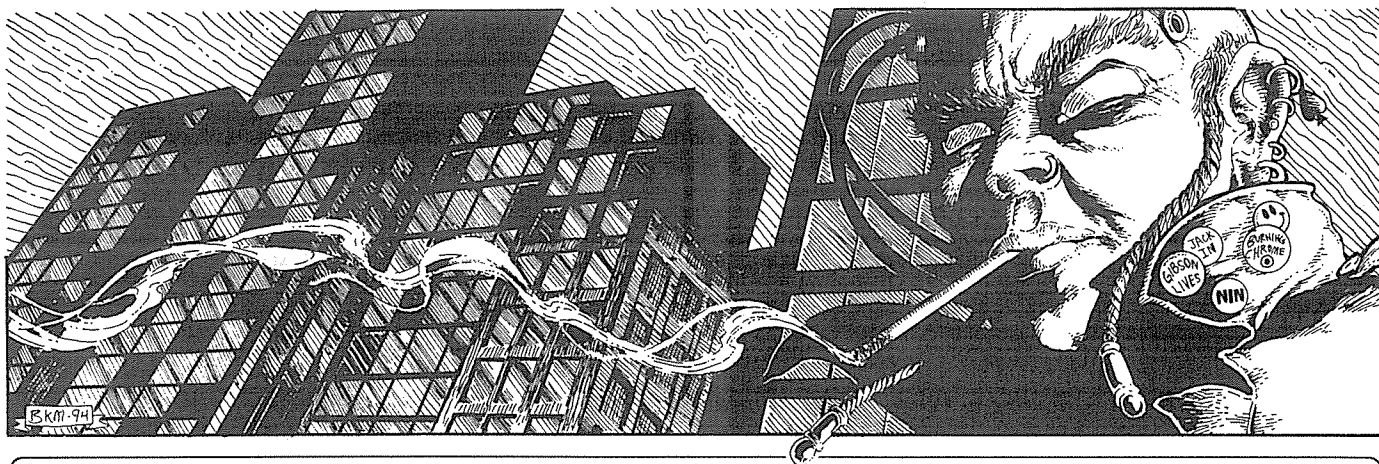
Each PC must pass an Average: Hide/Evade or Stealth (as applicable) skill check to avoid being arrested by San Francisco's finest. If they do get arrested, they better hope they don't have the above-mentioned drugs in their pockets.

CONCLUSION

If any of the PCs are arrested, Walter Courttnall will phone the San Francisco district attorney for a chat. The next day, the PCs will go before a judge and be charged under the Uniform Civilian Justice Code with one count each of Assault With Deadly Force and Homicide (3rd degree) and with one count each of Conspiracy, Vandalism, Riot and Trespassing. They will each immediately be fined \$2000 euro and ordered to leave the city of San Francisco.

If any of the PCs had the Spartans' drugs in their pockets, they will also be charged with one count of Possession of Illegal Substances for the Purpose of Trafficking and will be fined an additional \$1000 euro.

Isn't it nice to have a friend who plays golf with the city's DA? Ω



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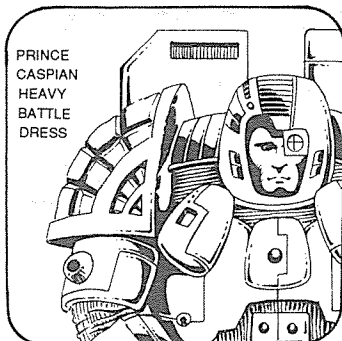
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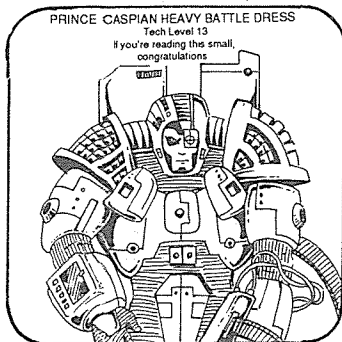
The New Era

EQUIPMENT GUIDE

PRINCE
CASPIAN
HEAVY
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DRESS



PRINCE CASPIAN HEAVY BATTLE DRESS
Tech Level 13
If you're reading this small, congratulations



RCES SECURITY: EYES ON
FILE NAME: PRINCE CASPIAN
HOMEWORLD: AUBAINE
ARMAMENT:

GAUSS RIFLE MARK

ARMOR:

SECTIONAL REACTIVE
ABLATIVE COMPOSITE
BALLISTIC WEAVE

COMPUTER:

TACTICAL

NOTES: PRINCE CASPIAN
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QUICKLY IN
OF DAMAGE
EXPLOSIVE
POSITIONED
ON EXTREM
AND MAIN
OF ARMOR.

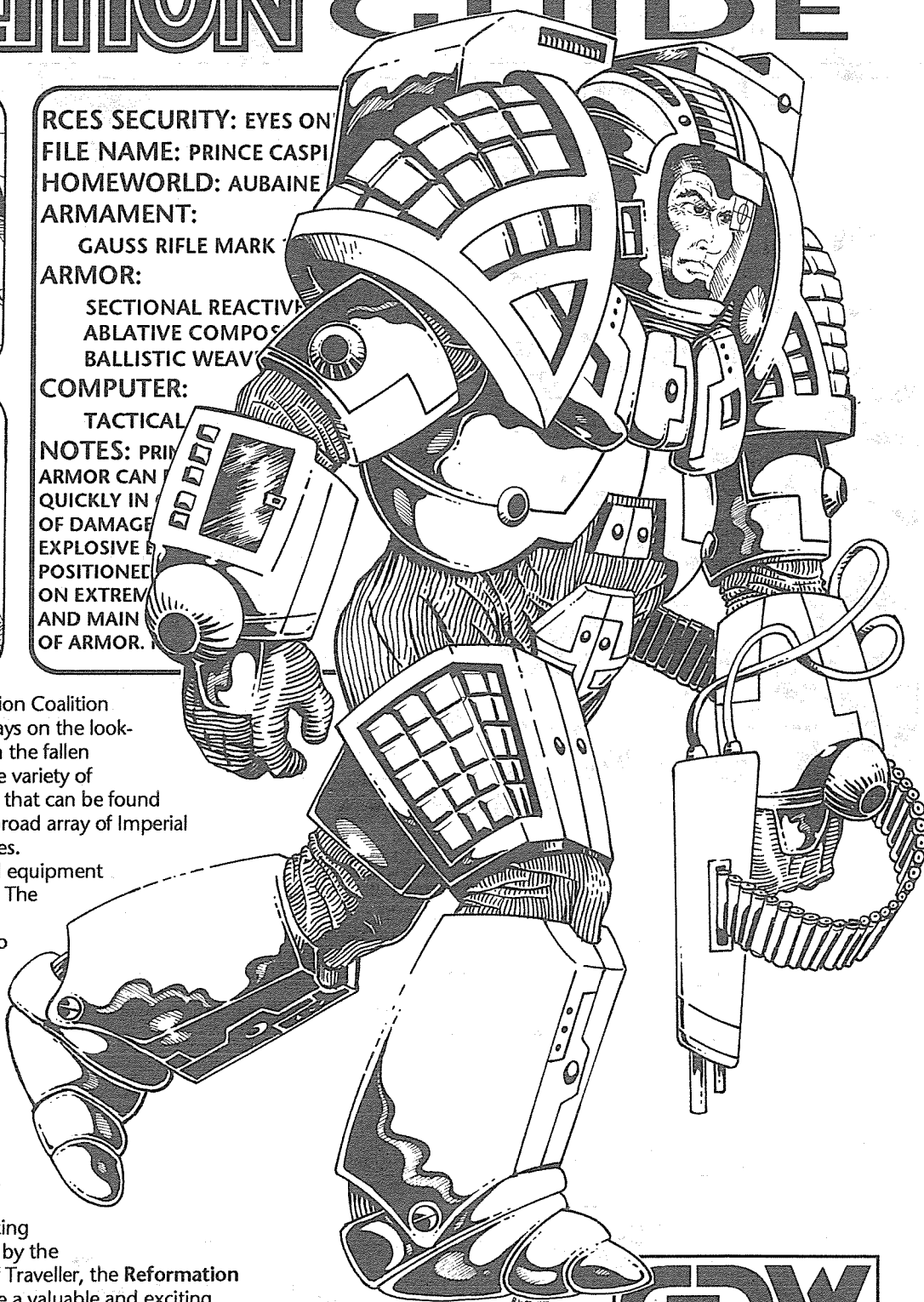
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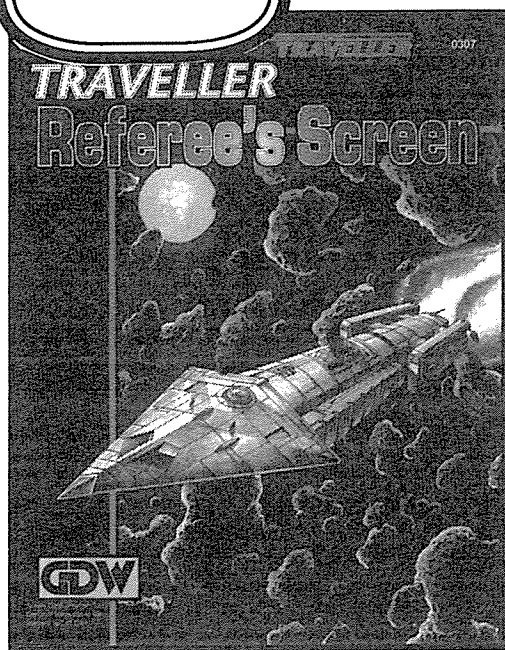
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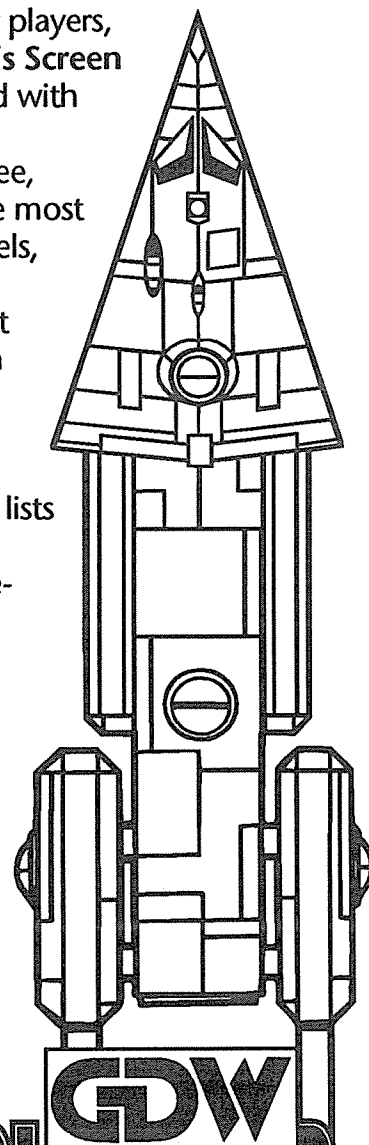
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Biodiversity

By Andy Slack

It was a quiet evening. Most of the Pentapods had gone dormant, and the only one left—we called it Rosebud because it was that color—was puttering about eating bits off trees. Chan said it was sampling them, but who knows? Stanford was playing stone-scissors-paper with her by the fire when he suddenly looked up and saw things dropping in for supper from the trees. The only problem was that it looked like we were on the menu.



This scenario is set on Beta Canum sometime after the Kafer invasion has been repelled. The referee will need the **2300 AD** rules. Access to **Beaststalk**, **Invasion** or **Colonial Atlas** may be helpful, but is not required.

MISSION BRIEFING

With the end of the current Kafer invasion, the surviving Pentapods on Beta Canum are once more investigat-

ing local wildlife to find source material for their genetic-engineering projects. The PCs are recruited to guide and protect an expedition of Pentapod biologists in surveying an area of Beta Canum near the eastern coast of the French Continent. Each party member will be paid Lv300 up front and Lv300 on successful completion of the mission (defined as the safe return of the Pentapods and all their samples to their enclave), plus Lv100 per day spent on the expedition. Payment will be made in genetically engineered Pentapod arti-

facts (e.g., biocontacts) to the agreed value, not in cash.

The party will be provided with suitable camping gear and Songbird hovercraft, as well as rations for several weeks.

APPROACH/RETRIEVAL

The PCs and their Pentapod charges will be dropped off by tiltrotor on the edge of the region map at a prearranged point. They will be picked up at the same place three days later—or earlier if they radio for help. Local authorities are keen not to endanger rela-

tions with the Pentapods, and while they cannot spare resources from the reconstruction effort to escort them, plenty of backup is only a call away.

MAP DESCRIPTION

The referee must prepare a map showing a region of the French Continent near the Pentapod enclave. The party should drive backward and forward across this area with the aim of

desired, generate one or more animal tables (or other encounters) and use them to extend the adventure. At suitable points during play, the referee should implement the following encounters:

Gatherer: The PCs enter a small clearing, occupied by what looks like a small hut. As the PCs investigate further, a small, apelike creature appears, hesitantly at first but with growing confi-

pearing: 1D6-2 Initiative: 3 Hit Chance: Difficult Size: 60 kg Speed: 85 meters Armor: 0 WPM: -1 Consciousness Level: 2 Life Level: 6 DPV: 0.1 Signature: -1.

Flying Chaser: As they set up camp for the evening, the PCs are attacked by a group of creatures vaguely resembling giant bats. These carnivores have spines protruding from their chests, and they attack by swooping down and impaling their victims.



surveying each 100-kilometer hex. This is a preliminary survey only, so one to two days per hex will be sufficient to gather the data the Pentapods need. The map should indicate the dropoff/pickup location for the party. The main encounters of the scenario are not placed, as the referee should introduce them whenever he feels it best to maximize enjoyment of the adventure.

REFEREING THE SCENARIO

Use the normal **2300 AD** travel rules to resolve the party's movements. If

dence, and approaches one of the characters. It begins to trace complex patterns in the dirt at his feet.

Contrary to appearances, this being is not sentient. Its apparent writing is a courtship display intended to attract a mate, normally triggered by seeing a particular bright color which is prominently displayed on the chest fur of the female of the species. By chance, one of the PCs is wearing a shirt of this color, and the animal is performing its display for him. Subsequent events must be adjudicated by the referee. The creature's statistics are: *Number Ap-*

Normally these predators would simply consume their prey, but as this is the reproductive season, they will instead give birth to small larvae which they entomb with the victim under a mound of rocks to keep scavengers at bay. The larvae then gradually eat the host alive. Statistics for these beasts are: *Number Appearing: 2D6 Initiative: 6 Hit Chance: Routine Size: 40 kg Speed: 220/55 Armor: 0 WPM: -3 Consciousness Level: 1 Life Level: 5 DPV: 0.1 plus DPV 0.5/ turn stun poison.*

Kafer War Band: The PCs stumble on a squad of 2D6 Kafers, armed at the

referee's discretion, left over from the invasion of 2301-02. As soon as these are roused from their normal stupor, they attack.

NPCs

There are several ways to play the Pentapods; the most appropriate depends on the type of game your players prefer. It's even possible that the Pentapods have a hidden experiment going and send a couple of each type along to see which type gets on best with humans.

Enigmatic Pentapods: These spend most of their time dormant, and the rest of it engaged in mysterious or apparently futile tasks. They inconvenience the PCs by strange rituals which they have to perform at odd hours, speak hardly at all and are equipped with a variety of weird-looking genetic constructs.

The PCs eventually work out that each is analogous to a human sampling kit or tool, but PCs may be repelled by the slimy, disgusting nature of the devices—only products sold to humans make any pretense at looking presentable. Enigmatic Pentapods make occasional puzzling references to their gods.

Humorous Pentapods: These may have trouble communicating with humans, in which case they speak in

gibberish a lot of the time (and the PCs have to work hard to understand what they mean by phrases like, "The faint sound of machine-wrapped litterbins eloping with custard"). Or they have learned their human languages from old videos sold to them by unscrupulous traders (and while their speech is appropriate and easy to understand, it consists of clichés and advertising jingles—"It's life, Jim, but not as we know it.").

Sinister Pentapods: These may be either enigmatic or humorous, but they have a dark side to them, caused by their lack of concern for pain or individual survival (theirs, or anyone else's). For example, their equivalent of the tranquilizer dart gun may kill creatures stone dead; captured creatures are tied down and vivisected—without anesthetic; or they may cheerfully use one of their number or one of the PCs as bait for carnivores.

ALTERNATIVES AND VARIANTS

If the Pentapods don't appeal as patrons, or if your group is not on Beta Canum, there are several alternative patrons who can be used instead:

Royal Society/Foundation for Practical Knowledge: These organizations can turn up anywhere, and differ only in their use of the results. The

Royal Society seeks knowledge for its own sake and has sponsored a team of biologists to survey the region for this reason. The FPK, in contrast, seeks applicable knowledge and, like the Pentapods, will be looking for some plant or animal usable as root stock for genetic engineering.

Trilon (or Another Megacorporation): Again seeking raw materials for bioengineering, this party differs from academically funded ones in being more commercially aware (and so harder to persuade if the PCs try to increase their wages by argument), and less concerned for the long-term impact on local ecologies.

Smugglers: These will probably pretend to be one of the other types of patron, but they, in fact, are seeking the gatherers (from the first encounter, described above) for sale as pets on the black market. In this case, the referee may opt to have the gatherers carry some hideous, virulent disease which breaks loose among the owners later, with the player characters being sought by law enforcers to explain their involvement. Smugglers may also replace the Kafer war band (the third encounter) if that suits your campaign better.

In this case, they are Experienced NPCs with military-grade weapons, equal in number to the party. Ω

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MAGIC Winter Tournament '94, Jan. 7-9 in Kenneth Taylor Hall Cafeteria, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Contact MAGIC, c/o Nicholas Cioran, 4 Parkside Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8S-3Y1.

RuneQuest Con, Jan 14-16 at the Columbia Inn in Baltimore, MD. Contact David Cheng, 313 East 85th St., Apt. 2C, New York, NY 10028.

WinterCon, Jan 15 near Detroit. Contact WinterCon '94, PO Box 656, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

Con Games '94, Jan 15-16 at Wright State University in Dayton. Contact Con Games, Write State Adventurers' Guild, PO Box 1016, Dayton, OH 45431-0016.

Crusades '94, Jan. 15-16 at the Comfort Inn in Darien, CT. Contact Crusades '94, PO Box 403, Fairfield, CT 06430-0403.

PrezCon, Feb. 10-13. Write to PrezCon, PO Box 5123, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Jaxcon '94, Feb. 18-20 at the Holiday Inn at Baymeadows in Jacksonville, FL. Contact Jaxcon, PO Box 442, Dept. M, Jacksonville, FL 32201.

SheVaCon 94, Feb. 18-20 at the Sheraton Inn, Harrison, VA. Contact SheVaCon 94, 120 Church St., Verona, VA 24482.

OrcCon 17, Feb. 18-21 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

Winter War XXI, Feb. 18-20 at the Chancellor Hotel, 1501 S. Neil St., Champaign, IL. Send a SASE to Donald McKinney, 986 Pomona Dr., Champaign, IL.

VisionCon, Feb. 24-26. Contact VisionCon, Box 1415, Springfield, MO 65801-1415.

Egyptian Campaign '94, Feb. 25-

27 at the Renaissance room of Southern Illinois University's Student Center in Carbondale, IL. Send a SASE to the Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Third floor Student Center, Carbondale, IL 62901-4425.

Concentric, March 11-13 at the Ramada Hotel O'Hare in Chicago, IL. Contact Concentric, 114 Euclid, PO Box 287, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

Northeast Wars II, March 11-13 at the Radisson Hotel, Burlington, VT. Contact Northeast Wars II, 152 Church St., Burlington, VT 05401.

Atomicon '94, March 25-27 at the Idaho Falls Recreation Center in Idaho Falls, ID. Contact Randy Pacetti, 2635 Laguna Drive, Idaho Falls, ID 83404.

Clare-Voyance, April 8-10 on the campus of the Claremont Colleges in Claremont, CA (about 20 miles east of LA). Contact Games Central, Storyhouse, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA 91711.

Americon, April 16-17 in Clayton/Franklinville, NJ. Contact Americon, c/o Carl "Thunder," PO Box 125, Mullica Hill, NJ 08012.

Name That Con 7, April 22-24 at the St. Louis Airport Hilton. Contact Name That Con, PO Box 575, St. Charles, MO 63302.

Madison Games Con '94, May 14-15 at Edgewood High School in Madison, WI. Contact Pegasus Games, 6640 Odana Road, Madison, WI 53719.

Gamescaucus II '94, May 27-30 at the Oakland Airport Hilton in Oakland, CA. Contact TriGaming Associates, PO Box 4867, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0867.

Gamex '94, May 27-30 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

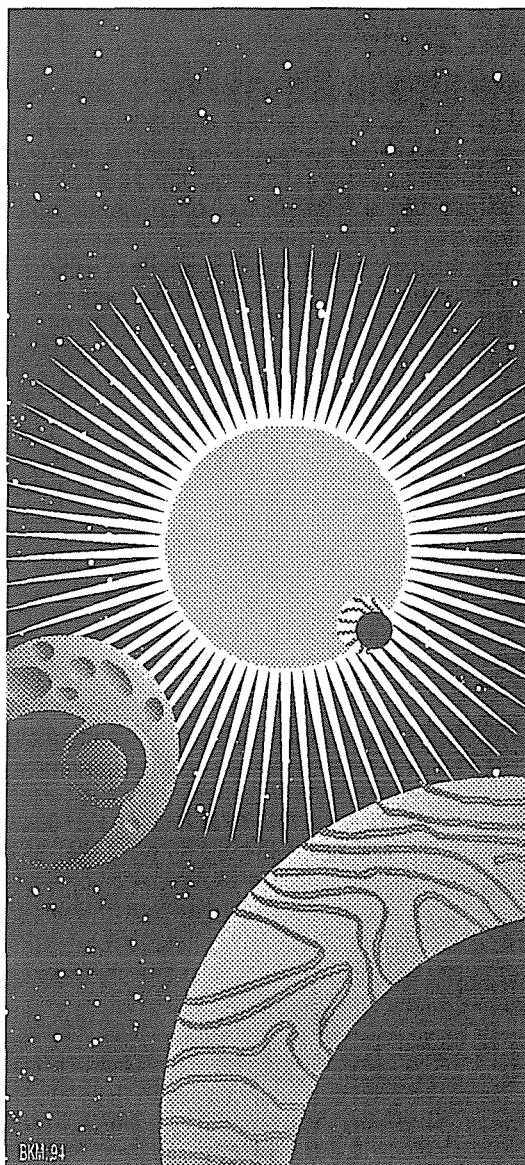
S.T.A.R.S. '94, July 1-14 at the

Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, GA. Contact S.T.A.R.S., PO Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696.

Dragon*Con '94, July 15-17 at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, GA. Contact Cragon*Con '94, PO Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 062-0696.

Gateway 14, Sept. 2-5 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

Convention announcements cannot be included unless received a minimum of four months in advance of the event. Challenge is not responsible for errors in convention announcements. Write to Challenge Conventions, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.



The characters are adventurers trading in a remote part of Mars. They have travelled almost 3000 miles east from the great port of Syrtis Major, crossing the dangerous Crocea to the Gorklimsk Swamp to Syrtis Minor, thence to Osorma, Surukaan and finally to the frontier twin of Sekoor, the last outpost of civilization before the untamed wilderness of Zephyria. Sekoor is a traditional frontier town with many mixed races—mainly the strong, rough Hill Martians with their large ears and dark hair, but also many fairer, elf-like Canal Martians from the huge Cimmerian Swamp to the south—from Olonia and Cimmeria, and French and British Earthmen trade here. It is not too unusual to see the savage High Martians at the trading posts—they come from the mountains north of Tratsk. It is an exciting, adventurous, colorful and often dangerous place to be. Beyond Sekoor lies only the desert with its abandoned, dried-up, dead canals and ancient, blasted ruins. And it is from the desert that the mysterious ship came one dark night.

The *Dauntless*-class, steam-driven, lightwood flyer glided in, crashing into the side of a brick building, its boilers exhausted. It suffered only superficial damage and can be repaired in a few days, with the exception of the bow-

foreign stations," because of its speed and bow-mounted gun. This ship, however, was being used to transport a small archaeological team to examine an unnamed ancient Martian ruin 100 miles east of Sekoor, its guns necessary because of the threat from pirates and High Martians. A chart shows the location of the ruins, and the log lists its crew and passengers:

Captain Arthur Smith, First Mate Master Hinchcliffe, crewmen Turner and Adams, Hill Martian guide K'Troonda K'Treel, and three archaeologists: Professor Richard Bird, Dr. Archie Archbold and Miss Emma Lee.

The log also tells of the mystery that befell the *John Bull*. Upon their arrival at the ruins, Professor Bird, Dr. Archbold, Miss Lee and K'Treel set up camp within the ruined walls in what appeared to be an ancient, overgrown garden. The ship was moved some distance away within an open area. That night, Captain Smith was standing watch on the ship's central gun tower, when a loud scream was heard throughout the camp. The rest of the crew ran to look, but the captain had totally vanished. Crewmen Turner and Adams set out to contact the research party. In the morning, their footprints were seen heading toward the ruins, but they abruptly ended in the middle of an open space—no trace of the two crew-

Her name is K'tree'-eenya, and she is quite striking. Of only average height at six feet, seven inches, she is obviously well-muscled and has unusual, flame-red hair. She explains that she is an entertainer, a dancer who is also a teller of tales and a singer of songs according to local tribal custom. As such, she can tell the legendary history of the ruins in question.

The ruins are believed to be of the country estate of an ancient king. They consist of his royal palace, gardens and harem, and are surrounded by the remains of his soldiers' barracks and servants' quarters, kitchens, etc. The king was extremely rich, with many vaults full of rare gems and precious metals, even the rare tin. He was both jealous and frightened, believing his concubines would run off, assassins would kill him or his soldiers would mutiny. Accordingly, he guarded his vaults with ancient demons which were released at night to enforce his curfew and protect his palace. These demons were invisible, huge and terrible, carrying people off to the Martian hell with no trace of them being left behind. K'tree'-eenya is very friendly and inquisitive about the ship, its weapons and speed, the weapons of the adventurers, what Earth is like, what food is eaten there, what treasures are found on Earth, etc.

WRECK OF THE SLOOP JOHN B. By J.B. Hill

mounted, four-inch gun, which is destroyed. Although part of its nameplate broke off in the crash, leaving only the name *John B*, its log shows it to be the *HMS John Bull*. Of its crew and passengers, there is no sign, except for one male body leashed to the steering wheel with ropes cutting deeply into the wrists, the head savagely torn off. Local knowledge and the ship's log tell the story.

HISTORY OF THE JOHN BULL

The *John Bull* is a *Dauntless*-class ship often referred to as a sloop, "a small warship used for general purposes and especially for police work on

members could be seen. Hinchcliffe stayed with the ship, too frightened to cross the red sands to the ruins. As night approached, his nerve broke, and he set course back to Sekoor, expressing his intention to tie himself to the ship's wheel. Obviously, he never made it back.

The local Hill Martian leader (a cross between sheriff and mayor of the town) asks the adventurers to take the ship back to the ruins in an attempt to rescue the archaeologists who may still be alive and to try to solve the mystery.

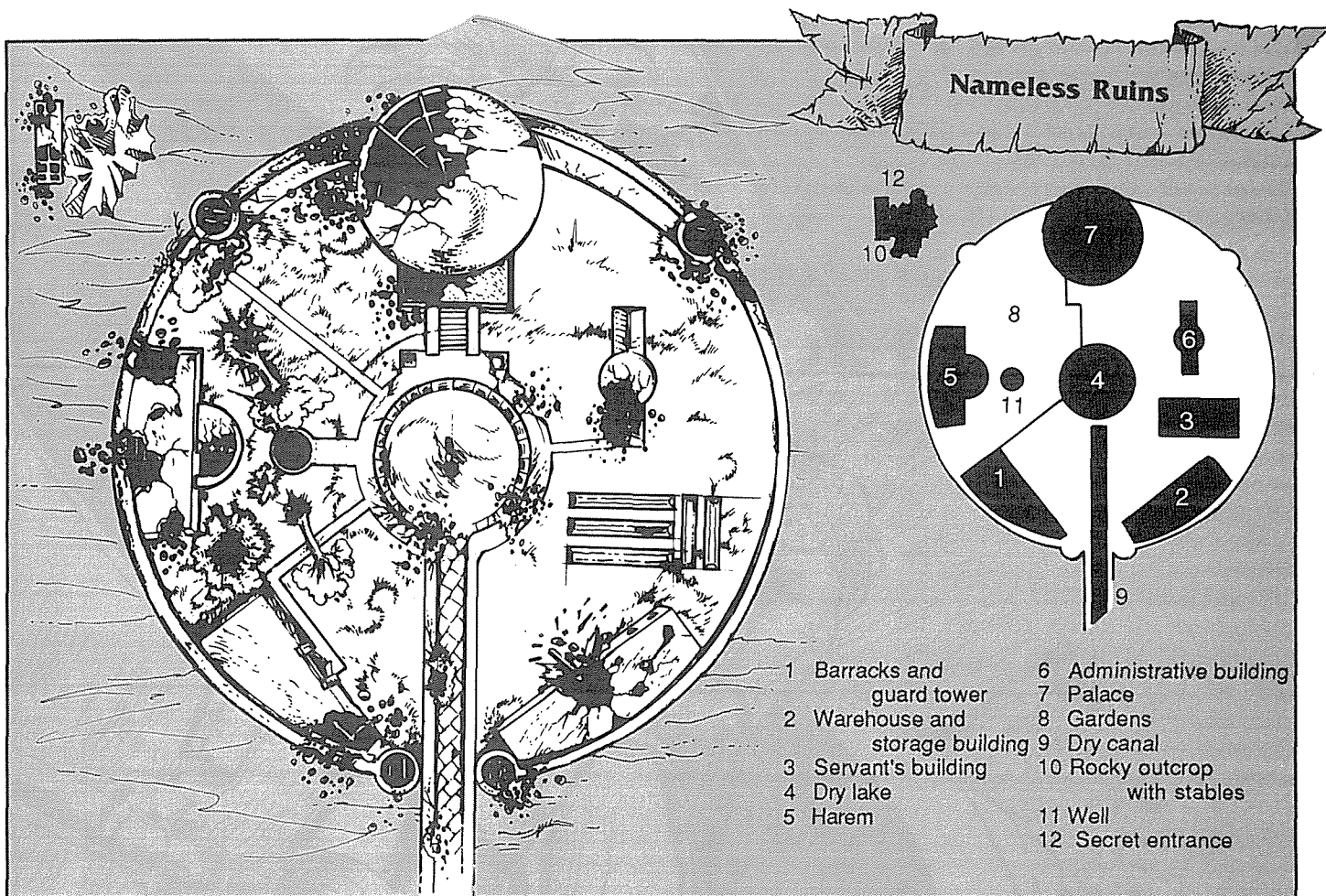
As they are preparing for the trip, the adventurers are fortunate enough to be approached by a female Canal Martian.

UNNAMED RUINS

It will take approximately four hours flying time to reach the ruins. Referees should attempt to make the adventurers arrive in the late afternoon to allow only a short period of preparation before night falls. Delay them with a sudden sandstorm with fake weather die rolls and with bureaucracy—no one can find the permit needed to fly the craft from the official pound in which it is docked.

The ruins are reasonably well preserved. There are four towers which have crumbled and are now only on average 20 feet high. The outer walls





are thick and still stand mostly intact. Many internal walls, however, have fallen. The gardens are very overgrown with ancient fallen trees, but the well still provides fresh water.

Barracks and Guard Tower: Mostly destroyed. The tower has the ruined remains of a large war engine.

Servants' Buildings: Almost totally destroyed.

Gardens: The well still has fresh water. A tribe of 20 Roogies now lives here, hiding in the harem building at night.

Harem: Still in good condition—but rather foul from the Roogies.

Administrative Building: Still contains many ancient record scrolls—all totally useless.

Palace: Some areas are destroyed, while others still retain their old glory—grand ballrooms, state suites, etc.

Rocky Outcrop with Stables: The outcrop hides a secret opening to a tunnel.

UNDERGROUND

Three of the towers are hollow entrance tubes to large tunnels leading to a central vault under the palace. There are also underground chambers under the king's personal quarters and the harem connected by a narrow tunnel

which also connects to an emergency escape tunnel leading to the stables. Below the administration building are storage tunnels and a tunnel from the barracks leads to the well.

King's Chambers: The archaeologist and guide are hiding here. They know there are huge monsters in the adjacent vault, but they are safe due to the small size of the corridor, provided they do not stand too close to it. Their food is almost all gone, but they can obtain water from the well.

Harem: The Roogies cannot open the door to the harem—it is only operable from below.

Armory: Below the barracks lies the armory. Metal swords and coddling-choppers are still usable, but all bows and crossbows are unusable due to deterioration of the strings.

Treasure Vault: This is packed with masses of copper, silver, gold and even tin in small quantities. Also, the "demons" which destroyed the crew of the *John Bull* dwell here. They are three Imperial Knoe Shoshu. The normal Knoe Shoshu discovered by the French expeditions are the modern degenerate descendants which have become land bound due to the loss of their lift sacs and have been reduced to scavenging. The original Imperial Knoe Shoshu are

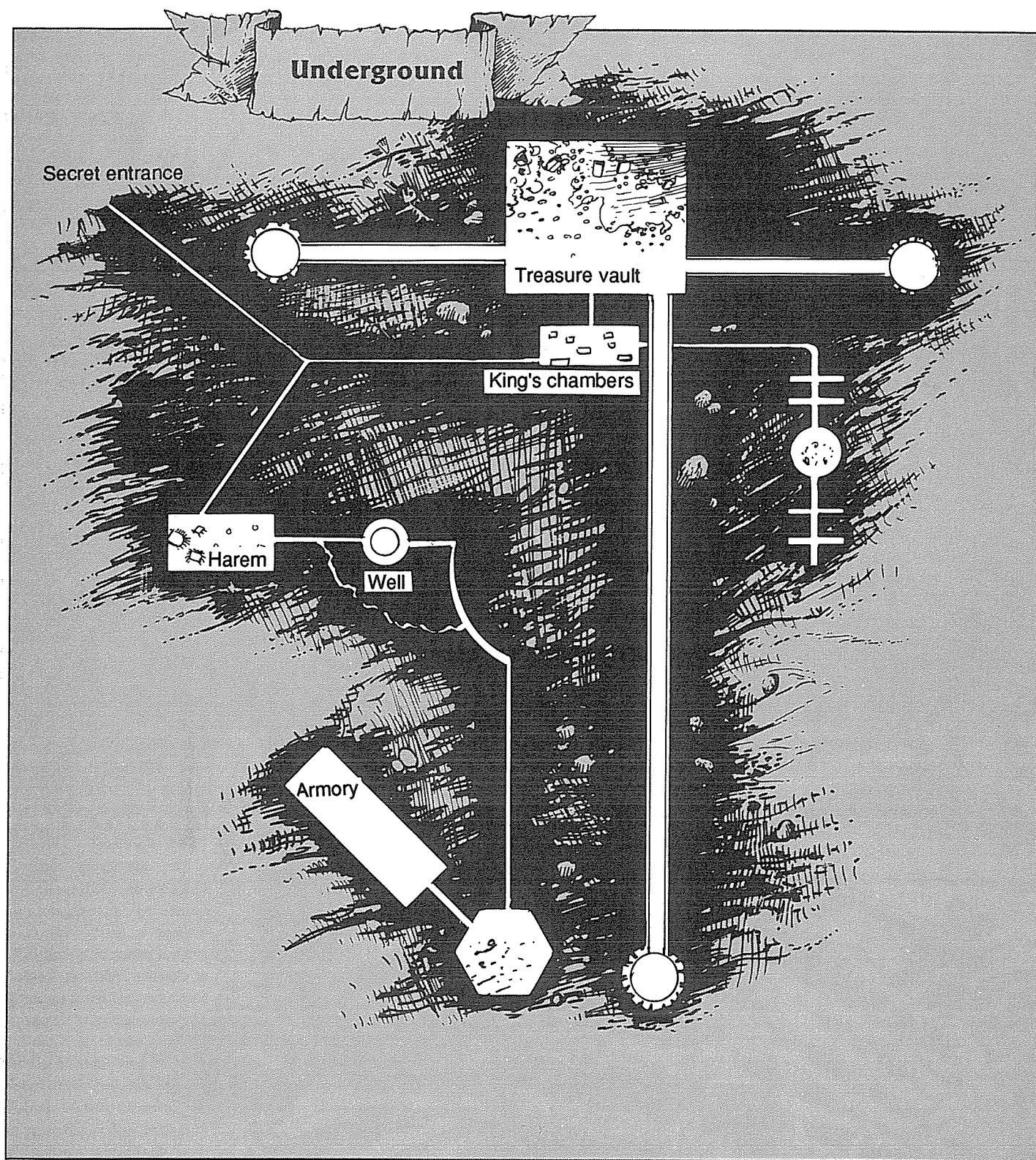
even more rare—perhaps unique. They are much larger and have well developed lift sacs, allowing them to reach high levels. They can pass down the large tunnels, but cannot squeeze through the small corridors, although they can reach through with a tentacle. They protect the treasure and can also patrol the grounds. They are not nocturnal but have discovered that they cannot catch Roogies in the daylight. Fortunately, their poison is still not fatal to humans, whom they will hunt in preference to Roogies.

Imperial Knoe Shoshu: # App: 3 Size: 4x4 Move: F50 (in *Sky Galleons of Mars*, it moves as a kite) Wnds: 20, Tentacles: (6, 4, 9, 6), Sting: (1, 2, 0, 2).

RETURN

The Imperial Knoe Shoshu will pursue and attack the *John Bull* in flight and so must be destroyed before the escape can be successful.

After two hours' flight, a red sail is spotted approaching from the south. Soon, a red *Whisperdeath* kite with a black-and-red striped sail is maneuvering to attack. If K'Treel was rescued, he will immediately recognize the sky galleon as the *Red Tigress*, a pirate ship under the command of the Red Tigress herself—a savage cutthroat pirate queen



with flaming red hair. With the use of a telescope, any adventurer can clearly recognize K'tree'-eenya standing high on the forecandle ordering her pirate crew in their attempt to capture the *John Bull*. She is only interested in treasure.

This can either be played as a **Space: 1889** roleplaying encounter using the 25mm plans from **Cloudships and Gunboats** or as a **Sky Galleons of Mars** wargame. For **SGOM**, use the

Barrovaar plan, but with no land above level 3. The *John Bull* may enter from any hex on the right, and its aim is to exit from any hex on the left edge. The kite may enter from any hex on the southern edge at high level. Its aim is to stop the *John Bull* by causing it to land, crash or be boarded. The *Dauntless* flyer does not have its bow gun. The wind is blowing from the south.

John Bull, Dauntless-Class Gunboat: Armor=2, Hull=4, Speed=6.

Armament 4" long, stern tower.
2x3 pdr HRC, wing mounted.
2xNordenfelts broadside.

Red Tigress Whisperdeath Kite:
Armor=2, Hull=7 (ram), Speed=K.

Armament=1 rod gun forecandle (her teeth)
2x heavy guns-wing mounted (her claws)
2xheavy guns aft

It does not have drogue torpedoes or Martian fire racks. Ω



THE BOOK

By Greg Unger

The moldering tomes of forbidden knowledge and sorcery found by investigators are without a doubt one of the greatest prizes to be had in Call of Cthulhu. Below is a scenario based on the discovery of The Revelations of Glaaki. The keeper can substitute any other book title, if desired. This mystery works best if it is integrated with a campaign or a more fast-paced scenario; this gives the investigators an ongoing sub-mystery which may or may not prove relevant to their current investigations.



The investigators have discovered an unusual, brass-bound, ornate, locked book of unknown origin. The pages of the book are not visible, as the cover is completely enclosing. It is the

keeper's prerogative as to whether a title, English or otherwise, is inscribed on the book. A locksmith will determine the existence of tiny filaments woven through the tumblers, making the locksmith hesitate. A Biology roll on the part of the locksmith equates these to trigger-hairs such as those found on carnivorous plants like the Venus' flytrap. Biology is at one-half for anyone not making the Locksmith roll to reach the same conclusion. The locksmith may proceed to pick the lock at this point; no further rolls are called for. However, anyone present who makes an Idea roll will put forward the concept that the book is trapped in some way, to be triggered by anyone picking the lock.

There are few ways of examining the book in depth. Taking the book apart at the seams will probably set off the trap by default. X-ray machines are uncommon in the '20s, but a well-established doctor late in the decade might have access to one. The trigger-hairs will not show up on X-ray photographs, but several vials are seen to be embedded in the casing and binding. These might theoretically contain chemicals of some kind—perhaps explosives or acid, designed to destroy the book's contents or kill the opener. A Knowledge roll at $\times 2$ can make an analogy between this and certain obscure Oriental puzzle-boxes, which were designed to store both rare treasure and a grenade—which would explode were the correct technique not employed in opening the box.

Investigators with access to 1990s technology can determine that the vials contain conflagratory chemicals released by the reaction of trigger-hairs to, apparently, any opening of the book. There are even a multitude of these triggers embedded in the cover and binding itself; opening the book by brute force is no solution, either.

The book was written in the fifth century by Chinese scholars, who recorded what they learned of Glaaki and the Cthulhu Mythos from their journeys to Polynesia. The book experienced many change of hands (the actual journey can be pieced together by clues 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 below) before arriving in the hands of the investigators. It contains an ingenious (perhaps nonterran) pressure- and tamper-sen-

sitive mechanism which destroys the book's contents if the book is opened incorrectly. The key can be simulated by an expert locksmith. However, the book can still only be safely opened when in a low-pressure environment, equivalent to 18,000 feet above sea-level or higher (hence clues 16 through 18). This desensitizes the trigger-hairs, disconnecting the destruct mechanism. In the 1920s, no plane existed which could fly that high, but such heights had and could be climbed.

The book contains a sheaf of tightly packed, brittle parchments. These have been written on each side of each page. Fortunately, these parchments were penned for reading to an emperor, so they are not cryptic or as incomplete as one would suspect a 1500-year-old book to be.

ADDITIONS

The book is in excellent condition, and many museums and libraries would be very anxious to get ahold of it. The more professionals and institutes contacted by the investigators with regards to this book, the greater the chance that one or more such institutes or collectors will offer to purchase the book. Exorbitant amounts might eventually be quoted by eccentric dilettantes; failing this, some museums might even resort to criminal activities to acquire such a priceless treasure. The keeper can expand on this as desired, including curious black-marketeers, cat-burglars, and ruthless art and curio dealers.

Were the book's contents to reach a major institute of learning, the presumed knowledge of Polynesian and Indo-Chinese myths and culture would be seriously expanded; mankind would thus creep ever closer to the mind-shattering revelations of the Cthulhu and Glaaki myth-cycles.

CLUES

The PCs can attain the following clues throughout their investigation. The sources of each specific clue are detailed under the Acquiring Clues section, below.

1. The book is definitely Chinese in origin—bronze was used by Oriental cultures earlier than any Middle East or Western nation.

2. Such books were written between 450 and 515 AD.

3. There may be many such books, each with a different solution.

4. Reference to the "Gordian Knot" myth: Alexander came upon an intricately knotted rope in his conquest of the Middle East. It was presented to him

by a Chinese scholar and was fabled to unlock great secrets if opened. Alexander failed to solve the puzzle and cut the knot with his sword in fury. A possibly related article explains that Alexander of Macedon fell into a state of depression after failing his quest of knowledge—an ancient locked book bound in brass and foreign in origin was destroyed in its opening.

5. Each book needs a key to be opened.

6. Keys to temples and cases (and possibly books?) were kept around the neck of a high priest or monk in many Eastern religions. Taoist monks wore keys to their most sacred writings.

7. The books were prolific and were burned on the orders of Emperor Vang in A.D. 550. Scribes copied the manuscripts (a Library Use roll shows that the manuscripts were originally copied from stone tablets), then later locks were forged so only the emperor and the scribes could use them.

8. The books originally went to monastery vaults in distant Nepal after the fall of Emperor Vang.

9. The books were taken by the monks to escape persecution, and travelled to India, then to the Middle East (in a pilgrimage).

10. The Ottoman Empire swallowed up the Middle East in the 14th-15th centuries. Many books were destroyed or scattered with the disruption of monasteries. Moslems imported relics, and they adopted techniques of embalming, even to the extent of importing corpses.

11. Great disturbances involving foreign cults from the East (either India or the Afghan/Kazakh area). Many tombs were desecrated and looted in Turkey between 1810 and 1822.

12. Turkey previously possessed Greece, but Greece gained independence in 1833.

13. The books probably originate from China or the south Pacific. Chinese scribes ventured to Polynesia—which may explain many cults' origins from and references to that area.

14. The high priest of said cult was reputedly buried in eastern Turkey in the early 1800s in an old city-fort. The cults often holed up in such places.

15. "Such knots may only be safely opened at the full height of Mount Ximvane." An Idea roll translates "knots" into "books."

16. A translational quirk altered the proper pronunciation of "Dimvane" to "Ximvane." "Dimvane" translates to "Demavend."

17. Mount Demavend is located in central-east China, north of the Himalayas.

18. The old Athens Library burned down in A.D. 625.

19. The new Athens Library was built on the ruins of the old.

20. Some cults hid out in old, abandoned city-forts. A History roll yields these facts: Such forts were built in early Greek history. These forts ruled over neighboring mud-hut villages. Many forts were built on islands, while others were built near the Pindus Mountains.

ACQUIRING CLUES

What follows are the various sources from which the PCs can attain the specific clues listed above. The clues attainable (with the right questioning, obviously) are listed as numbers beside each heading. The keeper is encouraged to add more clues and clue locations, as consistent with the setting or campaign storyline.

College Professor (1, 5, 13, and maybe 11 and 20): This professor can be an acquaintance of the investigators or may be recommended by library authorities as an expert in archaeology and anthropology. He can be convinced to examine the book as a favor by good roleplaying or Persuade rolls. If bribed, he will certainly examine the book, but will become suspicious and may later discuss his findings with an institute he is associated with, perhaps giving rise to the events described in Additions to this Scenario, above.

If cults are mentioned, add 11 and 20 to the attainable clues.

(Professor's College) Library (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18): This can either be the library associated with the college professor, above, or else any major American or British library.

British/American Museums (1, 5, 11)

Athenian Scribes (1, 11, and maybe 20): These are assumed to be working in the Athens Library. They might be contacted independently or recommended by an acquaintance familiar with Greece. They speak no English. A successful Persuade roll yields clue 20.

Athens Library (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 17, 18): This is the largest such institute in the city and is the focus for the nation's scholars.

Athens College Library (4, 10, 11): This is the center of learning for the nation.

Athenian Authorities (12, 19): These include public record archives and government offices. Making use of these all require Greek rolls.

Local History (Athens) (12, 14, 18, 19): These clues can be acquired by virtue of History rolls.

Scroll/Other Papers (13, 15): These

can be found in the ruins of the old Athens Library. The clues require Greek rolls to be read. If only one Greek roll is made, clue 15 should be the one that is understood.

BENEATH ATHENS LIBRARY

The dark cellars beneath the library are accessible by way of the old, grumpy librarian (this requires a Fast Talk or Persuade in Greek); through the college professor speaking on the investigators' behalf; or, failing those, by breaking and entering. The door to the cellar is large and is kept padlocked at all times.

The cellar is a chilly, unlit, disused jumble of hewn stone halls, crumbling rooms and cracked flagstones. Spot Hidden rolls in various rooms will turn up nothing but animal bones and shattered glass. In a room at the end of the hall, where the floor has not yet cracked, a Listen roll reveals a continuous drip-drip coming from the corner. Investigation reveals the cause as a cracked pipe in the ceiling. Since the smooth floor is not cracked, why doesn't the water fill the room to some degree? Sure enough, the water is actually leaking into space below the cellar: namely, the old Athens Library. A look around the room reveals that the stones in one section of the walls are loose and crumbling inward. A few good kicks can send most of the rubble tumbling down a rocky incline beyond the wall.

This is actually an ancient marble stairway, which can be followed down into the crushed and claustrophobic ruins of the old library—a thick stone tangle of fractured pillars and collapsing archways crouching over stained and buckling marble, with sprinkled remains of sculptures and books disintegrating in the dusty puddles. A search of the accessible sections will turn up several withered parchments unreached by water, including a fat scroll partially pinned by a SIZ 45 pillar. Keepers should play up the realization that nobody has been down here for over 1000 years; at any moment, the entire mass, settling slowly for centuries, could be unbalanced by this intrusion and lurch down onto the intruders, crushing or pinning them.

Investigators may notice a skeleton pinned from the waist up under several tons of rock. This corpse was actually that of an assassinated scholar who had planned to burn the manuscripts relating to the book.

CITY-FORT

The old city-forts in the Pindus Moun-

tains in Greece have been around for as long as anyone can remember. A few venerable old Greek men living in the villages outlying Athens still remember stories of dark sects and their unholy rites, of secret pilgrimages of the dead, and the strange, alien peoples from the Far East and India, who brought with them the bound corpses of their priests and hid them in the decrepit forts. Showing these men the book brings a collective gasp of horror, and they speak in hushed tones that there are reasons—which they will not discuss—why such books were given such locks.

Any competent guide scoffs at such superstition and can quickly locate the city-forts closest to Athens for paying customers. Walking there will take a full day, but transport by horseback or truck can be purchased, cutting the travel time to two or four hours, respectively. The Pindus Mountains are covered with scrub and provide challenging and twisting trails (hence the advantage of horses).

One of the forts—a decaying, moss-covered stone affair overgrown with tough scrub, built on the side of a mountain—sports an archway fronting a passage that has been chopped out of the mountain. Considerable brickwork near and around the arch have been laid to rubble by the knotted shrub that has diligently worked its roots through the fort's wall over the decades. An Idea roll spawns the thought that this entrance was formerly bricked up.

CRYPT

Beyond the archway, the short tunnel angles awkwardly into a ragged, very crude stairway. This unexpectedly ends at a large, black, iron-banded door filling the entire passage. The door is STR 19 to be opened. Unwitting investigators who push the door wider than needed to get through will realize, belatedly, that it had been supporting part of the decaying ceiling, at the cost of 2D6 HP; those making a Luck roll think to look up in time enough to move mostly out of the way, losing only 1D3 HP.

Beyond the door is what looks like a low-ceilinged natural cavern partitioned by mud-bricked walls. The layout is rather simple, if chaotic, so that a person making his way *forward* comes out into a large open area containing another arch. Anyone wandering around, however, finds the brickwork to be a veritable maze, which periodically fuses with natural channels and caves in the rocks which lead further into the mountain. If a few moronic investigators stalk off into this maze, allow them each a

Track roll to return once they quit exploring. Failure means they are hopelessly lost in the natural cave system and will wander into a large natural cavern in 1D4+1 days. This cavern contains a 15-foot, rectangular, black, stone arch set in one wall. Geology rolls confirm the stone as basalt. Archaeology rolls indicate the architecture to be unlike anything known. Astronomy rolls recognize what appear to be faint carvings on the arch to be star charts. A light breeze goes inward through the arch. Twenty yards in is a large impression like a one-toed print. Zoology rolls prove this to be of no known creature. Cthulhu Mythos rolls convince the hapless investigators to turn tail and run before they get 100 yards in.

Anyone *not* getting lost (i.e., they go forward, as above) will be able to continue through the low cavern and into a naturally narrow and vaulting chamber within which are two large stone sarcophagi. The first is empty, but the second contains a mummified "corpse." This is in fact a hibernating Servant of Glaaki, but it is much too far away from Polynesia and much too rotted to move anymore. If its flesh is exposed to sunlight, the Green Rot will run rampant through it, destroying it hideously within hours. However, if it is ever taken 2000 yards or more above sea level, it will make contact with Glaaki and rise to kill

again. (Keepers should have some fun if the thing is airlifted back to the U.S.)

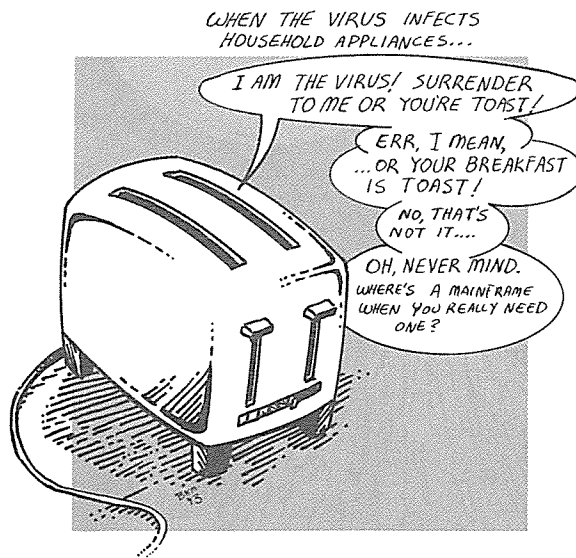
On the far side of the chamber, a dangerously steep and cramped, but short, passage winds into a third chamber, which is apparently a deserted shrine of some sort, replete with crumbling candles, torch holders, and what appears to be the body of a shrouded warrior monk desiccating away on a low stone table. There is a strong, strange smell here. (A Knowledge roll identifies this as embalming fluids.) The corpse is clutching a carved wooden scepter. Anyone examining the scepter notices that one end is pointed and deeply stained. One guess as to with what. Anyone daring to look under the shroud will see that the corpse wears a tiny key around its neck. The chain is fairly strong, is not long enough to pull over the corpse's head and has rusted shut. To free the key, the investigators must either rip this STR 9 chain or else pull it off through the corpse's head (0/1 SAN loss).

SCEPTER

This length of teakwood has been carved, and a smooth piece of obsidian is inset at one end, while the other end has been sharpened to a blood-stained point.

The scepter is in fact enchanted; anyone with at least 1% Cthulhu Mythos

is allowed to attempt to roll his POW or less on 1D100 to realize this. The staff currently has 6 Magic Points stored in it, and these are involuntarily expended when spellcasting, before its wielder's MPs are drained. If the scepter is used to kill someone or something by stabbing it through the head or throat with the pointed end, all Magic Points possessed by the victim are absorbed into the scepter. If the scepter is broken, or the obsidian tampered with, the scepter becomes permanently inactive. Ω



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Call of Cthulhu

Challenge 72 75

Quarantine Field

By Brian Holmes



This adventure has been designed for a group of Star Fleet characters in either an "old series" or *Next Generation* campaign. Ideally, there should be either a Vulcan or Andorian player character in the group. This

is a skill-oriented race against time, in which the characters are asked to diagnose and cure infection. Many skill roles are expected of the players, and to make their descriptions easier, this adventure uses a simplified version of GDW's **2300 AD** task system. Each task roll includes an objective, a difficulty level, a skill to roll and a length of time. For example:

Task: To reconfigure a tricorder for medical readings: Routine, Computer Operation, 2D10 minutes.

The level of difficulty implies certain modifiers to the skill roll as follows: A character can perform any task in half the time, but at a level of difficulty that is one higher. Thus, if characters try to rush things, they have a greater chance of making a mistake. Characters who are cautious, and who take extra time, can roll at one level of difficulty lower.

SETTING

This adventure takes place in the main archaeology lab. The staff has returned from a planetary dig on a recently discovered world (GMs can develop this if they choose). They have brought with them a number of artifacts, including animal bones, building materials, and some glass spheres and porcelain objects that seem to have something to do with food preparation.

The archaeology lab is a three-room structure, with an exam and research area, observation room, and chief archaeologist's office. The office is like Captain Picard's ready room, with food dispenser and washroom. The observation room is mostly used for small meetings, but also contains specialized equipment, as well as controls for a set of robot "waldo" arms in the examination room. The examination room contains most of the research equipment.

SYMPTOMS

For highest drama, try to arrange

things so that so that a player character Vulcan or Andorian is in the examination room, while another PC is in the observation room. Add some NPC science technicians and/or officers in each room.

One of the archaeologists is taking a sample form one of the glass spheres for material analysis. He is drilling into it to remove a bore, only a few molecules wide, when the quarantine light goes off. Quarantine force fields are automatically erected around the whole lab and in between each room. The entire lab is on one circuit, and it is not possible to lower the quarantine field in, say, the chief archaeologist's office, without also lowering it in the examination room. Before the PCs can react to this, the humans in the examination room suddenly begin convulsing, gasping for breath, and collapsing. Within a few minutes, they are dead. The Vulcan or Andorian PC in the examination room feels no immediate effect.

DISEASE

What the PCs have encountered is a silicon-based microbe that prefers to live in warm areas, such as live bodies. The microbe usually lives in the blood, where it takes in carbon dioxide and breaks it up into oxygen ions and carbon monoxide waste. Carbon monoxide in the blood is very poisonous, as it binds itself to iron-based hemoglobin and prevents the blood from carrying oxygen to the various parts of the body. Carbon monoxide poisoning manifests itself as the inability to breathe. Victims gasp for breath, while the blood and tissues of their body turn cherry-red. (Note that these symptoms are also indicative of cyanide poisoning. Cyanide poisoning is also accompanied by an almond odor, although not everyone has the ability to smell cyanide.)

The microbes themselves are not harmful, but the carbon monoxide waste they produce *is*. Carbon monoxide will also exist in the blood of Vulcan or Andorian characters, but because their hemoglobin is different (copper and cobalt based), it does not prevent the normal movement of oxygen through the body. Some other races might also be immune.

If left unchecked, the microbes will use up all of the carbon dioxide in the room in about six hours. Characters need carbon dioxide to breath normally, so even Vulcans and Andorians will be

affected in the long run. They will get light-headed, start to hyperventilate and finally die.

The PCs must figure out the nature of this crisis within that time frame in order to save their group. At this point, GMs should start keeping track of game time. Each task that is attempted uses up a certain amount of time. (GMs should be careful when different characters are carrying out different tasks at the same time.)

DIAGNOSIS

The PCs may first attempt to determine the cause of death of the humans in the examination room. The following tasks have been provided for reference:

Task: To determine that the NPCs are dead: Simple, General Medicine, 3D10 seconds.

Task: To determine the cause of death based on obvious symptoms: Routine, General Medicine, 1D10x20 seconds.

Referee: A particularly bad failure (96-00) means that the cause of death is misdiagnosed as cyanide poisoning.

Task: To determine the cause of death with a medical tricorder: Simple, General Medicine (human), 1D10x10 seconds.

Referee: There are no medical tricorders in the archaeology lab. All available tricorders are configured for material analysis, carbon dating practices and other archaeological purposes.

Task: To reconfigure a tricorder for medical readings: Routine, Computer Operation, 2D10 minutes.

Task: To determine the presence of carbon monoxide in the bodies of the living characters with a medical tricorder: Routine, General Medicine or Chemistry, 1D10x3 seconds.

Task: To assess the current risk to the PCs: Routine, average of General Medicine and Mathematics, 2D10 minutes.

Referee: Success means the PCs can determine that carbon monoxide continues to be produced in the examination room and that carbon dioxide is disappearing. The PCs establish that within six hours, there will be insufficient carbon dioxide to breathe. The PCs can also determine that the observation room shows no sign of unusual carbon monoxide. Remember, however, that the quarantine field in the observation room is linked to the other fields, and you cannot drop one without also dropping

the others. The PCs in the observation room are trapped, in a sense.

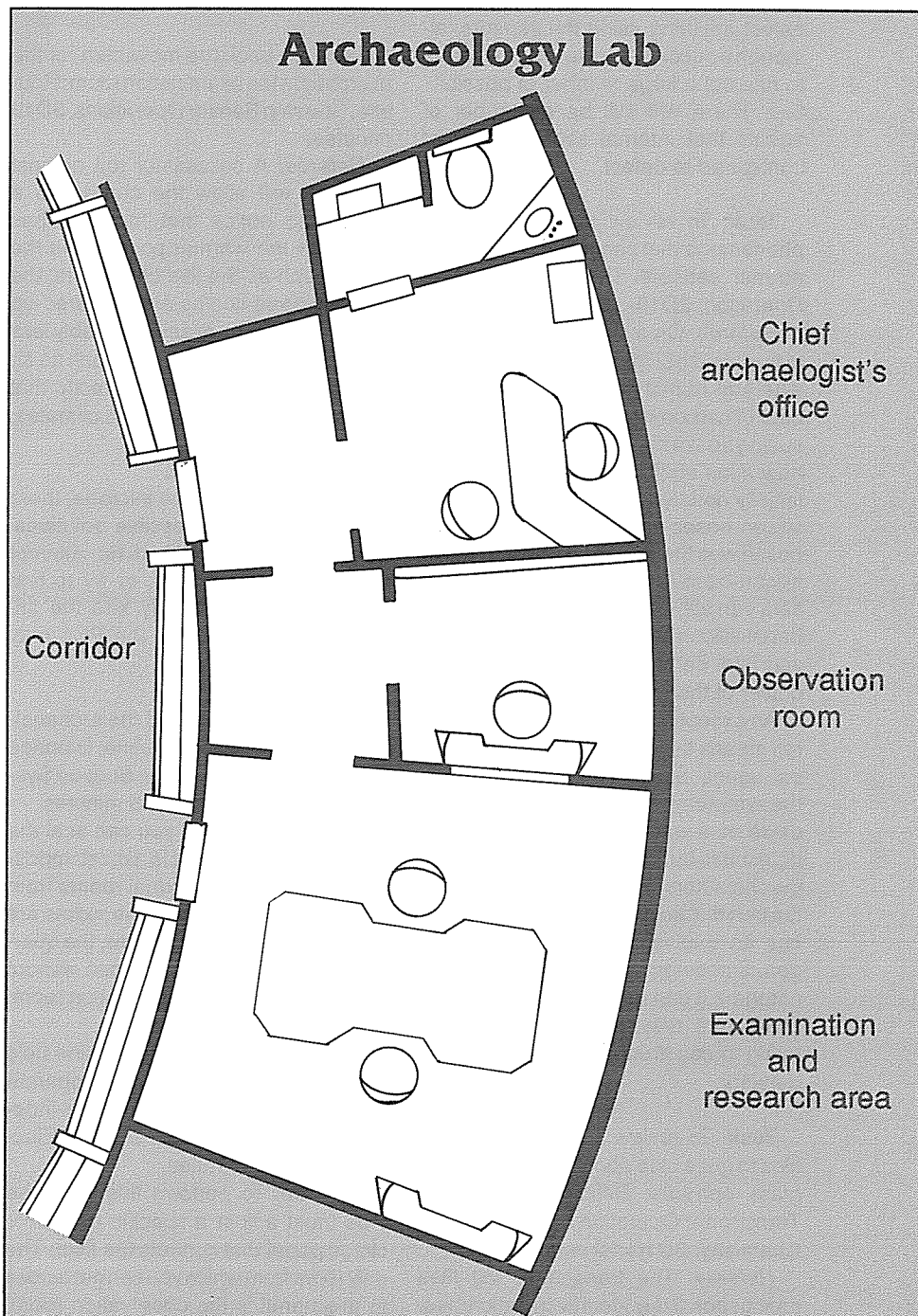
Next, characters are likely to try to determine where the carbon monoxide is coming from. They may try to ask the computer to track all chemical reactions in the room, but that would require several hours of accurate sensor data to process. Also, characters who ask for all known causes of carbon monoxide will discover that there are millions of cataloged phenomena that generate carbon monoxide as a waste product and that trying to sift through them could take hours.

Some other tasks include the following:

Task: To determine why the computer erected the quarantine field: Routine, Computer Operation, 1D10 minutes.

Referee: A successful roll means the characters determine that the computer spotted the rapid increase of carbon monoxide in the archaeology lab and interpreted it as a life-support risk. Without any apparent cause for the carbon monoxide, the computer assumed the existence of a foreign agent and raised the quarantine fields. The computer is unable to detect the foreign agent.

Task: To create a database of all known phenomena that generate carbon monoxide: Routine, Computer Op-



eration, 1D10×10 minutes.

Referee: By creating a separate database, other searches of the computer records can be handled much faster. If the players aren't computer experts, perhaps an NPC computer expert could suggest it to them.

Task: To use the internal sensors to check for known causes of carbon monoxide generation: Routine, Starship Sensor Operations, 1D10×15 minutes.

Referee: This task assumes that characters have built a separate database of carbon monoxide cases. If they have not, then the computer will have to search through millions of computer records, taking 3D10×20 minutes. In either case, the PCs will not be able to detect anything using the sensors, although a success allows the characters to rule out a large number of possibilities. There will still be a number of agents that internal sensors are not configured to detect.

Task: To review the database for phenomena that cannot be detected by normal sensors: Routine, Computer Operation, 2D10×10 minutes.

Referee: On a success, the characters will find a single medical case study, whereby human miners on Janus VI died of carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from a microbe encountered in a new mine shaft. The microbe was not initially noticed because of its complex silicon-based structure. Although Janus VI was the location of the first major silicon-based life form, Federation sensors can still only detect a limited number of silicon life forms. A counteragent was later detected by the chief medical officer of the mining colony.

An exceptional failure (96-00) for this roll means the characters find a chemical agent, Straeliiothymanite, that fits the symptoms. It produces carbon monoxide as a waste product, and it is not detectable by normal sensors. But since the characters failed the roll, they missed the part that says that Straeliiothymanite has an explosive reaction with nitrogen. Since normal air is three-quarters nitrogen, it can be easily ruled out. But characters may, instead, waste time trying to construct a Straeliiothymanite detector.

Task: To review the transporter log files to get a clue about what was in the glass spheres: Difficult, average of Transporter Operation Procedures and Chemistry, 3D10×10 minutes.

Referee: The transporter log files cannot positively identify the microbes.

However, PCs who successfully make this roll will notice a repetition of complex silicon-hydrogen-oxygen molecules that might be considered organic.

Task: To reconfigure the sensors to detect silicon-based life forms: Routine, Computer Operations, 2D10 minutes.

Task: To detect the silicon microbe using modified sensors: Routine, Starship Sensor Operations, 1D10 minutes.

Referee: This microbe is not identical to the one encountered on Janus VI, although it seems to have a similar structure. Tricorder or other sensor readings indicate that the microbe can be contained in any airtight environment.

Task: To track the movement of the microbes in the examination room: Routine, Starship Sensor Operations, 3D10 minutes.

Referee: A successful roll against this task will allow the characters a chance to notice that the microbes swarm to the warmer positions in the room, such as the live characters, the recently dead bodies and powered-up equipment. There are considerably less microbes near cooler areas such as air vents. One might guess, correctly, that the microbes do not like cold climates.

CURE

After discovering the microbe, there are at least three possible solutions: Use the transporters' biofilter, attempt to develop an antitoxin, or try to find something that naturally kills the microbe. And, of course, the PCs may think of other solutions.

Task: To seal (airtight) the archaeology lab from outside: Routine, Damage Control Procedures or Life Support Systems Technology, 2D10×5 minutes.

Referee: Although you can seal the lab from the outside, it is almost impossible to seal the individual rooms from one another. And unless the rooms are individually sealed somehow, the quarantine field cannot be dropped without killing the PCs in the observation room.

Task: To adjust the quarantine field circuits so that it is possible to operate the fields around the three rooms independent of one another: Difficult, Electronics, 2D10 minutes.

Referee: To perform this task, the PCs must adjust a specific electronic circuit panel that controls the field. The only room from which you can get across to this panel is the observation room.

Hence, one of the characters in that room must actually perform the task. If no character in the room has Electronics skill, then a PC outside the room might be able to "talk" one of them through the procedure. In this case, the character who is describing the procedure makes the skill roll against the average of Electronics and Instruction.

If the PCs manage to perform the above two tasks, then they can drop the field around the observation room, transport the PCs out, then drop the rest of the field.

Task: To reprogram the transporter's biofilter to edit out the microbes based on tricorder readings: Difficult, Transporter Operation Procedures, 3D10 minutes.

Referee: Tricorder reading doesn't usually have the "quantum level" detail that is needed for biofilter reprogramming. Even if the biofilter is reprogrammed, the transporter cannot operate through the quarantine field.

Task: To reprogram the transporter's biofilter to edit out the microbes using an infected character held "in transit": Routine, Transporter Operation Procedures, 2D10×5 seconds.

Referee: If the characters are held in transit for more than 90 seconds, their patterns will degrade to the point that they can't be rematerialized.

Task: To develop a counteragent to the microbe: Difficult, General Medicine or Pharmacology, 2D10×12 hours.

Task: To develop a counteragent to the microbe using the Janus VI counteragent as a base: Difficult, General Medicine or or Pharmacology, 3D10×10 minutes.

Task: To modify the lab's temperature: Life Support Systems Technology, Routine, 2D10 minutes.

Referee: The airborne microbes become dormant at -10° C. They are killed by -40° temperatures. It is safe to lower the quarantine field while the airborne microbes are dormant. The microbes will remain active inside the PCs' bodies, unless they can think of a way to lower their body temperatures.

Task: To put the infected PCs into suspended animation: Routine, General Medicine, 2D10 minutes.

Referee: By flooding the archaeology lab with cryothridium gas, the characters can be frozen, effectively killing the microbes. Ω

Ananuru Express

By Alison Brooks

The world of Ananuru is barren. Its surface consists of mountains surrounded by "oceans" of dust. The mountains have a grandeur, however, while the dust oceans are spectacular, restless and dangerous. Under the right weather conditions, they produce beautiful light effects known as "dustbowls." The scenery led an enterprising tourism operator to view Ananuru as a base for luxury holidays, at a suitably inflated price.

Thus was born the *Ananuru Express*. The train is, as one might expect, highly luxurious, designed to minimize the risks of foundering in a duststorm, and indeed any other dangers to its passengers, who are the very rich.

The *Express* runs on a monorail suspended above the dust seas. Both train and monorail are protected from the dust by forcefields. It was decided that a monorail, the structure of which contained various sensor units, would enable the *Express* to be found quickly in the case of a breakdown. A free-travelling repulsor craft could easily disappear without trace if it broke down here.

INVOLVING THE PCS

If the PCs are members of the Rebellion, they can simply be assigned this mission, perhaps as a chance to relax after several hard-fighting scenarios.

If the PCs are not Rebels, they might be employed by another interested party to undertake the mission; they might stumble upon clues pointing in this direction; or they might be paid by a customer in tickets for the *Ananuru Express*, where they will stumble upon the plot without benefit of any prior knowledge. If they are employed by an NPC, the GM will have to decide the employer's motives. The employer might be a villain intent on getting the secret for his own use, someone of Rebel sympathies hoping to deprive the bad guys of the secret, or simply someone who is curious as to what is going on, but who does not wish to risk identification by using normal employees.

BRIEFING

Hakon deVille, the owner of the *Ananuru Express*, has obtained a datatape from an Imperial research project. This project was destroyed under mysterious circumstances, and it is believed that most of the scientists involved have defected to the Rebel Alliance. Hakon has decided to auction this datatape. The auction is to take place on the next trip of the *Ananuru Express*.

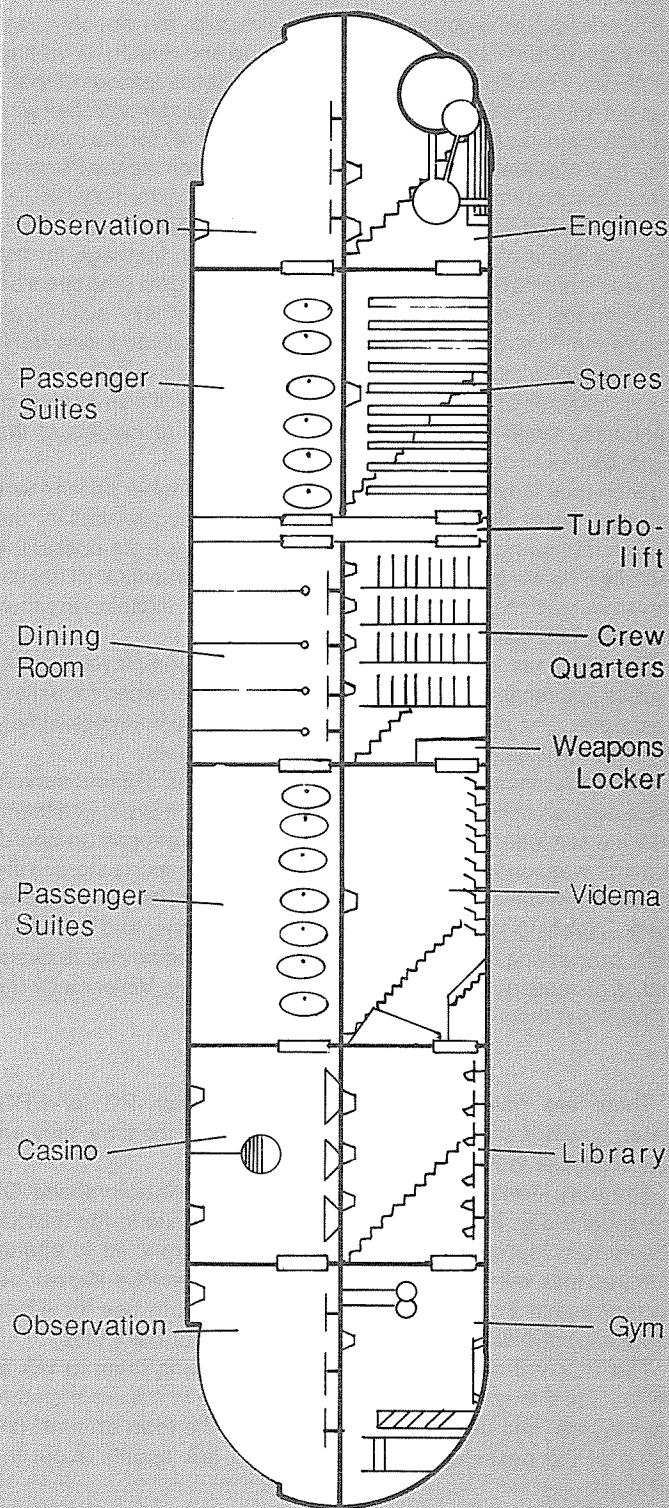
If the PCs are members of the Alliance, their briefing will include additional information: The research project was into viruses. The researchers were screened for Rebel sympathies, yet were so horrified by the implications of the research that they destroyed the project and defected. It is of the utmost importance that this datatape not be allowed to fall into the wrong hands.

The PCs are also given cash with which to attend the auction. If they are Alliance operatives, they receive a faked credit transfer which will not pass a computer inspection. Otherwise, the GM should decide what is available to them. In any case, it should not be enough.

If the PCs are entrusted with money by an employer, they will be given the credit chip immediately before embarking on the *Express*.

Star Wars

Ananuru Express Side View



Each carriage leads into the next on upper and lower floors, and has stairs and turbo-lift between upper and lower. Lower deck of each carriage has way down to escape dust-skimmers. Partitions are well insulated. There are small bars serving drinks in casino, dining room and observation decks; elsewhere, drink droids circulate.

ARRIVAL

Ananuru City consists of a spaceport and support facilities for the *Express*. The spaceport is protected by a force-dome. The cost of parking ships at the spaceport is exorbitant. PCs could park outside the force-dome, but they would risk dust damage to their vessel.

Imperial customs does not examine the ship, but closely questions each of the PCs as to their background and reason for visiting the planet. The officers are under orders to spot suspicious characters, but not to challenge them. PCs may attempt to smooth their way through the examination using Bargain against 4D for the customs officers. A Moderate Planetary Systems roll will remind the PCs that the customs examination on Ananuru is usually extremely lax.

From the spaceport, passengers for the *Express* can walk along a short parade of shops to the *Express* station. Luggage for the *Express* is normally taken separately from passengers (and checked for weapons before being placed in the passengers' suites), although the PCs may carry their baggage themselves if they don't mind attracting attention. The shops are extremely pricey, whether selling toiletries or high-fashion ballgowns. There is also a range of souvenirs, ranging from holos of the dustbowl to models of the *Express* in precious metals and stones.

Once they leave the spaceport, the PCs and other passengers are kept under discreet observation by the security staff of the *Express* company. If the PCs behave suspiciously, a member of the security staff will politely ask them to explain themselves; if necessary, they will be escorted to Hakon's office to explain why they should not be ejected from the planet.

The PCs may attempt to join the *Express* as employees rather than as passengers. Employees are carefully screened for assassins, spies and other undesirables. Would-be employees simply turning up will be unlikely to be considered suitable.

At the entrance to the *Express* station, various discreet surveillance devices check the PCs and their luggage if it is still with them. PCs are reminded that they will not need any weapons on-board, and that weapons should be deposited in the weapons store in the center of the vehicle. If they refuse, measures will be taken against them—cleaning staff will remove cached weapons, and if the PCs insist on carrying the weapons, they will be asked politely to desist and, if necessary, politely shown off the *Express*. Violence by the PCs will get them thrown off.

SCHEDULE

There are several formal events, from which PC (or NPC) absence would cause comment, but for most of the time, they are free to amuse themselves.

There is a formal dinner each night, with cocktails beforehand. On the second day, the dinner is followed by a dance in the forward observation lounge, which everyone will be expected to attend. Cultures rolls will be at a premium here, and the PCs should feel uncomfortable if they don't know which utensil to use for eating some imported delicacy, or if they tread on a partner's toes.

The PCs will be separated at dinner, allowing them to talk to NPCs. The GM should give the PCs a chance to assess the other passengers, and be assessed by them, in the form of small-talk (none of the passengers, nor Hakon, will talk openly about the auction).

The *Express* slides smoothly away from the station. During the days of the trip, the scenery will be a continual presence. An intercom informs passengers whenever a particularly spectacular view is available, whether it is dustbowls, a spectacularly beautiful sunset, mountains rising from the dust sea or a view of the dust sea from the top of those mountains.

TROUBLE

On the third day out, the *Express* is attacked. This is an attempt

by Hakon to evaluate the passengers. He hired these thugs, through an intermediary, to try to hold the *Express* up. He ensured that they were able to get through the usual security on-planet. *Express* security is quite good, but it takes the unarmed staff some time to reach the weapons storage and deploy themselves.

The attack is straightforward. The PCs are in one of the observation lounges when they see a dust-skimmer coming toward the *Express*. It attempts to land on the roof and blast its way in. A third skimmer comes from the side and ducks beneath the *Express*. The attackers attempt to disable the *Express*'s motors.

The skimmers are armored (4D hull, speed 3D), but their heat dissipators are vulnerable. These are at the rear of the skimmer. It requires a Moderate Technology roll know of them and a Very Difficult blaster shot to hit. The dissipator has 2D Strength; disabling it cuts the available power, and the skimmer is forced to limp away.

The observation lounges have skeet blasters, to knock down target drones for the passengers' amusement (Damage 2D). They are fixed in place and cannot be turned inside the vehicle. Otherwise, the PCs will have to obtain weapons from storage or from the thugs, or brawl with them.

If the thugs get that far, the thugs will attempt to grab passengers to ransom them. If the thugs attempt to flee, the PCs can pursue in the *Express*'s escape skimmers. These are not armed, but they are fast (Speed 3D) and durable (3D+1 hull). Shooting from them could be an interesting trick, as it is not possible to open the windows.

If any of the thugs are taken prisoner, Hakon has them taken "for interrogation" and removed from the *Express* by a recovery skimmer from the port. Hakon is apologetic about "this regrettable lapse of security" and assures everyone that it will not be allowed to happen again.

NPCs

Thugs: 10 thugs in each skimmer. *Stats:* As Normals. *Skills:* Blaster 3D (stun-only blasters, 4D damage).

Staff: The staff of the *Express* is discreet and efficient, making the voyage as luxurious as possible for the passengers. Many staff members are also trained in coaxing difficult passengers to behave well, and they double as security guards. They don't carry weapons, unless they have reason to think they'll be needed. The staff members are well-paid and in secure employment. They do not normally accept bribes.

Hakon deVille: Proprietor of the *Express*. Hakon appears smooth and urbane, but is ruthless when it suits him. Hakon enjoys verbal fencing with his guests. His attitude is the expansive host, encouraging guests to enjoy themselves. *Stats:* Gambler. Determine skills as required.

Luna: Hakon's secretary and bodyguard. Tall, elegant, efficient and loyal to Hakon, Luna appears to be a companion/secretary. *Stats:* Bounty Hunter. *Skills:* Blaster 5D, Brawl 5D, Brawl Parry 5D, Cultures 4D, others determine as required. Luna is the only person to carry a weapon on the *Express*, a blaster in her handbag.

Tol, Jemmy and Chral: Gamblers. These three know nothing about the auction—their reason for being here is to win money from rich people. They are pleasant and amiable. In fights, they try to stay under cover. *Stats:* Gambler. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Bles, Rae and Dran: Green-skinned alien racketeers. Their culture emphasizes family commitments over mere technicalities such as legal niceties. They take little part in the social whirl. In fights, their sole concern is each other. Bles gives the orders; her niece and nephew obey them. *Stats:* Pirate. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Hamnet: Crime boss whose illegalities are sufficiently under cover that he doubles as a respectable and wealthy businessman. Hamnet enjoys the trappings of success. He is middle-aged, overweight and shrewd. His only foible is his daughter, Icomia, for whom he will do anything. In a fight, he will allow his bodyguard to do the work. *Stats:* Armchair Historian. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Icomia Hamnet: Hamnet's daughter; a 12-year-old, spoiled, unpleasant brat. She throws her weight around and will accost a PC at some stage thus: "I want you to play cybersquash with me. I want you to lose. If you don't, Daddy will have you killed." In a fight, she's liable to get in the way. *Stats:* Normal. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Wesson DeLameter: Hamnet's bodyguard. Well-dressed but quiet. *Stats:* Pirate. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Tanis Hal: Hamnet's secretary. Beautiful, well-paid, but harassed from attempting to keep Icomia under control. *Stats:* Loyal Retainer. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Kane Mihal: Street-thug who has struck it big. His clothes are too loud, as is his conversation. He defiantly uses the wrong implements at meals, rather than admit he doesn't know which to use. In a fight, he will take risks in order to show off to any attractive women. *Stats:* Brash Pilot. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Havas Rar and Quil Nathan: Well-dressed employees of an arms manufacturer which is interested in the implications of the datachip. *Stats:* Tongue-Tied Engineers. *Skills:* Determine as required.

Saminalwala and Saminalwasa: These two are Frases, a species of humanoid tigers, aggressive and luxury-loving. They are littermates. They spend most of their time asleep or lazing about; the three or four hours a day when they are active, they spend in the gym bouncing around at an alarming rate. They give the impression of being extremely arrogant, which they are. In fights, they are aggressive. They are liable to eat fallen foes. They are representatives of a group of pirates in the next sector. *Stats:* Tough Native. *Skills:* Brawl 5D, others determine as required. They also have claws which give +2 damage.

Secesh Trant: The Frase's secretary, human, apparently quiet and as boring as the datawork she deals with. Trant is, in fact, the paymaster of the Frase pirates, and she is a member of the Destabilization branch of Imperial Intelligence. Her goal is to strengthen the Frase and to use them against enemies of the Empire. In fights, Trant keeps under cover. *Stats:* Old Senatorial. *Skills:* Determine as required.

SEARCH

After the initial sizing-up period, the various interest groups begin making attempts to locate the datachip. Bles orders her family to search the suites. Havas and Quil begin searching through the *Express's* computer systems. Kane attempts to persuade the employees to confide in him. Hamnet sounds out the PCs to see whether he could employ them.

Hakon knew that people would attempt to find the datachip, and so he has not left it in his suite. It is hidden in the sleeve of an obscure datachip in the library, on the principle of hiding a leaf in a forest.



If the datachip is destroyed prematurely, the GM should assume that it was a duplicate, placed to forestall such an eventuality, and have the real one concealed elsewhere.

AUCTION

Assuming that the PCs have struck Hakon as interested parties, they return from dinner on the sixth day to find a message glowing on their comm-unit: "Hakon de Ville invites you to a special, one-only sale. Location: The videma. Time: Now."

In the videma, Hakon is on the stage, Luna nearby, the other bidders (Bles, Rae and Dran, Hamnet and Wesson DeLameter, Kane, Havas and Quil, the two Frases and Trant) scattered about the auditorium. Hakon says: "Gentlebeings. On offer tonight is the fruits of an Imperial top-secret research project. Havas, if we might?" (Havas hands it over ruefully; substitute a PC if they have managed to locate it.) "Still intact, I see. Well now. What am I bid?"

"How do we know it's genuine?" Hamnet asks.

"I'm afraid you'll have to trust me, as I had to trust the being I obtained it from. Bids?"

Bidding starts at 50,000, and goes up by 5000, then 1000, until it sticks at 98,000.

"Any further bids?"

"Yes," says Trant from the back. "Your life."

There is consternation. Trant mounts the stage, the Frases with her. She takes the datachip from the stunned Hakon.

"Gentlebeings, you are all guilty of treasonable activities. Just by attending this auction, you have committed a category 1 crime. You have two choices. You can either continue as you have been, running your organizations and retaining your power, or you can find the weight of the Empire coming down on you with full force.

"To choose the former course, all you need do is accept an advisor from our agency, who will ensure that you do not attempt anything that is against our interests. In return, we will turn a blind eye to your other activities.

"If you do not accept an advisor, or if anything should happen to our advisor, then, quite simply, you will be eliminated.

"Imperial forces from INS *Intimidator* are close at hand. Please do not think of violent activities. You would not live to regret them."

With luck, the PCs will start the fight at this point. If not, Kane will. If the players are slow in realizing, and poor in hand-to-hand combat, allow them Per rolls to realize that the back of the videma adjoins the weapons locker in the service part of the ship.

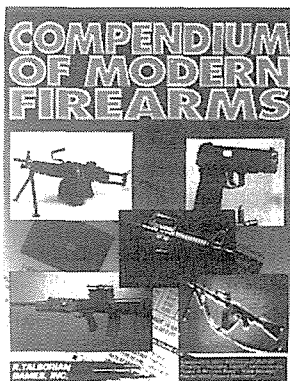
Once violence erupts, Trant will attempt to escape, while the Frases deal with the fighting. Trant will try to get to one of the escape skimmers.

DATACHIP

Protected by a powerful security code which requires three successive Difficult computer rolls to break, the datachip contains details of the Imperial project, which was to develop a virus which could insert RNA into the brains of sentients. Since memories are made of RNA, this would provide the Imperials with the potential of brainwashing which was self-propagating, and would destroy any chance of future rebellion. The Rebel Alliance will be glad to see the information destroyed.

ESCAPE

The NPCs split over whether to stay on the *Express* and lie low, or to take escape skimmers back to the spaceport. If the PCs are inclined to stay, have a message received that the *Express* is to be boarded and searched by an Imperial party. Hakon advises them all to leave. The skimmers are fitted with a homing indicator to the spaceport, which fortunately is only a few tens of kilometers from the *Express* at this point. TIE recons are launched to locate the fleeing skimmers; the PCs will have to dodge these and escape from the planet in a hurry. Ω



Edge of the Sword, Vol. I

Compendium of Modern Firearms.
R. Talsorian Games.
Written by Kevin Dockery.
216-page book of firearms and infantry weapons, with tables for use with *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.*, *Hero* system, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Twilight: 2000*, *Mercenaries*, *Spies and Private Eyes*.
Published in 1991.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

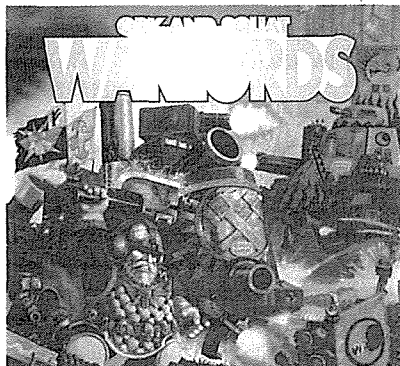
Kevin Dockery, author of *The Morrow Project* and *The Armory*, has unleashed another collection of weapon statistics on the gaming public. This latest effort is the most impressive—Dockery's previous works were only practice runs for this one. The collection focuses on infantry weapons, those most likely to be used on other people rather than vehicles and hard targets. To this end, the book is filled with handguns, rifles, shotguns, grenades, grenade launchers and machineguns, all military issue.

The detail is impressive. Each weapon profiled has a short text concerning either history, use or technical details, complete physical statistics (mass, length, muzzle velocity, range, etc.) and ammunition used. Last, each weapon has a table showing accuracy at given ranges (where applicable) and damage statistics, phrased in terms of wound cavity depth and diameter. This last table is the real heart of the *Edge of the Sword* system, a game system for hitting and doing damage that Dockery explains in the appendix.

This book is very useful indeed. Ever wondered exactly how much that MAT 49 SMG weighs, or how accurate is it at range? (It isn't—at over 100 meters, hitting a target is a matter of holding the trigger down and waving the gun.) This book tells you what you want to know, and more, about hundreds of weapons. It's a book written for weapon fanciers, by a weapon fancier and expert ar-

mor. Statistic-loving referees will love it, and the appendix will catch most gamers' eyes. It features tables offering bullet damage for five different game systems, and shows the formula for damage applied to the average human body (gruesome, if physically correct).

Be warned: If you don't like stats and figures, if you are bewildered by probabilities and percentages, if dry details of firing actions bore you, then don't get this book. But if this sort of thing appeals to you, or if you want the most complete arms book yet produced with an eye for gaming, then you can't afford to miss this one.



Warlords

Games Workshop. \$29.95.
Written by Andy Chambers, Jervis Johnson and Rick Priestley.
Boxed supplement to *Space Marine, 2nd edition*. 78-page rulebook, 25 sheets of die-cut cards.
Published in July 1992.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

Across the depths of known space, sentient beings brace for the gathering storm. A storm of death, a maelstrom of destruction, a whirlwind of wanton, good-natured violence: The Waa-Ork, the only galactic event that can overshadow a Tyranid Hive invasion. The Orks are coming.

And now they're here, accompanied by their blood enemies, the Squats. For some time, *White Dwarf* has been carrying articles explaining the simple Ork lists published in the basic *Space Marine* game, fleshing out the Orks with tidbits of new units and gear. The Squats, on the other hand, were mostly ignored. *Warlords* solves that problem, presenting the greenies and the stunties in all their martial gory, I mean glory.

The rulebook starts off with a short essay on each race's history and society as relating to war. The Ork section says nothing that hasn't been said many times over, but the Squat section has some nice new snippets of information about their culture.

Next comes unit descriptions, including special rules and foibles appropriate to each type of troop or vehicle. The Ork units are notable for not having been modified from those in the initial game. (I wish that one unit *had* been altered. Full-scale Ork Warbikes are lethal cannon-toting antitank units. In *Space Marine*, someone decided they would be relegated to short-ranged, low-powered "bolter" weapons only useful for close combat. Anyone with Ork Warbikes can convert them into Nobz Warbikes.) The Squat units have had some modifications, all to the good. (Squat troop stands get to reroll any 1 rolls in close combat, or any 1 or 2 when fighting Orks.)

Of course, there are new units. Of note are the Squat land forts, the incredible Land Train and the hideous Colossus, an upgunned Leviathan. The stunties even get armored dirigibles, fearsome in their own right!

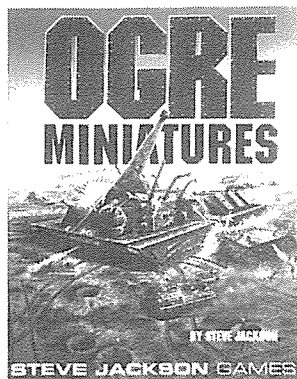
The cards outline the basic units and their support for military formations. The Orks are somewhat hamstrung by the limitation of only one of each type of clan (Goffs, Snakebites, Evil Sunz, etc.) per army, limiting an Ork army to a total of six special cards. This is counterbalanced by the addition of new unit types (Speed Freaks and Renegade Meks) and "package" deals like the new Gargant Mob (three Gargants, any type, for the price of two Great Gargants). The big problem with Ork armies is an embarrassment of riches. There are so many units and support cards to choose from that it's difficult to decide what to take! It's hard to fit in just the right combination of troops, vehicles, mek-boyz (so you can take advantage of the Mekboyz Kustom Kards, which enhance unit combat or movement capability), Gargants and special cards.

The Squats have their own problems. Their units are just the wrong size to comfortably use one box of Squat figures. (If you mount your bikes two to a stand as suggested, you'll have to acquire at least *four* boxes to make your army! Try 'em one to a stand instead.) This is a shame, because in the arms race to see who has a chance of unseating the reigning Imperial Guard army list, the Squats have the firepower to make it an even contest. Their mega-cannons, their *Ogre*-like land forts, their bike forces and ferocious armaments would make them contenders for the number one position.

The supplement's rules read pretty well, but I can hear a few arguments already ("It says all troops within 2D6 cm are automatically destroyed when a Weirdboy Tower blows up. That means no vehicles." "No, when they say troops,

they mean any unit vulnerable to psychic attacks." And so on).

Warlords is a good supplement for *Space Marine*, as *Space Marines* supplements go, with plenty of cardstock in the box to give it a nice heft. But you'll have to decide whether it's worth the hefty price.



Ogre Miniatures

Steve Jackson Games. \$14.95.

Written by Steve Jackson.

64-page set of miniatures rules, with cardstock and template and tables sheet.

Published in August 1992.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

Fifteen years ago, *Ogre* appeared, a simple game with simple mechanics and not-so-simple strategies. It even acquired miniatures back in the early '80s. The problem was, you had to have a big hex-sheet to use them, and you only had the basic game rules, and the miniatures were not very good, even by early '80s standards.

Not any more. *Ogre Miniatures* is a complete set of rules for miniatures play using the new figures available from Ral Partha. To the joy of old *Ogre* players, the rules are still largely the same! Of course, the rules expansions from G.E.V. and Shockwave are included, as well as new rules covering engineers, blocked roads, demolitions, marine battlesuits, revetments, hard cover, structures, gun emplacements, etc. Although it may sound more complex, the system hasn't changed much—the only change on the CRT is the "XX" result, which means that the target is destroyed and removed from the field; a simple "X" leaves a hulk to block roads and fire. Attack and defense strengths are still the same, and range and movement are expressed in inches—one hex of movement/range is now two inches. Very simple.

One unique feature of the rules is that each figure has a center mark, where all movement and firing is measured from

and to. This is because an Ogre really isn't 1.5 miles long, even though the figure is over 3" long. The size discrepancy is explained as technology at work; the figures are holo-tank representations of the actual units, and only the center point represents where a unit really is.

The book clearly explains units, movement, combat, structures, options and scenarios. There's a chapter detailing painting, scenery, an outline of future history (something *Ogre* fans have been waiting for for years), and unit makeup.

The book's layout is easy to read and understand. The book is illustrated with beautiful color photographs, featuring some really garish paint jobs, and there are only two drawn illustrations that aren't diagrams. Be warned that painting units in camouflage colors works; camo units can blend into the terrain on the gaming table and be forgotten at the wrong moment! Ogres are the only unit really large enough to lavish gorgeous paint jobs on; the rest are quick and easy jobs.

These rules work very, very well. No surprises, no rules misinterpretations, fast and furious—just like the pocket game, but with really neat minis. The author even accounts for sub-standard units like M-1 tanks, refitted for nuclear service. This allows owners of micro-armor armies to use their modern units on the *Ogre* battlefield, if they wish! The miniatures from Ral Partha are in micro-armor scale.

Ogre Miniatures is a book that every other miniatures system should have a serious look at, just for layout hints. If you like *Ogre*, or just like armor miniatures, I highly recommend this book and the figures.

Stan Johansen Miniatures

Designed and sculpted by Stan Johansen.

Prices vary.

Lead miniatures, weapons and accessories for a variety of gaming systems.

Review by Terry Sofian.

SJM produces several lines of miniatures that are well suited for use with roleplaying and wargaming systems currently under-supported by figure manufacturers.

The first of these is his *Merc* line that works well for any of the contemporary or near-future combat-oriented games such as *Twilight: 2000* or *Merc: 2000*. These figures cover a wide range of subjects, from terrorists to the SAS,

from mercs to African troops. They are cast in lead in 20mm scale and mix well with other manufacturers, such as FAA and Platoon 20. And SJM's prices are reasonable, at 50¢ a figure. The 36 different packs of five or more figures each, plus four discounted assortments, will provide a sufficient variety of uniforms, poses and weapons to satisfy the needs of most campaigns.

For post-holocaust games, SJM produces the *Road Warriors* range to provide a group of adventures with figures for player characters and enemies. These figures are also in 20mm and are priced from 50-60¢ each. Seven packs of five or more poses each represent a variety of savages, law enforcers and normal folks just trying to defend themselves. There is also an excellent pack of motorcycles and trikes. SJM additionally provides packs of weapons and accessories to customize die-cast cars for that open-road feel.

The third line of 20mm figures that SJM casts are for the Boxer Rebellion, but can easily be used with *Space: 1889*. At this time, the Boxer Rebellion line contains figures from nine nations in 25 packs. Sailors, marines, infantry, cavalry and some artillery are all available. Many of these figures can also do double duty as armed civilians and militias in post-holocaust games.

SJM also produces 25mm space troops and heavy weapons from a variety of races, such as reptilian Hiss and crablike Klakons. Space figures are also available in the form of a small 15mm range with a very nice set of adventurers as well as several vehicles, and 1/300 scale *Star Armor* which is packaged as companies and would look very good next to the 'Mech or Ogre of your choice.

EVALUATION

SJM does not produce the finest-quality figures available, but they are also far from the worst, and they won't disappoint you on the game table. Coming in a wide variety, the 20mm ranges allow almost any type of merc or militia unit to be fielded. The 25mm and 15mm figures fill holes in the lines of other, more well known and expensive manufacturers. SJM are produced in the USA and offer exceptional value for the money. If you do science-fiction gaming in 1/300, 15mm or 25mm, or of you roleplay or skirmish game in 20mm, there is a good chance you'll find something you like at a reasonable price. Ω

For more information, contact Stan Johansen Miniatures, 128 Barberton Road, Lake Worth, FL 33467.

WHAT THE NEW YEAR WILL BRING

By Frank Chadwick

As you read this, **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** will have been in your hands for several weeks and the **Traveller® Referee Screen** should be in the stores any day. While we've been anxious to provide as much adventure and background "color" as possible for the New Era, we all agreed that it was essential to get the technical aspects of the game locked down first. **Brilliant Lances** made a real start on this and **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** finishes it (at least for now). As you read this I am hard at work finishing **Path of Tears** (the Star Viking sourcebook) while other busy hands work on **Smash and Grab** and the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide**, all with lots of great background and adventure material. There are a number of other projects already under way for release further down the road, but we'll tell you more about them in later issues.

Suffice it to say that everyone at the Workshop is involved in **Traveller** in a big way. We told you when we released **Traveller® The New Era** that our aim was to make **Traveller** our flagship game again, and that's exactly what we've done. We also expect to increase the coverage of **Traveller** in **Challenge**, mostly because we've got more material that we want to present than we can fit in the games we've got scheduled in the near future.

We've also been running a consumer survey among **Twilight: 2000™** players for almost a year (many thanks to all of you who sent in your GPS survey sheets) trying to determine which direction we wanted to take the game. We had lots of ideas, but we weren't sure which ones would be most popular with the people already playing the game (who are the ones who count the most). Almost all of the ideas found some adherents, but most of them also had a fair number of people who weren't interested in them at all. One game concept, though, had a very high number of respondents who loved the idea, and almost everyone else liked it to a greater or lesser degree. That game supplement idea is called **Armor 21**. It stands for armor in the 21st century. Here's what it's all about.

Europe is unified and locked in a global trade war with the US and Japan. Parts of the Middle East are still radioactive from Iraq's abortive attempts at nuclear blackmail. The world is short of raw materials, particularly oil, and the Nigerian wells and oil reserves may mean the difference between economic survival and collapse.

The game covers conventional and unconventional (covert) warfare between the US and EEC in

central Africa over Nigerian and Angolan oil. The campaign scenario is an excuse to explore the nature of warfare two to three decades down the road. The obsolete tanks are M1A3s with 140mm electrochemical guns. Newer vehicles mount hypervelocity rail guns and active electromagnetic armor, but the real killers are helicopters and commando teams with laser designators.

We've already done a lot of the conceptual work (and the hardware can almost all be designed using **Fire, Fusion, & Steel**), but there's still a lot of background and scenario work to do. Look for it later this year, sometime after **East Europe Sourcebook**.

All this activity on **Traveller** and **Twilight** doesn't come without price, however. For the last year, **Dark Conspiracy™** has been stumbling along without a firm hand at the wheel, and has really shown it. To be honest, while we are very happy with the game itself, the support material went in a different direction than the game was originally aimed. This is not the fault of the people writing the support material at all—it's just what can happen when there isn't a firm guiding vision for the game. I think the last couple projects we did for **Dark Conspiracy—Empathic Sourcebook** and **Proto-Dimensions**—were outstanding, but customer interest in the whole line has declined and those two products haven't seemed to turn that around.

So what are we going to do? We can't manage major renovation of the game line and still devote the time and attention to **Traveller** and **Twilight** that we want to. On the other hand, we still have a fair number of loyal **Dark Conspiracy** fans who we don't want to just abandon. Besides, the idea behind **Dark Conspiracy** is too cool to just throw away.

So here's the plan. We're going to retire the line for a while. The material already in print will stay in print while quantities last, but won't be reprinted, and we won't be doing any new **Dark Conspiracy** free-standing products. However, we have a fair quantity of really good stuff that has never been published—whole additional proto-dimensions, additions to the Empathy system, more Dark Races—that we're going to publish in **Challenge** over the next couple years. While we do, we're going to keep looking at the best way to bring **Dark Conspiracy** back in a new format, once we have the time to do a really good job with it.

Oh, yeah! Did I mention the **Space: 1889™** movie and TV series coming from Anders International in Reston, Virginia? Oh, darn! Out of room. Maybe next issue.

Challenge 72

Rate each article from 0 to 5. 0 means you did not read the article. 1 indicates great dissatisfaction, and 5 indicates great satisfaction. 2, 3 and 4 are shades in between. To use a separate sheet, list each article number, then your rating (be sure to indicate the issue number). Send responses to:

Challenge Feedback
Managing Editor
PO Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.

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0	1	2	3	4	5	Article					
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Send us your feedback, and you will automatically be entered in our drawing for a FREE one-year subscription to **Challenge**, the magazine of science-fiction gaming.

Name
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Congratulations to Tom Reed of Tolono, IL, who won a free one-year subscription to Challenge for sending in his feedback on issue 68.

Feedback Results for Challenge 68

Poppies (Twilight)	2.9
Rolf MacKenzie (Twilight)	2.9
Lightning (MegaTraveller)	2.9
Supermart (MegaTraveller)	3.1
Union Blue (MegaTraveller)	3.2
Window of the Mind (DC)	2.2
Bugout (2300 AD)	2.5
Zoned Out (Shadowrun)	2.9
New Totems (Shadowrun)	2.5
Street-Slang (Cyberpunk)	3.0
Parts is Parts (Star Wars)	2.6
Kleptomania (High Colonies)	2.1
Operation: 9 Hells (Chill)	2.1
Science (Space: 1889)	2.8
Mating (Space: 1889)	2.8
Anime	2.8
Fire (BattleTech)	2.0
Opinion	3.1
Traveller News Service	3.1
Conventions	2.6
Reviews	3.3
Classifieds	3.3
This issue's cover art	3.8
This issue's interior art	3.5
This issue as a whole	3.6

We look forward to receiving your feedback for this issue.

GDW Product Distribution

GDW products (including *Traveller*) are available through distributors as follows:

- Australia: Imported and distributed by *Jedko Games*, 134 Cochranes Rd., Moorabbin, Vic, 3198, Australia.
- Denmark: *Fafner Spiele*, Ermelundsvej 92D, DK-2820 Gentofte, Denmark.
- Finland: Imported and distributed by *Fantasiapeli Tudeer KY*, P Rastitie 6 B 22, 01360 Vantaa, Finland. Some titles are translated into Finnish.
- France: *Ludis International*, 32 Rue Louis Piana, 31500 Toulouse.
- Greece: *Ludis Company*, Samis 18, 111 42 Athens.
- Holland: *American Discount Books*, Kalverstraat 186012, XC Amsterdam.
- Iceland: *Godson Myth*, P.O. Box 5085, 125 Reykjavik.
- Japan: Printed and distributed by *Post Hobby Japan Co., Ltd.*, 26-5, 5-chome, Sendagaya, Shibuyaku, Tokyo, Japan. Titles published are translated into Japanese.
- The Netherlands: *999 Games*, Rondeel 134, 1082 MH Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- New Zealand: *Unicorn Distribution*, 5A Lome St., Auckland, Central.
- Spain: Imported and distributed by *Central De Jocs*, C/Numancia 112-116 Bajos, Barcelona 08029. Some titles are translated into Spanish.
- Sweden: Imported by *Target Games*, Frihamnen S-100 56, Stockholm, Sweden, and *101 Productions*, Box 19008, S-400 12 Gothenburg.
- United Kingdom: Imported and distributed by *Chris Harvey Games*, PO Box 38, Bath Street, Walsall, WS1 3BY, UK; *Hobby Games Ltd.*, Unit T3, Rudford Industrial Estate, Ford Airfield, NR Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 0BD, UK.
- Germany: Imported and distributed by *Fantasy Productions*, Kon-kordiastr. 61, Postfach: 3026, 4000 Dusseldorf 1, Germany and *Welt der Spiele GmbH*, Alt Griesheim 72, 6230 Frankfurt, A.M. 80, Germany. Some titles are translated into German. Ω

feedback

Gaming-related classified ads are free and run for at least one issue, longer as space permits. **Challenge** reserves the right to edit or refuse any ad. **Challenge** will not be held liable for errors occurring in ads. All ads must be typed. Send ads to **Challenge Classifieds**, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA. For display ads, write for our free rate card.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

ON DECEMBER 7, 1993 a lone gunman killed 6 and wounded 20 people on a Long Island commuter train. One of the wounded was 26-year-old Kevin McCarthy, a long-time gamer with the New York Tech. gaming group. His father, Dennis, was killed in the shooting. Kevin was shot in the head and as of today, Dec. 17, he remains paralyzed in the left side of his body. A fund has been set up to help him and his family meet the ever-mounting medical expenses, and the NY Tech. gaming club (home of the New York Mechs and the Klingon Flagship, I.K.V. *Smurfslayer*) ask for your assistance. Please send any donations to the Kevin McCarthy Fund, 493 Nancy Road, Mineola, NY 11501. Let's pull together for one of our own! (72)

PLAYERS WANTED

LOOKING FOR *Battletech* and *Traveller* players in the Karns area. Can referee or play. Extensive *Battletech* and *Traveller* library and game aids. Contact Gary Miller, 8911 Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-1614. (72)

GAMER IN EXILE looking for players in southern West Virginia. Any RPG system welcome. Also need people interested in a PBM SF RPG I'm running. Contact W. C. Bargo, 1505 Temple St., Hinton, WV 25951-2035. (72)

BATTLETECH PLAYERS: The AFMG recruiting address has changed, but we are still around. If you are interested in a top-quality PBM, write to AFMG Recruiting, c/o Jim Domarad, 1039 W. Emerald, Mesa, AZ 85210-3410. (72)

SEARCHING FOR a gaming group in academia at Texas Tech University/Lubbock area interested in *Star Wars*, *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.*, *Shadowrun* and much more. Contact C. E. Williamson, 613 Coleman-TTU, Lubbock, TX 79406. (72)

Friday evening *Traveller* gaming group in Seattle (Northgate area), WA seeks beginner to intermediate-level players. The campaign is based in the Spinward Marches, circa 1100 (using vintage and custom *Traveller* adventures). Contact Roger Sanger, 1021 NE 123rd, Seattle, WA 98125. (72)

PLAYERS AND GMS in south eastern Indiana and Cincinnati, OH wanted for a *Journeys* campaign. Contact Gary Duty, PO Box 254, Metamora, IN 47030. (72)

VANGUARD HOBBY CLUB meets once a month. Strategy, roleplaying and miniatures games played. Club tournaments, newsletter and other benefits to members. Contact K. Howe, 88 Riverfield Road, Taunton, MA 02780. (71)

THE SOCIETY OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION WARGAMERS was formed to further the science fiction and fantasy period of miniatures gaming within and outside our hobby.

Members receive six issues of *Ragnarok* and free entry to the SFSFW AGM/Show. Contact SFSFW, Treasurer Simon Evans, 72 Avonleigh Road, Bedminster, Bristol, UK BS3 3JA. (71)

PLAYERS AND GMS wanted for *Shadowrun*, *Star Wars*, *Dark Conspiracy*, *Champions* in the Tampa, FL area. Please contact Robert Cotner, 3707 Spring Way, Apt. 103, Tampa, FL. (70)

BATTLETECH PLAYERS: The Agents of Fortune Mercenary Guild is looking for new blood to fill our roster and command positions in our exciting play by mail. Contact AFMG Recruiting, c/o Jim Domarad, 1039 W. Emerald, Mesa, AZ 85210. (70)

JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF GAMERS meets twice monthly to play miniatures, board, beer & pretzel and roleplaying games. The club also puts out a monthly newsletter. Membership includes the use of the hall during game day, a membership list and use of the club game library. (70)

FOR SALE

LOST INTEREST—Selling large collection of RPGs, boardgames, magazines and miniatures. For a list, send a SASE to Patrick Morgan, 3905 Northern Lights Drive, Pocatello, ID 83201-5934. (72)

FANATIC'S GUIDE to Collecting Traveller. Includes a comprehensive list of products made for *Traveller/MegaTraveller/New Era*, plus a bibliography of related articles appearing in magazines. Contact Roger Sanger, PO Box 75472, Seattle, WA 98125. (72)

TRAVELLER, 2300 and MegaTraveller rules and supplements. For a list, send a SASE to David Meeks, 1407 W. Princeton, Ontario, Canada 91762. (72)

AMAZING BARGAINS on out-of-print *Traveller* and related SF game items. Send SASE for list to Charles Kimball, 3019 N. Casselwood St., Winter Park, FL 32792-1716. (72)

SOURCEBOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTS for many games, including *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.*, *IO*, *Shadowrun* (and *DMZ*), *Dark Conspiracy*, *2300 AD*, *MegaTraveller*, *Twilight: 2000* and others. For a complete list, write to Ross Mackenzie, Dunlin Close, Kingswinford, West Midlands, United Kingdom DY6 8XP. (72)

OUT-OF-PRINT *Traveller* products. Send a SASE to Roger Sanger, 1021 NE 123rd, Seattle, WA 98125. (72)

VINTAGE TRAVELLER materials: **Books 1-5, Supplements 1-8, 11, Adventures 1-5, 11, Double Adventures** (all six), **Alien Module 9, JTAS 6-12.** Contact Roger Sanger, 1021 NE 123rd, Seattle, WA 98125. (72)

TSR Gold Card sets for sale, complete with rares. Over 10,000 cards for trade. Send want and need list to JM Kittrell, 2915 LBJ 161, Dallas, TX 75234. (72)

IBM COMPUTER PROGRAMS for *Traveller*, *AD&D*, *Battletech* and other game systems. Several shareware programs per disk. Send a SASE for complete list to Mike Hensley, 3303 Mission Bay 194, Orlando, FL 32817. (72)

2300 AD PLAYERS and IBM PC owners: Is navigation and all the computations needed a hassle? If so, you need this *StarMap* program. Trade routes, shortest travel distances, all stars

within a specified distance of a given star! Contact Magician's Query, J. Link, 3247 Montreal St., Bismarck, ND 58501. (72)

COMPLETE PRODUCT LINES: *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *2300 AD*, *Vampire*, *Rolemaster*, *Spacemaster*, *Cyberspace*, *Silent Death/Metal Express* (all miniatures, all blister packs), *Space Opera*, *Miccle-Earth*, *Champions*, *Chill*, *Jorune*. Plus various *Challenge* magazines, *BattleTech* (1st *Battledroids* edition also), *Dark Conspiracy*, *DC Heroes*, miniatures, Japanimation (and related material). Contact Ray Woy, 5396 28th Ave. N., St. Pete., FL 33710. (71+)

S&T MAGAZINE issue 71-147, most unpunched. *Wargamer* vol. 2 issues 1-25, plus some *Wargamer* vol. 1 issues. Some boxed games from SPI and GDW. Send SASE for list to Gene Zuratynsky, 3202 Fernwood Ave., Alton, IL 62002. (71)

COMPLETE PRODUCT LINES: *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *2300 AD*, *Vampire*, *Rolemaster*, *Spacemaster*, *Cyberspace*, *Silent Death/Metal Express* (all miniatures, all blister packs), *Space Opera*, *Middle-Earth*, *Champions*, *Chill*, *Jorune*. Plus various *Challenge* magazines, *BattleTech* (1st *Battledroids* edition also), *Dark Conspiracy*, *DC Heroes*, miniatures, Japanimation (and related material). For prices and list, contact Ray Woy, 5396 28th Ave., N. St. Petersburg, FL 33710. (70)

LARGE COLLECTION of *Dragon* magazines going back into the 40s. Best offer gets each issue. Contact J. Kinbrough, Box 520404, Independence, MO 64052. (70)

AD&D, *Forgotten Realms*, *Dragonlance*, *Ravenloft*, *Greyhawk* games, novels and comics, plus *Dragon*, *Dungeon* and *Polyhedron* magazines, TSR trading cards (1991 edition) and *Star Trek* trading cards. Send SASE for list to Kevin Quashie, 2 Lamont Court, Sicklerville, NJ 08081. (70)

ENTIRE GARY GYGAX *Dangerous Journeys* (Mythus) set. New/mint. Includes screen. Also Entire *Vampire* set. Includes all books from second edition hardcover to newest sabbat. All books never used. Contact Alex Krampis, 3845 Woodside Ave., Woodside, NY 11377. (70)

A NUMBER OF RPGs and supplements: *World of Synibarr*, *Renegade Legion: Legionnaire and Interceptor* with lead ships, *Warhammer FRP* and *Warhammer Campaigns*, plus lots of other games and supplements. All items are in absolute mint condition, and prices are reasonable. For a full price list, write to Larry Moreno, 197 North Cottage Road, Sterling, VA 20164. (70)

NEW SIX-PART *Traveller Referee's Screen* for original *Traveller*. It contains many new weapons and other items that the Judges Guild referee screen didn't have. Contact StarQuest Games, RR 1, Box 81, Flat Rock, IL 62427-9735. (70)

TRADE

WILL PROVIDE photocopies of *Traveller/MegaTraveller* materials in exchange for photocopies of items not yet in my collection. I am mostly seeking items from FASA, Gamelords, Digest Group Publications, Judges Guild and Group One, plus a few from GDW. To swap inventory lists, contact Roger Sanger, 1021 NE 123rd, Seattle, WA 98125. (72)

MODERN DAY RPG adventures and

sourcebooks, particularly for *Daredevils* and *007*. I'll pay reasonable prices for originals, but prefer to swap photocopies from my large collection of game stuff for all genres and most non-TSR systems. Also looking for any data on Chinese myth and folklore, particularly religious Taoism as seen in the films of Sammo Hung. Tom B., 2500 E. 109th St., 2nd floor, Chicago, IL 60617. (71)

WANTED

ANY INFORMATION, blueprints and background material from the Transformers toy line made by Hasbro. Need data on Cybertron homeworld as well. Material will be compensated for. Transformers SFRPG in design preparation. Contact Universe Products, POB 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142. (72)

TRAVELLER'S AIDE SOCIETY *Journal 1* and early Traveller items. Will trade or purchase. Gary Miller, 8911 Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-1614. (72)

BATTLETECH supplements *Rolling Thunder*, *Kell Hounds*, *Gray Death Legion* and *Sorensons Sabres*. Can trade *Rifts* or *Marvel*, or pay full price plus a finder's fee. Also want any magazines or fanzines with *Battletech* material. Contact Joey Cohen, 7452 N. Washtenaw, Chicago, IL 60645. (72)

SOLO GAME BOOKS: Every genre wanted. *Sorcery! 1-4* and *Spellbook*, *Middle Earth Quest: Mines of Moria*, *TSR Catacombs: Knights of the Living Dead*, *Car Wars 3-6*, *Fighting Fantasy 4-41*, *Heroes Challenge 1-4*, *Combat Command*, *Sniper!*, *Marvel Superheroes 1-8*, *Grailquest*, *Freeway Warrior 1-4*, *Crossroads*, *AD&D 1-18*, etc. (not *Lone Wolf* or *Grey Star*). Also solo RPG scenarios, *TFT*. E. Jackman, 1815 Butler Ave. 120, Los Angeles, CA 90025. (72)

ATTENTION CLUBS: We are compiling a national directory of gaming and SF clubs, and we want to include your organization. Listings in the directory are free. Write for a survey form to Unconventional Graphics, 841 Worcester Road, Suite 207, Worcester, MA 01760. (72)

PHOTOCOPIES of all *Space: 1889* articles featured in *Challenge*, from issue 34 to the present. Will pay fair price. Call collect (314) 423-8587 for more information. (72)

LOOKING FOR JTAS volumes and older Traveller game materials and miniatures. Also *Renegade Legion/Centurion* miniatures. Contact Gary Miller, 8911 Emory Road, Knoxville, TN 37931-1614. (72)

TRAVELLER SUPPLEMENTS. GDW: *Secret of the Ancients*, *JTAS 15*, *16*, *18-24*, *Alien Modules 2*, *4*, *5*. DGP: *Starship Operator's Manual*, *101 Robots*, *Travellers' Digest 5-21*, *MegaTraveller Journal 1-2*, *Flaming Eye*. Photocopies are fine. Please Contact J. A. Holden, 1221 E. Charleston Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85022. (72)

FROM GDW: *JTAS 1*, *10*, *13*, *14*, *18*, *20-23*, *Books 7 and 8*, *Supplements 10 and 12*, *Alien Modules (K'kree, Droyne, Zhodani)*, *Adventure 8*, *Atlas of the Imperium*, *Striker*, *The Traveller Adventure*, *The Spinward Marches Campaign* and *Game 1-5*. I want the originals, but will gladly trade for photocopies. I have all of GDW's Traveller products not on the above list. Contact Roger Sanger, 1021 NE 123rd, Seattle, WA 98125. (72)

ISSUES 1-24 (except 20) of the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, either originals or photo-

copies. Send details to Ryan Dooley, 1743 Goldenlake Ct., Chesterfield, MO 63017. (71)

ADVENTURES for any RPG. Royalties paid for published submissions. For more information, send a SASE to Adventure Submission, PO Box 37081, 2930 Lonsdale Ave., N. Van., BC V7N 4M0. (70)

Any *Star Wars* related items, including miniatures, sourcebooks, adventures, etc., and magazine articles concerning *Star Wars*. Send information to Todd M. Hersey, c/o Mary Ann Scarfin, 47319 Pramik Road, St. Clairsville, OH 43950. (70)

LOOKING TO BUY Chaosium's *Ringworld* and *Ringworld Companion* supplement. Will pay reasonable price and shipping costs. Please send offer to Craig Berend, 1715 Rochon, Apt. 6, VSL, Quebec, Canada H4L 1W9. (70)

COPIES OF ANY ARTICLE to do with Steve Jackson Games' *OGRE*. Any article with background fiction, scenarios, maps, etc. Any from *Space Gamer* would be appreciated. Will pay for postage, copies, time and trouble. Please send details to Edward Markle, PO Box 3324, St. Augustine, FL 32085-3324. (70)

SEEKING ANY PROFESSIONAL or personal work, article, background, etc. dealing with *Star Trek's* Klingons. No racism, no bettishism, but political and social reflection. I also practice **2300 AD**, *MegaTraveller* and *Space: 1889*. I'm seeking any materials about these RPGs. Write to Eric Morel, 5 Place Du Commerce, 14123 Cormelles-Le-Royal, France. (70)

TRAVELLER MATERIAL: GDW: *Adventure 8: Prison Planet*, *Supplement 12: Forms and Charts*, *Adventure 12: Secret of the Ancient*, *Best of JTAS 2-4* or *JTAS 1-19*, *Alien Modules 2: K'kree*, *4: Zhodani*, *5: Droyne*, *7: Hivers*, *8: Darrians*, *Fifth Frontier War*. DGP: *MegaTraveller Referee's Gaming Kit*. Willing to buy or trade photocopies of other Traveller material. I have most GDW and DGP material not listed above. For a list, send a SASE to J. Weherton, 144-88th St., Newaygo, MI 49337. (70)

FANZINES

ALLIANCE ADDRESS: This new *Star Wars* gaming newsletter has adventures, campaign settings for the second edition, new character templates, dossiers, game updates and reviews, and more. Send a legal-sized SASE to Planitia Publications, POB 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142. (72)

SILVER GRIFFIN: A magazine for enthusiastic gamers. Contact *Silver Griffin*, PO Box 1751, St. Paul, MN 55101. (72)

THE TRAVELLER CHRONICLE: A new magazine covering all aspects of Traveller, from original to New Era. Published quarterly. Contact Sword of the Knight Publications, 2820 Sunset Lane 116, Henderson, KY 42420. (72)

BEAUMAINS: The Arthurian magazine for gamers. *Pendragon* scenarios, historical and literary background and discussions, etc. Published 3-4 times per year. Submissions welcome, especially artwork. The first three issues now available from Gareth Jones, 69 Atherley Road, Shirley, Southampton, England SO1 5DT. (72)

GAMERS FORUM was *Apart* newsletter. It still covers a wide range of games. Send your

request for a free copy. We are open for articles and art submissions. Write to David P. Kufner, 800 Emory St., Apt. B, Imperial Beach, CA 91932. (71)

FGMP-16, a quarterly newsletter dedicated to Traveller miniatures rules, equipment, battles and campaigns. Features terrain-building techniques, new battletanks and Aslan mercenary battalions. Every issue will contain a new vehicle or two, and 15mm starship deck plans. The exploits of Kelly's Highlanders, a tank mercenary battalion, will also be covered. Contact Mike Kelly, 10710 Evergreen Way, C-308, Everett, Washington 98204. (71)

DARK TIMES, a quarterly newsletter dedicated to *Dark Conspiracy*, features new proto-dimensions, equipment, adventures and darktek. The Darklords and evil minions will also be covered in detail. Each issue will have a complete adventure ready for play. Contact Mike Kelly, 10710 Evergreen Way, C-308, Everett, Washington 98204.

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITANNIC TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY, a newsletter in support of the *Space: 1889* game system, is now available and is seeking submissions. For inquiries and submission guidelines, send a SASE to *TJBTS*, 21W127 Tee Lane #3, Itasca, IL 60143. (70)

CYBERPUNK GAMING FANZINE: Features adventures, source material, fiction, etc. Covers most cyberpunk game systems. Submissions welcome. Send a SASE to *BIOSCAN*, 833 N. San Juan, Stockton, CA 95203. (70)

SOUTHERN AURORA: Australia's only fanzine dedicated to comics and roleplaying gamers. Looking for subscribers and writers. Send an A4-sized SASE for a free copy (Australia only). Non-Aussies please write for details to Chris J. Scull, 7 Rupert Court, Thomastown, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 3074. (70)

SILVER GRIFFIN: A roleplaying magazine. Now in its third year and getting better, this publication offers game articles, game reviews, book reviews, fiction, a superhero universe that you can submit superheroes or supervillains to, and highly detailed pencil half-time covers. Contact *Silver Griffin*, PO Box 1751, St. Paul, MN 55101. (70)

INQUISITOR: Warhammer 40,000 newsletter/forum for experienced players. Open forum and resource for all players. Scenarios, Titan rules, Q&A, army calculation worksheets, unit stat cards and more! Write to *Inquisitor*, PO Box 14485, Santa Rosa, CA 94502-6485. (70)

IMPERIAL NEWS SERVICE seeks writers and artists. Our fanzine is devoted entirely to original Traveller (not *MegaTraveller* or any new version). We publish adventures, supplements and campaign aids. Please contact Star Quest Games, RR 1, Box 81, Flat Rock, IL 62427-9735 for subscriptions and guidelines for writers and artists. (70)

MELBOURNE TIMES: Newsletter of the Earth Colonies Development League (ECDL) provides background material for completely new, non-Imperium Traveller setting with 3D campaign area based upon system locations from 2300 AD Near Star Map. Features news service, world briefs, character sketches, sophont descriptions, corporate portfolios, political analysis, cultural events and more. Subscribers and contributors send SASE top *Melbourne Times*, c/o David Johnson, PO Box 18956, Boulder, CO 80308. Overseas include three IRCs. (70)

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Merc: 2000

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When the captain broadcasted an "iceberg warning" over the ship's intercom, we all had a good laugh. But we didn't laugh for long. *By Michael C. LaBossiere*

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A new ship design and character templates to supplement the Mos Eisley Galaxy Guide. *By Martin Wixted*

2300 AD

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Cadillacs & Dinosaurs

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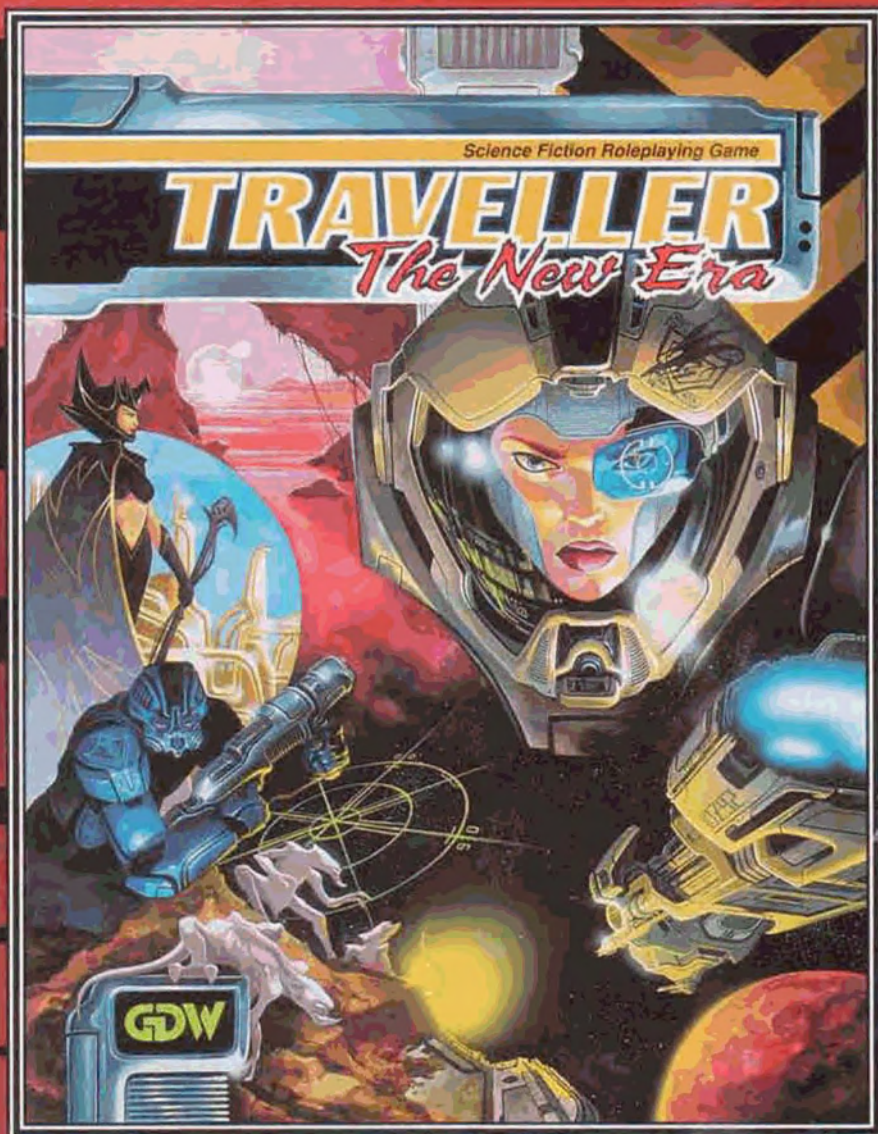
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