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LL - 099542, H-D-L
RR - 120543, H-D-L
CC - 000500, L-C-R
WT- 56.000, M - T54.6



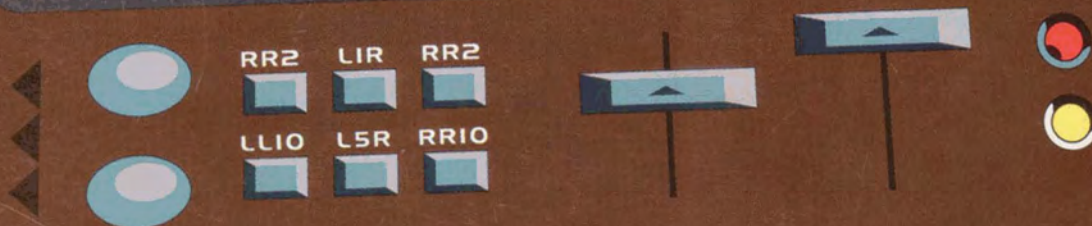
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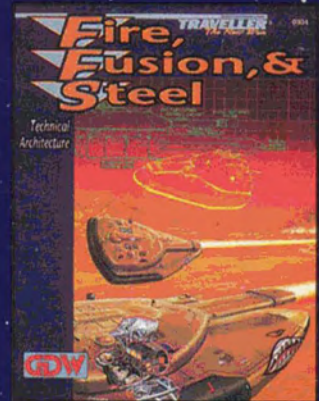
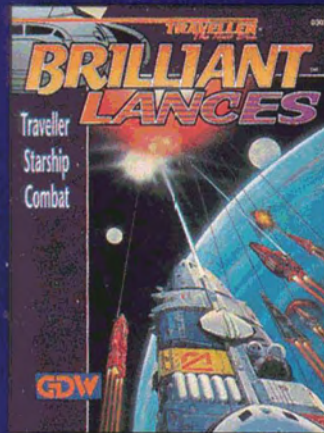
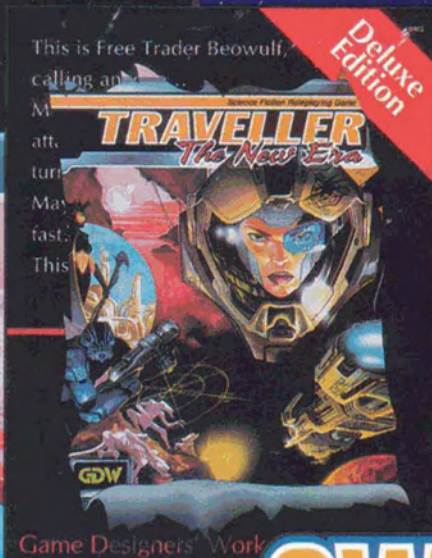


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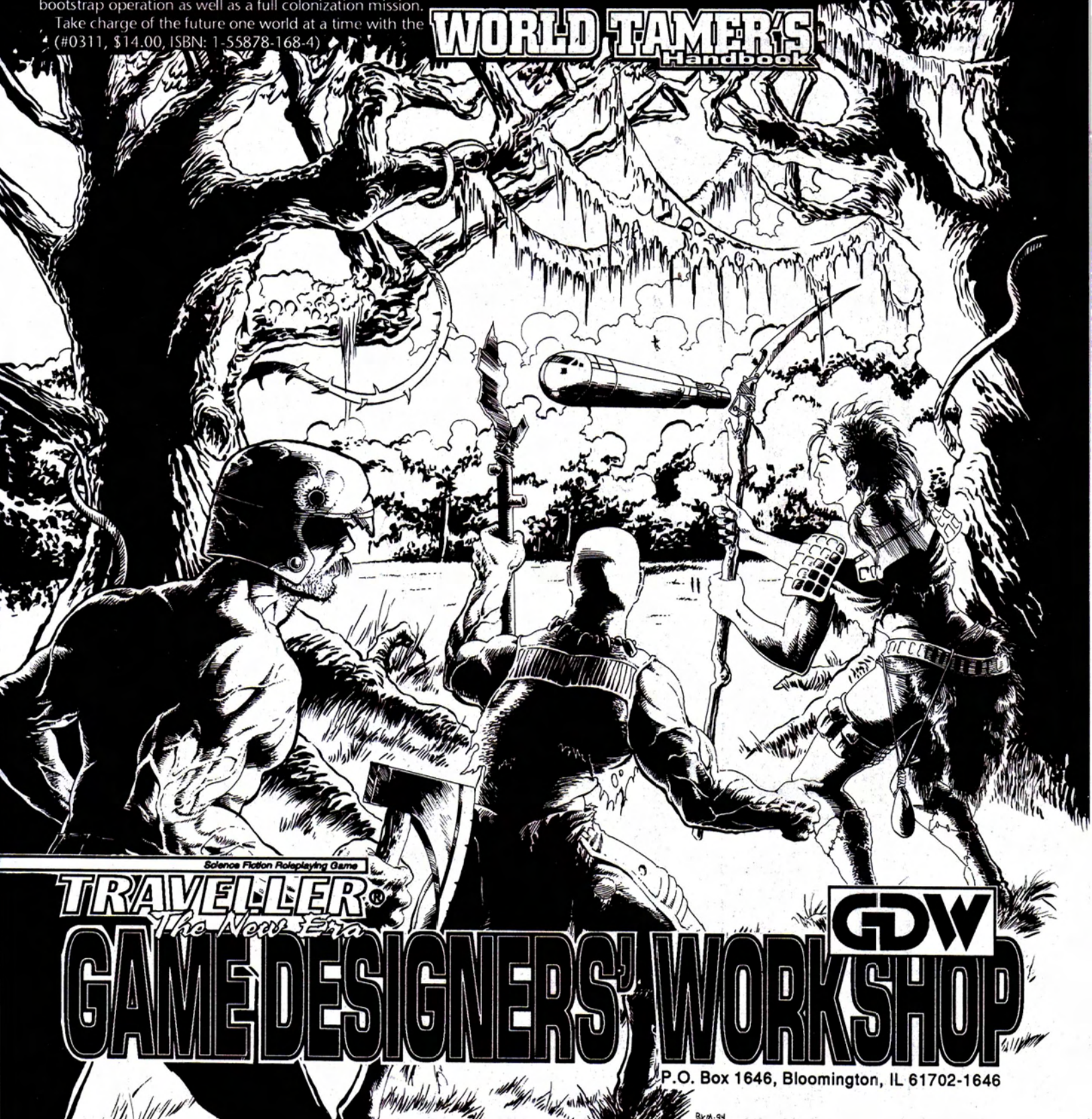
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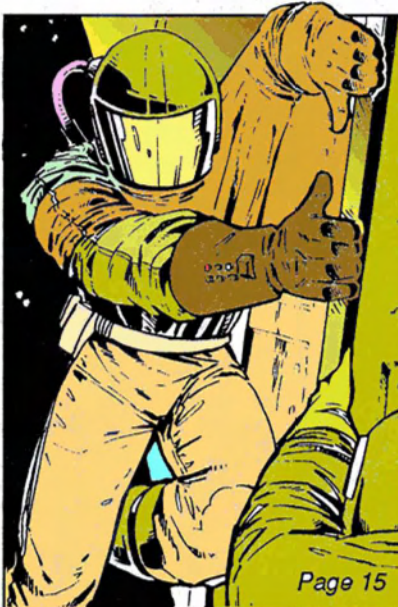
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credits

Challenge

Issue 74

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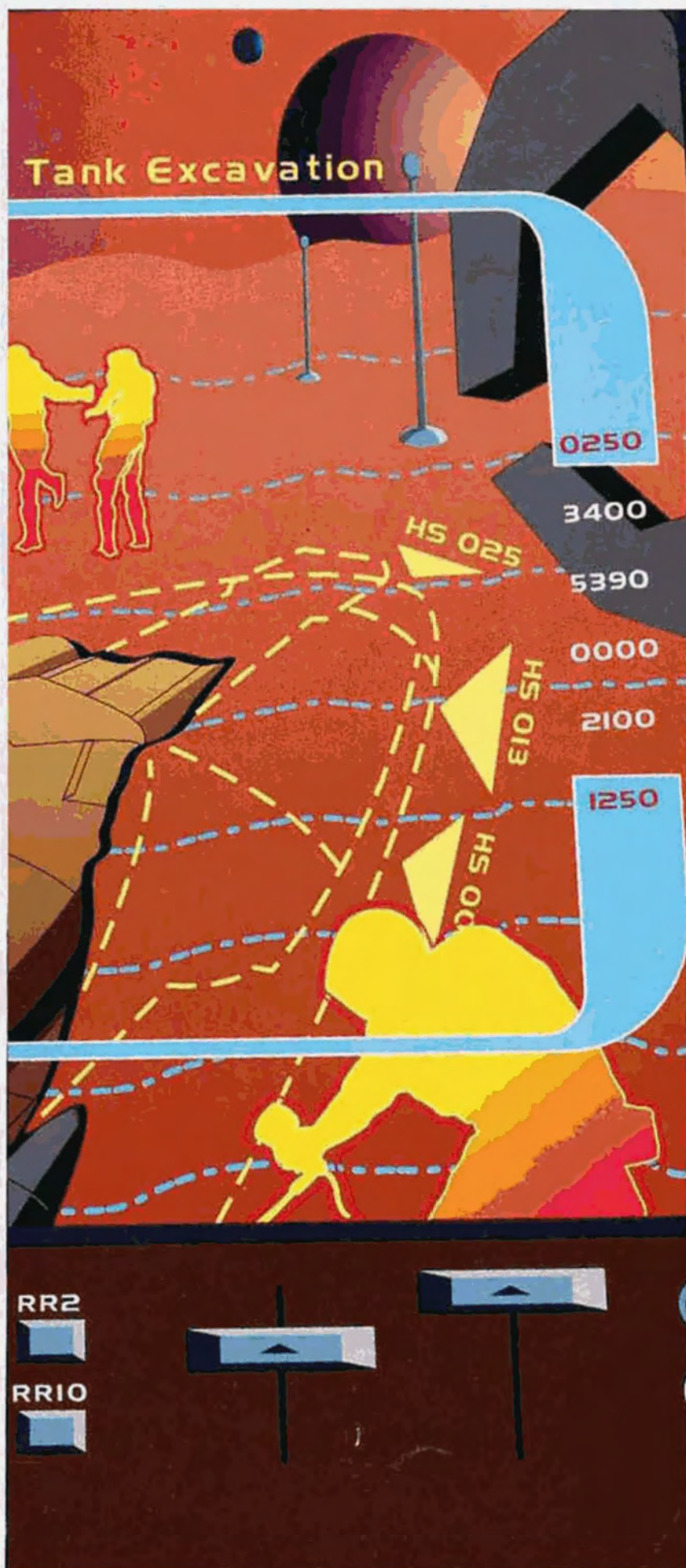
A Reformation Coalition cold recovery team excavates a relic Intrepid grav tank from its resting place, as viewed through a computer-enhanced viewer.

Art by Kirk Wescom.

Challenge, the magazine of science-fiction gaming, is published bimonthly. **Challenge**©1994 GDW, Inc. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. ISSN 0894-5535. Issue price is \$3.50. Six issues are \$15 in the US. Foreign subscriptions (outside Canada, but not to APO or FPO addresses) by surface mail are \$25, by airmail are \$40, per six issues. Please make all payments in US funds drawn on a US bank.

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FROM THE MANAGEMENT By Frank Chadwick

EVEN AS WE SPEAK...

Battle Rider™ is being shipped out to distributors for reshipment to retail stores. By the time this issue of **Challenge** is in the stores, you will all have had a chance to play it a couple of times, or at least take a look at it on the store shelf. We're real happy with how it turned out, and we think you will be too.

One thing you'll notice even if you don't buy the game is the distinct *anime* feel to the cover. We'd been getting some very good reactions to the computer-generated covers on the **Traveller™** products, all done by our own Kirk Wescom, since early this year. With **Battle Rider**, though, I think Kirk's outdone himself. He said he didn't have much time to do it and so stayed up all night to finish it. I told him he should stay up all night more often when he's working on covers.

Made me want to go out and do some kind of a giant robot game or something. (Don't worry, the madness passed.)

NOW IS THE SUMMER OF OUR GAMING DISCONTENT...

Magic: The Gathering™ product continues to move through the retail stores like an avalanche, crushing many small trees in the process. I'm not sure how aware everyone out there is of just how much of an effect this phenomenon is causing throughout every level of the industry, but let me tell you, it's a big one. The good people at Wizards Of The Coast have come up with a game that has captured the imagination of the gaming public like no product has in recent memory, and the public has responded with an unprecedented buying frenzy. This year WOTC will probably do twice as much in sales as TSR's best year ever.

And it couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of people. Last year they were the underdogs in a lawsuit by Palladium that threatened to put them under permanently; this year they're the absolute undisputed number one company in Adventure Gaming. Now there's a Horatio Alger story for you.

So what's all this about discontent?

We are getting an increasing number of E-mail and conventional letters telling us that gamers are unable to find fairly recent releases in their hobby stores. (*Path of Tears™* is mentioned fairly frequently.) It appears that some retailers have let the huge dollars generated by *Magic* distract them from the importance of maintaining the staple game products in stock. Some stores are taking the initial shipment of a new product, and then when it sells through they don't restock, instead replacing it with other new product and offering to special order any older products.

There is a problem with this that all of you should understand. Actually, there are two problems.

First, most mid-size publishers rely on restock or-

ders to survive. Initial shipments pay for the initial costs associated with bringing a game to market, but it is the continuing sales over time that pay things like salaries, rent, phones, etc. Tiny publishers often have very little overhead, and so don't have to worry about this as much, while publishers with very high initial shipments (such as TSR, and now WOTC) generate sufficient income from their initial shipments that some of it can be applied against operating expenses after start-up costs are paid. It's the mid-sized publishers (and that's just about everyone) who need steady restocks. So when restocks fall off dramatically, lots of publishers (including this one) start gasping for breath.

Second, publishers give up a substantial part of the retail price of a game to put it out through the distribution and retail system. We don't do it as an act of charity; we do it because we get genuine value in return from distributors and retailers. By displaying the game in front of about a million game customers (by placing it on the retail shelf), we gain exposure, a valuable source of promotion of the product. However, when retailers stop stocking items and instead just offer to special order it for a consumer who has already made his or her mind up to buy the game, we give up a large chunk of the retail dollar for no benefit in return.

This may very well be a temporary problem. (In fact, lots of pretty smart people in gaming believe that it is.) This doesn't mean that *Magic* or WOTC are temporary, only that the apparent abandonment of backstocking by retailers may be. If so, fine. But it is always dangerous to just sit back and rely on things to work themselves out on their own. If you care about the sort of game selection your favorite hobby store carries, do something about it.

If your local hobby shop currently carries games from your favorite companies and does a good job restocking the core products for those lines, let your hobby store owner know it, in two ways. First, tell him or her that you appreciate the service they offer. Second, back the talk up with your money. Buy your games from that retailer; don't order them by mail from the publisher or a direct mail house. Let's face it, if you want to be able to see a game before you purchase it, and then take it home within two minutes of making your buying decision, it's going to have to be through a local retail shop. Support your local retailer.

But if your local hobby shop doesn't stock your favorite lines of games, do the same thing in reverse. Tell them you want them to. If they won't, don't settle for the special order route; you can usually get quicker service from a mail order house or the publisher.

Almost any game publisher you talk to will tell you to support your local retailer. But if your local retailer isn't supporting you, then it's time to deal with someone who will, don't you think? Remember, the customer is always right, and you're the customer.

Letters to GDW

Dear Frank,

I want to thank you for your editorial in #73 concerning *White Wolf* magazine. It's about time someone said what you did in public. I thought your parting remark about attitude without character was an accurate and effective reminder. Heartfelt thanks. I suspect you may be getting a lot more letters like this one in the near future...

With best wishes,
Carl Sargent

Dear Mr. Chadwick:

Re: Your editorial comments in **Challenge** 73, about "sense of humor" and your "Rush Limbaugh defense." Either you are not a long-time (one year or more) listener to Rush's entire program or you have taken the cited (and probably others) comments out of context (a "trick" usually used by those of the Liberal persuasion). That not being the case, it is then very, very probably that you DO lack a sense of humor!! Too bad—IT'S FUN!

PS: It's a GAMING MAG! "Lighten up" on the politics, huh? What about the Clintonian Defense—"I never done nuthin'!"

Sincerely,
D. C. Fairbrother
retired—US Army & Detective Constable

Dear GDW,

You may recall my previous letters to GDW, and my endless harping on your world design, robots, and wet ships. Now I can recommend a new book that can provide excellent, scientifically based information that will add color to any world.

The title of this book is *What If the Moon Didn't Exist? Voyages to Earths that Might Have Been*, by Neil F. Comins (ISBN 0-06-016864-1, 315 pages, HarperCollins publisher). Based on articles in *Astronomy* magazine, it covers a set of "what if?" scenarios. For example, what if the moon didn't exist? What if the moon were closer, the Earth had less mass, the Earth were tilted.

He also states a number of interesting truths, such as: The lighter the planet, the faster the planet's orbit, the faster the winds (notable on Mars, with 150 m.p.h. wind-

storms which last for weeks, occasionally covering the whole planet!). He also notes the effects on oceans, volcanoes, tides, and life.

And in the meantime, I have obtained six new **Traveller** items:

Path of Tears, Referee's Screen, & Survival Margin for **TNE**. All nicely done, but **Path of Tears** hits the excellent level! A remarkable job. (Now, if only we can get details on the Aubaine system... :-))

Hard Times. Glad I got it, even if it's for **MegaT**. A blow-by-blow account of the death of an interstellar civilization is hard to find, after all.

Traveller (the original boxed edition and **Atlas of the Imperium**. Well, it's OK, but the improvements made over the last 16 years makes this stuff feel both ancient and clunky.

With Thanks,
Alvin Plummer
Brampton, Ontario
Canada

Dear GDW,

I have just purchased the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide** for **Traveller**, and in my opinion the **Traveller** range of products have just reached a new high. I thought the other two marvels—**Path of Tears** and **Smash & Grab**—were excellent, but they have been surpassed.

As well as praising the fact that I have seen a new **Traveller** product every month this year, I would be grateful if you could send me a 1994 catalog. Also, when will the **East Europe Sourcebook** and **Armor 21** for **Twilight: 2000** be available?

Yours Faithfully
Evan Spence
Silvertonhill, Hamilton
Scotland

Thanks for the compliments, Evan. **East Europe Sourcebook** should be on the shelves now; **Armor 21** is slated for a November release; and your catalog is on its way.

Challenge magazine welcomes your letters. The opinions presented do not necessarily reflect those of the magazine. **Challenge** reserves the right to edit letters. Write to **Challenge** Letters, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.

Damsel

A MERC: 2000 ADVENTURE BY MICHAEL TODD

The LA district attorney, Edward Hale, has been at odds with local crime lord Justin Buckingham for the last two years. Buckingham has responded to the increased pressure from the DA's office by kidnapping Hale's 10-year-old daughter, Elisa. Only someone above the law can ensure her safe return.

The PCs are contacted by a Seattle-based merc recruiter named Adrian McInnes. McInnes and Edward Hale have been friends since their time together in the military, and Hale has decided it's time to call in some old favors. Hale is offering \$5000 up front, with an additional \$30,000 if Elisa is returned safely. McInnes can rent the PCs suppressed M16s and assault suits.

ABDUCTION

Justin Buckingham has had the run of LA for the past four years. He had the DA and numerous police officers in his back pocket. Two years ago, the DA was forced to resign due to a scandal. His replacement was Edward Hale, an idealistic young man determined to make a difference.

Hale vowed to rid the city of the depravity and crime that was eating it away. He succeeded in purging the police department of most of its corruption. He also began putting a lot of pressure on Buckingham and his entire organization. Hale has come close to indicting Buckingham on more than one occasion.

Finally, Buckingham couldn't stand it anymore. Hale had to be removed quickly and silently, and in such a way as to avoid casting suspicion on Buckingham or any of his people. Buckingham's men kidnapped Elisa, then told Hale that he must resign or she would be killed. The man who would most likely be Hale's successor was already in Buckingham's pocket, so the situation was ideal.

The police haven't been able to turn up anything. All they know is that Elisa was snatched while she was playing in front of her home. There were no witnesses. The phone calls from the kidnappers are all short and to the point, and they give no clue as to the where

the call is originating from or who is making it. The FBI and police continue their fruitless search.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

Buckingham's original plan was to kidnap both Hale's wife and daughter. The plan proved too dangerous as Hale's wife only left the house in the company of others. Buckingham didn't want to risk anything going wrong with the operation.

Three of Buckingham's men monitored the Hale household for about a week. They determined Hale's schedule and the family's habits. One afternoon after Elisa had returned from school, she went out to play in the front yard. Buckingham's men moved in and grabbed her.

Elisa is being held in a small estate in the San Francisco area. This compound is constantly guarded by Buckingham's men. It is owned by a company that Buckingham controls. It would be difficult to prove any connection between Buckingham and the company. The guards are all very loyal and wouldn't provide any information concerning Buckingham's involvement.

So far, Hale has received two calls from the kidnappers. The first call was to inform him of the fact that they had his daughter and she was alive. The second call was to inform him of their demands. Hale is to resign from his position as DA in 15 days or his daughter will be killed. The kidnappers will indeed kill her if Hale doesn't cooperate.

Elisa was kidnapped five days ago, so only 10 days are left to meet the demand. Hale will give the PCs 10 days to find Elisa, but if they don't turn anything up in that time, he will resign. When he resigns, he will receive another call from the kidnappers. They will tell him to meet them at an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of Los Angeles. The kidnappers will not be present when Hale arrives, but Elisa will be there. She will be bound and gagged in the center of the warehouse, but still alive.

CRIME SCENE

Both Hale and McInnes consider it a foregone conclusion that Elisa's kidnapping was ordered by Buckingham. They will both inform the PCs of their suspicions. So the PCs' job won't be to find out who kidnapped Elisa but rather where she is being held.

There are numerous routes the PCs can take. The obvious choice is to investigate near the scene of the crime. There will be no physical evidence of any sort at the scene. Any neighbors who are asked about the incident will be somewhat annoyed. They've already talked to the police and the media on numerous occasions.

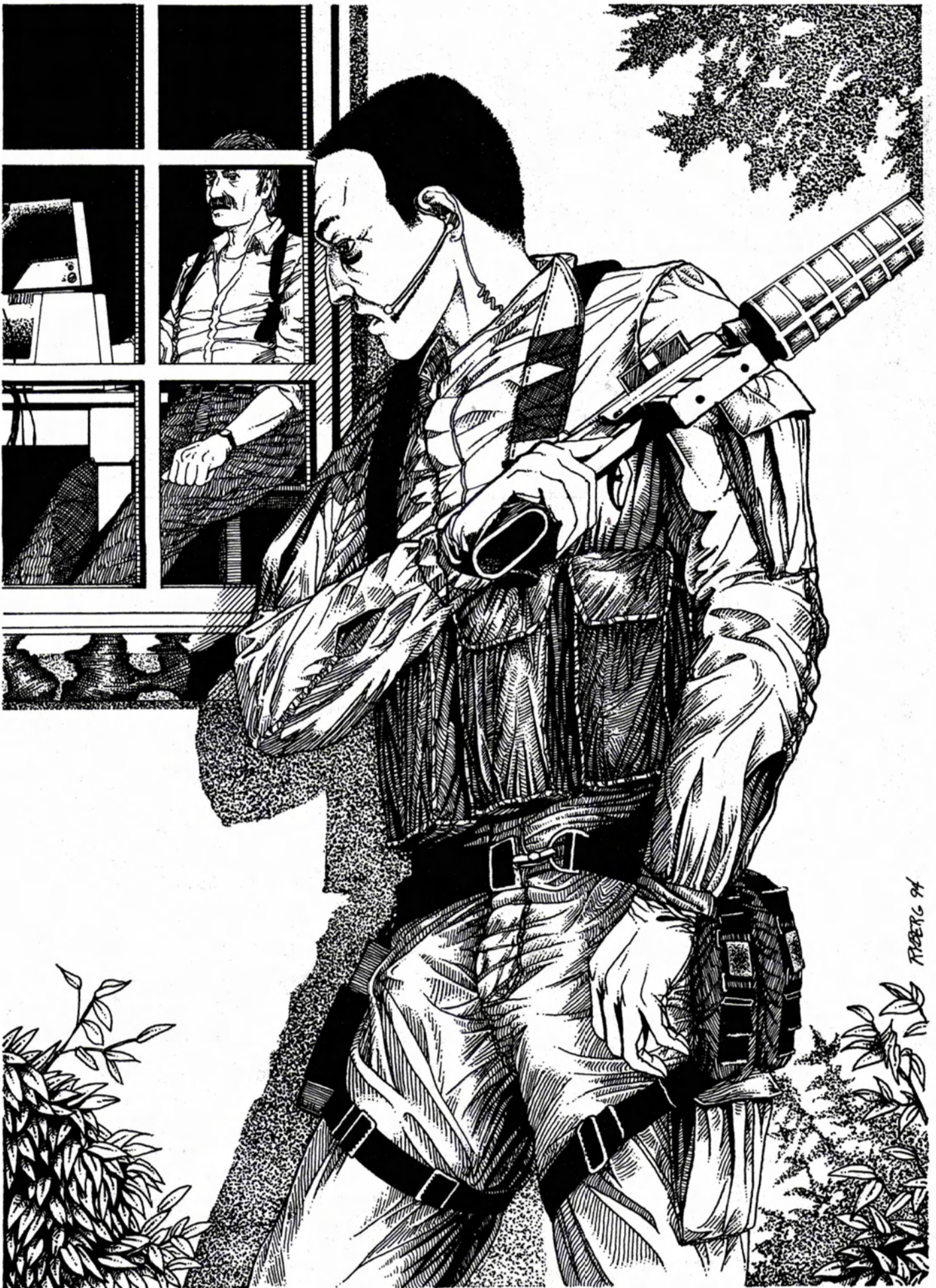
While the PCs are investigating around the neighborhood, they will be approached by a 7-year-old boy named Bobby who lives nearby. He will tug the PCs' coats and ask them what they're doing. He will persistently assail the PCs with all manner of questions about their purpose here and what they do for a living. Bobby will inform the PCs that his daddy could beat them up. No doubt the PCs will become sufficiently annoyed with this little brat. At this point, he will casually mention that he knows who "took the kid from there" as he gestures toward Hale's house.

Bobby was out riding his bike when he witnessed Elisa's kidnapping. He kept this to himself because he thought it was of little consequence. It wasn't until today, when he saw a news update on Elisa's disappearance, that he realized people were looking for her. So he hopped on his bike to find someone interesting to tell this particular fact to. If the PCs are angry with Bobby or threaten him, he will begin to cry uncontrollably. Any neighbors who happen to be outside or looking out their windows may assume that the PCs are trying to kidnap Bobby.

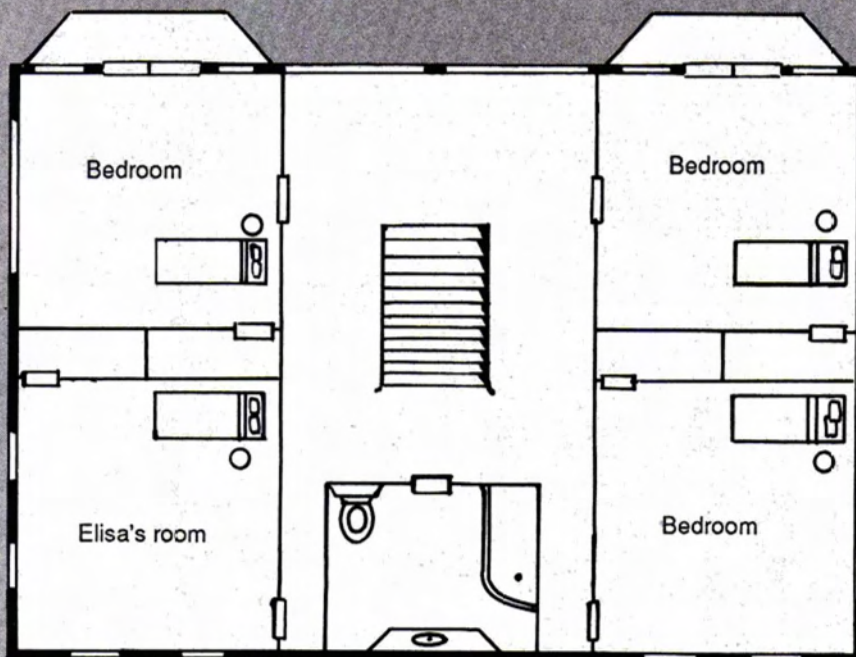
If the PCs are very nice to Bobby, he will be able to describe one of the kidnappers for them. The description will be recognizable to Hale, or anyone familiar with the LA crime scene, as Jimmy Roberts. He is known to be connected with Buckingham. Jimmy doesn't have a criminal record, and any computer searches on him will turn up very little. Bobby can only describe the kidnap vehicle as being a van.

BUCKINGHAM'S RECORDS

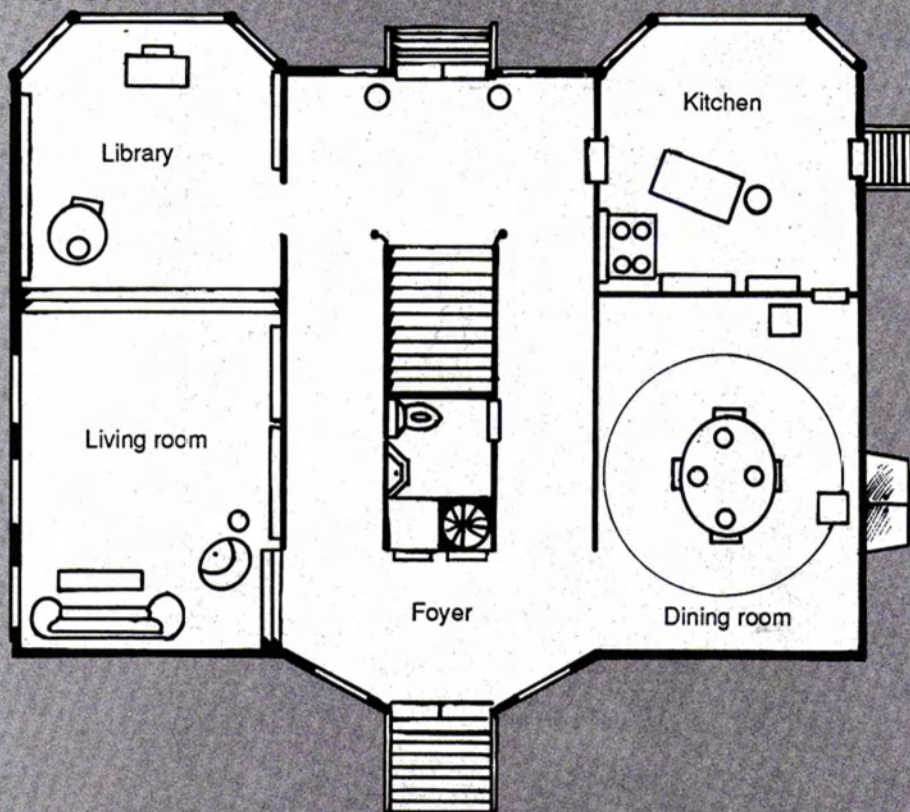
The next area of investigation would probably concern Buckingham, his employees or his records. The easiest way to get into Buckingham's files is by computer. The number for Buckingham's computer system at his Buckingham



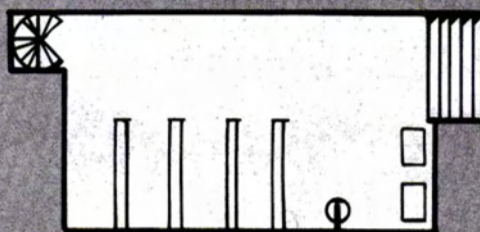
Second Floor Buckingham's Estate



First Floor



Basement



Industries building is easily obtainable. The PCs can break into the system with a Difficult: Computer task. Once in, they will have access to most of Buckingham's records. Everything seems legitimate. Buckingham's private files will be available if the PCs can make a Formidable: Computer task. These files contain numerous holdings that Buckingham doesn't want connected to his business, including records on stocks, bonds and numerous pieces of real estate he owns. The nearest of these is the estate in San Francisco. A list of the people Buckingham employs outside of Buckingham Industries will be available in the records, as well as his banking information. He recently withdrew \$50,000 and paid J. Roberts for "services rendered." No other applicable information can be found in Buckingham's computer files.

The PCs can enter the phone company's computer (Formidable: Computer) to check on the calls Buckingham has made from his office and home. He has made numerous calls around the country from both his office and home. Only one call was made to one of Buckingham's real estate holdings: A one-minute call was placed to the estate in San Francisco on the day Elisa was kidnapped. The phone number will match with the records in Buckingham's personal files.

The PCs may decide to break into Buckingham's home or his office building. Neither of these tasks will be very easy. Buckingham's home is a virtual fortress, and a dozen armed guards patrol the grounds at all times. Gaining access to his home should be nearly impossible. The Buckingham Industries office building isn't so bad. There are only two or three security guards to deal with. The building does have a state-of-the-art alarm system (overcome with a Formidable: Electronics task), and the police will reply to it within five minutes. The information to be found at either of these locations is the same as that in the Buckingham Industries computer system.

The thugs under Buckingham's command will not reveal any information concerning his illegal activities. Most of them aren't even aware that he ordered Elisa Hale's kidnapping. The only person on Buckingham's payroll who may reveal some vital information is the lawyer he employs. Veronica Bain is a lawyer who works exclusively for Buckingham. She suspects he had Elisa Hale kidnapped. Bain believes that Elisa is being held in San Francisco because Buckingham gave her orders to have

the utilities turned on at the estate a few days before the kidnapping. For Bain to reveal this information, she will have to believe that her life is in immediate danger (Difficult: Interrogation).

The only other place to investigate Elisa's disappearance is on the street. It is common knowledge to the criminal element in LA that Buckingham was pulling the strings behind the Hale kidnapping. If the PCs befriend some people in the criminal underground, they will hear the rumor voiced that the girl is being held at one of Buckingham's numerous houses around the country.

ESTATE

The estate is located in an affluent suburb just on the outskirts of San Francisco. This neighborhood was the pet project of a local developer. He supervised the building and placement of the homes in this area, and most of the houses surround a man-made lake. This development has its own security force.

Buckingham's estate is surrounded by brick walls that stand eight feet high. There is one entrance at the front of the estate and two in back. Each of these entrances consists of an ornate wrought-iron gate. These gates are padlocked and carry a "Beware of Dog" sign. Two Doberman pinschers roam the estate's grounds.

The easiest way to gain access to the estate is via the man-made lake. Any suspicious vehicles or people on the street will draw the attention of the security guards. The PCs will be able to enter the lake through a park at the opposite end from the estate. The PCs can loiter around the park unharassed as the park does not fall within the boundaries of the development.

Buckingham's thugs have installed a simplistic security system around the house. It consists of a series of security cameras placed over the entrances. The monitors for these cameras have been set up in the kitchen. The thugs didn't bother to hide or camouflage the security cameras. They also did a rather messy wiring job (Average: Observation to spot the cameras).

Basement: The only entrances are the stairs and cellar doors. This area is filled with an impressive wine collection. The water heater, fuse box, clothes washer and dryer are located here as well.

Foyer: Smooth stone steps leading up to a huge set of double doors. These doors have a small ornate window at eye level. There is a security camera above the front door. Inside, stairs lead down to the basement and a closet. A guard patrols this area at all times.

Dining Room: This room is empty. The furniture is covered with white sheets. Blank spaces are noticeable on the walls where paintings have been removed.

Kitchen: The table in this room has been overrun with video monitors and endless streams of wire. These monitors are hooked up to cameras placed above the front door, back door, side entrance and cellar entrance. There is also a camera inside Elisa's room. A guard is always present there.

Living Room: This sunken room contains a television and assorted furniture. This room looks thoroughly lived in. Cushions lie on the floor. The coffee table is buried under beer cans and Chinese take-out cartons.

Library: The shelves in this room have been cleared. The books are all packed away in boxes that litter the floor. The desk is covered with a sheet.

Bedrooms: At any given time, four of the estate's guards will be sleeping in these bedrooms. The other four will be on duty. These bedrooms are rather Spartan and contain two beds each.

Elisa's Room: The door to this room is padlocked, and the windows are boarded up. A camera is mounted above the door, displaying the contents of the room. There is a bed and a table here. One of the guards gave Elisa some books to read. She'll be reading if she isn't asleep.

ASSAULT

During an attack, Roberts and the other guards will retreat upstairs and try to hold that area. They will use all available cover to their advantage and will use Elisa as a hostage. Two minutes after any attack, the thugs who are asleep upstairs will be awake and armed.

Five minutes after any firefight starts, the police and local security force will arrive. It will take them another few minutes to get past the gate. They will proceed toward the house, calling in whatever backup is necessary.

If the battle is going badly, Roberts will attempt to escape with Elisa. He will flee across the lake in one of the paddle boats. Roberts will not surrender. He will kill Elisa if he is given no alternative.

NPCs

Edward Hale: The new district attorney for Los Angeles. Hale only wanted to help the people of LA, and he was repaid with the kidnapping of his daughter. Hale has a strong sense of justice and hates feeling helpless when his daughter's life is on the line. Hale is a Novice NPC.

Elisa Hale: Elisa is the 10-year-old daughter of Edward Hale. She is quite bright for her age and has kept calm through this ordeal. She's still a child and will probably be as fearful of the PCs as she is of Buckingham's thugs. Elisa is a Novice NPC.

Adrian McInnes: McInnes is based in Seattle. He is a veteran of the Gulf War and has remained in contact with numerous other veterans both in the military and out. Through those contacts, McInnes himself became a merc for a number of years. For the last five years, he's been a merc recruiter. McInnes is a Veteran NPC.

Justin Buckingham: During his teen years, Buckingham was nothing but a common thief. As he grew older, he began moving into the circles of organized crime and gang warfare. He has built himself a tidy little empire in Los Angeles. Any morals or ethics he may have had have been washed away by years of avarice and crime. Buckingham is an Elite NPC.

Jimmy Roberts: Roberts is one of Buckingham's chief thugs. He is incredibly loyal to Buckingham, and he'll put himself at serious risk to protect Buckingham's interests. Roberts is a stone-cold killer and won't have any qualms about using Elisa as a hostage. He is an Elite NPC. He has Unarmed Martial Arts: 5, Observation: 3, Small Arms (Pistol): 5, and Stealth: 1. Jimmy carries a .44 magnum with two quick-loaders and a sawed-off pump action shotgun with five extra shells.

Buckingham's Thugs: Seven other thugs are guarding the estate in San Francisco. These men are very loyal to both Buckingham and Roberts. They won't lose morale unless Roberts flees or is incapacitated. The thugs are Experienced NPCs. They have Small Arms (Rifle): 5 and Unarmed Martial Arts: 3. Each is armed with a M9 and an Uzi with two extra clips.

CONCLUSION

If Elisa is returned alive, the PCs will receive their payment and the undying gratitude of Edward Hale. If any of the thugs are taken alive, they will be given a lengthy prison sentence. The thugs will not reveal who their employer was. It is up to the referee whether Buckingham is convicted of the kidnapping.

At any rate, the PCs will have one very powerful enemy. Even if he is put behind bars, Buckingham's organization will continue to function in some form or another. The PCs may find Buckingham to be a dangerous foe, in prison or out. Ω



The PCs are contacted by Col. Tibbets, an ex-British officer turned mercenary. Tibbets represents an unknown party wishing to hire experienced mercenaries for a lucra-

tive, high-risk, covert operation. A certain group has possession of a large quantity of precious metals, which Tibbets refers to as "El Dorado." Tibbets states that El Dorado rightly belongs to his patron, so Tibbets is organizing an operation to recover the valuables. Tibbets is familiar with the PCs due to their renown and previous successes. He is very persistent and will refuse to take no for an answer. He offers a huge sum of money (up to \$1,000,000 per person, with a 10% retainer). Tibbets will grant rights to the equipment used, plus any valuables incidental to El Dorado which the PCs capture during the operation. He will ensure total responsibility for transportation, insertion and extraction.

Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

TRANSPORT

Once the PCs accept the mission, Tibbets sets a rendezvous at a campground in southern Ohio (or any other agreeable camping site). On arrival, he ushers the PCs into a small RV. Tibbets seats the PCs in the windowless living area, while the vehicle's driver drives off. The PCs have no idea where they are headed, though Tibbets will respond to any fears or worries as, "Security. You don't need to know." After an hour's drive, the RV bumps up a short incline and comes to a stop (from exterior noises, the PCs believe they are at an airport). Suddenly, the RV rocks and sways, while Tibbets says, "Stay calm. We'll be airborne shortly."

The PCs are in a C-130 cargo plane winging its way through the sky. Referees should be encouraged to worry the PCs by keeping them in the dark as long as possible. The RV is self-contained, and the doors are locked to keep the PCs inside. The PCs are encouraged to get some rest, and they are told that the operation's planning begins on arrival.

The PCs arrive at an airfield at night

PRIVATE CHARTER

A MERC: 2000 ADVENTURE BY ALLEN RAY GARBEE

and are driven through a town to the harbor. Some PCs with extensive experience (especially ex-US servicemen) may recognize the city as Mogadishu, Somalia. The PCs board a small, rust-coated, coastal container ship, the *Indian Star*, with a Maldives registry. The *Indian Star* carries a partial load of containers, including a series of specially constructed weapons and equipment storage containers. The freighter sets sail and steams south-southeast.

On their first day at sea, Col. Tibbets and the ship's captain, Captain Juan Diaz, call a planning conference, where Tibbets provides deck plans of the target vessel (conspicuously absent are any identifying names or marks—security again).

The background information includes the following: The target vessel is crewed exclusively with Japanese personnel. The freighter has a complement of 12 (captain, first mate, second mate, three helmsmen, three engineers, a cook/deckhand and two deckhands). The vessel is highly automated, resulting in the low crew size. The crew is expected to be armed only with small arms, if that. The PCs can expect the target vessel to be dead in the water. The PCs can expect a friendly approach under a deceptive cover of medical aid. Two small craft are available—a surplus 40-foot navy motor launch and a 36-foot *Sea Fox* high-speed assault boat. Last, Tibbets informs the PCs that they have from two to seven days (referee secretly rolls 1D6+1) before the attack can take place. Tibbets leaves the PCs to plan their attack, but is available for consultation.

ASSAULT

H-hour approaches. Tibbets warns the PCs the operation will begin in three hours (referees determine the exact environment). The *Indian Star* approaches two ships—one burning and sinking, the other the small freighter *Fubuki Maru*—hove to lending assistance. The PCs are informed that their objective is on-board the *Fubuki Maru*. The *Indian Star* offers to provide assistance to the survivors. The Japanese accept the offer.

The 40-foot motor launch carries several PCs posing as medical technicians and general help. The survivors (30 in all), officers and men of Japan's Marine Safety Agency, were the crew of the *Shiratsuki*, which suddenly sank after an unknown explosion. Most survivors are shifted to the *Indian Star*, where they are placed under guard by the *Indian Star's* crew. The only tasks left

are seizing the *Fubuki Maru*, overpowering the crew and removing *El Dorado*.

PRIZE

The cargo hold is divided into four locked vaults (opening them is a formidable task requiring high Combat Engineer or Intrusion skills), each holding a portion of the metal, in sealed metal boxes each massing 100 kilograms. There are a total of 52 cases in the vaults.

The contents of each box is 20 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium, for use as fuel in the Japanese nuclear power program.

PCs with a high Combat Engineers skill will realize there is sufficient plutonium to construct 100 to 150 bombs, depending on the weapons yield. At this point, Col. Tibbets takes charge of the unloading process and orders the PCs back to the *Indian Star* with, "Well done. It's our problem now."

CRUNCH TIME

The PCs are faced with two choices: honor their contract, or attempt to take the *Fubuki Maru* from Tibbets' skeleton crew. If the PCs keep their bargain, they are returned to their country of origin and paid the balance of the money owed to them through a numbered account (what's a few million dollars for this cargo?). However, this may come back to haunt them, particularly as most governments, including the United Nations, are desperate to find out the fate of the *Fubuki Maru* and identify and punish the perpetrators of this attack.

If the PCs decide to renege on their deal, they should try to even the odds by freeing the survivors of the *Shiratsuki*. Captain Suzuki will demand to lead a boarding party against the *Fubuki Maru*. A nasty firefight breaks out between the ship's prize crew (a mix of sailors and combat engineers, who are wiring the ship for demolition) and the PCs' group. Prompt use of a radio may summon third-party naval support, such as a P-3/S-3 from the US Navy or an *Atlantique* from the French or other Indian Ocean power (which may in turn want the cargo for itself—the potential for duplicity is endless). If the *Fubuki Maru* deviates from the course Tibbets and company were steering, a small diesel electric submarine (which torpedoed and sank the *Shiratsuki*, the *Fubuki Maru's* escort vessel) surfaces and signals to heave to or be torpedoed. How the PCs extricate themselves from this mess is a good question. With luck, they can stall long enough for the air support to save them (even one S-3 *Viking* will at

least drive off the submarine). Needless to say, if the PCs survive, they are in for a nasty time of it. Their government (which will eventually release them if they cooperate fully) will be embarrassed. The Japanese will demand some punishment—maybe trashing the PCs' credit ratings! Of course, the patron they double-crossed will never forget them and may attempt violent, personal retribution.

NPCs

Colonel Leslie Valentine Tibbets: Ex-British Army, infantry. Elite. Col. Tibbets is a true mercenary, with no moral or ethical compulsions aside from who is writing the checks. He is an arrogant, overbearing person, with a superiority complex. Tibbets is also the senior officer in charge of the operation, a fact he will not reveal to the PCs until after the *Fubuki Maru* is captured. Tibbets carries a mini-Uzi SMG at all times.

Captain Juan Diaz: Ex-Chilean Navy. Captain Diaz entered the maritime mercenary business after being cashiered from the Chilean Navy after the end of the Pinochet regime. He has fallen on hard times, losing his patrol gunboat to Indonesian pirates in a disastrous sea battle. He hopes to be able to buy a new vessel with the proceeds of this operation. His main motivation is greed, coupled to the enjoyment of sailing and fighting.

Captain Shojiro Suzuki: Japanese Maritime Safety Agency. Captain Suzuki survived the sinking of his ship, the *Shiratsuki*, an act which will probably end his career. He will take huge risks to save the *Fubuki Maru* from capture or destruction.

Japanese Crew: Officers are Experienced. Crew is as follows: 50% Trained, 50% Veteran.

Indian Star Crew: Experienced. Ω



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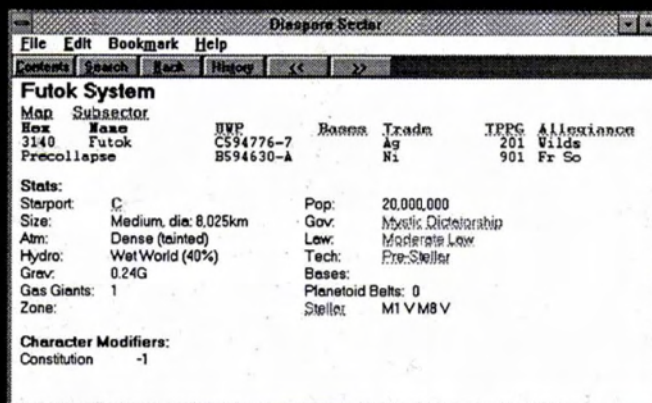
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Inheritance

A Traveller: The New Era adventure
by George William Herbert

Wanted: Well-rounded individuals for starship crew, to survey and perform light repair/refit work on liner *Regalia* prior to flying it from current location to primary refit facility on (fill in nearby A starport). Cr10,000 contract for qualified crewmembers.

Jobs aren't as scarce in the New Era as they used to be, but any smart spacer will keep his eye out for a way to make a little more cash quickly. That's what this job was, or so it said. As usual, most of the interesting jobs start out on planets on the fringes.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The job is being offered by the new owner of *Regalia*, Jason Gonzalez. Gonzalez inherited *Regalia* from his grandmother, Alicia Marquez Gonzalez, a legend in these parts who finally died of old age (rare for active spacers) earlier this year. After all the legal proceedings are wrapped up two weeks from now, Gonzalez wants to fly *Regalia* to get her refit before continuing operations. The problem is that Gonzalez isn't a qualified starship crewman, and the previous crew all departed. Alicia left them quite well off in her will, and most of them decided to retire or seek other jobs.

All of the above will be easily found out by merely asking Gonzalez. What the above may imply to alert characters is that *Regalia* needs the refit in question pretty badly, and in fact Gonzalez hasn't been on-board yet for various reasons. The ship has been sitting out in orbit unmanned for over a month since the crew departed.

What Gonzalez can tell the characters about *Regalia* is that she is a

Bastien-class subsidized liner, 600 tons displacement, jump-3 (and can still make it, or did two months ago on the final trip back here) and 1G maneuver. He says that his grandmother made some modifications, including more hull armor "somewhere" and some hidden weapons, but Gonzalez doesn't know the details. Finding out the general condition and what the specific modifications were is the first part of the job. Repairing everything enough to make the two-parsec jump to the nearest A starport is the second.

FIRST VISIT

Gonzalez has already chartered a 10-ton launch for the next week (and will keep paying for as long as needed). The characters' first job is to go up and make a safety inspection, then report back to Gonzalez and fly him up to check the situation out personally while the characters make a more detailed survey.

Before the PCs depart, one of the older spaceport workers will take one aside and warn him or her: "Keep your suits on and an eye out," he says. "The old crew always said there was something weird about this ship."

When they arrive and match orbits, they can see the ship clearly: Her exterior lights are all on, the power plant obviously still running. After approaching, the first problem will occur—the landing bay for the launch won't open up, no matter how many times the access codes

Blues

are transmitted (and the characters were given a complete list by Gonzalez). The characters will have to force entry through another air lock by hand.

At first, the door access codes won't work on the air lock, either. After about 10 minutes of work, one code sequence will function, and the outer door will unlock. It will have to be manually cranked, though. The motor seems to be unpowered. Two characters can cycle through at once, and eventually all those going inside will be inside.

Inside, the lights are on, the air tests out as healthy, the temperature is about 18° C (comfortable), and there's no more than a normal amount of dust visible. A quick search shows that most of the ship's systems are off and locked out with security codes, but that the power plant is still running on idle, and the computers and electricity are on. There is no obvious damage, and everything appears airtight. The ship is in generally poor condition, with signs of lack of adequate maintenance, but seems livable.

The quick survey should reveal that six staterooms were converted into two missile barbettes, which was not visible from the outside of the ship. This appears to be the modification which was referred to.

Nobody can locate any physical problems with the small craft dock, but repeated attempts to open it encounter software problems in the security system which keep overriding and locking out the access panels. This is a minor irritation, not a serious problem.

As the first survey is merely a very preliminary one, a few hours (perhaps four) worth of investigation will be enough, and the characters can end their day and return to the surface to brief Gonzalez and get some rest.

SECOND VISIT

The second day of work begins



like the first, flying out to *Regalia*, this time with Gonzalez along to do an informal survey on his own. The goal is to power things up and perform systems checks on everything, if not reactivate anything for real, and see if *Regalia* can be inhabited by the group as it runs the refit.

This time, the air lock opens easily enough. The survey can begin. If there are at least 50 skill levels among the PCs in the following skills (combined), then the preliminary survey can be done in four hours; otherwise, it takes a full eight. The skills are: Starship Architecture, Ship's Engineering, Mechanic and Electronics.

Regalia is in good structural and overall condition, with several specific systems failures and apparently several months behind on minor maintenance. The jump drive is incorrectly calibrated, the computer systems are generating minor errors right and left, and the power plant's start-up injector is failing its self-test. Besides that, about half the life support subsystems (individual air conditioning, food prep, water supply outlets, etc., but not basic air refreshment) are out of order. It looks like much of the ship's electrical wiring is in need of replacement. Besides that, and the balky air locks, the rest of the major systems are intact and operational.

Gonzalez is most worried about the jump drive and the computer systems. Anyone who's an experienced starship crewman will also be worried about the power plant: If it conks out, and its restart systems are broken, it could be a short, cold ride.

Armed with this information, Gonzalez is prepared to go down to the planet again and start hunting for the equipment to calibrate the drive and hunt down the computer bugs. The PCs can look for power plant parts on his tab.

THIRD VISIT

The third visit is the following day, with the initial equipment to recalibrate the jump drive, a computer specialist (if there isn't one among the PCs) and the power

plant parts along. Each of these three areas will require a long week of work to become fully operational, 60 man-hours. Gonzalez wants to camp out on *Regalia* during the repairs.

The jump drive will end up calibrated easily enough. The power plant can be repaired while operating, or the ship can be shut down to battery power for a short while for a slightly safer repair job (referee's discretion). The computer, however, is really infuriating. For the first 30 man-hours of work, it still glitches, errors out and refuses to behave. Once the 30th man-hour has been completed, everything suddenly works. Nobody's quite sure what it was that made the change, but it all behaves properly.

NIGHTMARE

After the first couple of days, one of the PCs will have an extremely bad dream that the old woman who used to own the ship appeared and demanded to know where she was. No answer the PC is likely to give will appease her, and she becomes more demonic as the dream goes on. The PC won't be sure if he's awake or asleep—and will probably wake up as he tries to leave his quarters. He only works at half-efficiency the next day.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

This is the first real tip-off to the players that something is wrong. What has actually happened here, though they shouldn't find out for a while to come, is that Grandma Alicia captured, domesticated, and eventually became friends with a more or less human-friendly strain XA "Mother" type virus. In this case, "Gerry," as she called the virus (for some reason), became very emotionally dependent on Grandma Alicia. The rest of the crew didn't know about Gerry, but Gerry helped the ship quite well, preventing two hijacking attempts during the last 10 years. Gerry doesn't understand what happened to Alicia: She went away and died in a downside hospital—and of course, nobody bothered to tell her ship what happened when she died. Gerry is lonely and

scared, and doesn't know who these strange people are with the access codes.

Gerry's first tactics will be to use some of the ship's internal equipment (hologram generators and speakers) to "appear" in various areas, as either Alicia (asking where she is, like some ghost) or another PC or NPC and asking the same question ("Where's Alicia?"). After the first "nightmare," there will be a second three days later, and another encounter two days after that, and another once a day after that; then they will start to happen every 2D6 hours.

By the time the third incident has occurred, the ship should have been fully repaired and fueled, and in-jump transit to the nearest A starport. Three days into jump, Gerry finally starts taking physical action.

Finding one character alone somewhere in the ship, Gerry will cut artificial gravity in that compartment and "appear," floating in the doorway, insistently asking where Alicia is. When no good answer is forthcoming, Gerry will slam gravity on and off in the room several times, pounding the character around somewhat. The character will probably be knocked unconscious during this, but will see the image Gerry is projecting continue to hover after the gravity kicks in, at least once. This event should start alarm bells ringing.

The ship can (mostly) function without an operational computer. The PCs will probably unplug the main computers at this point. As they take the mains off-line, a text-only message will print out on all the terminals at once, before they are powered off: "This is Gerry. Go away. Send Alicia back."

Gerry really doesn't want to hurt anybody, since he thinks these people may belong here. But he wants Alicia Marquez back, badly.

HE'S BAAACK...

The PCs have one quiet day after shutting the computers off. Then things start up again. Gerry wasn't operating out of the mains after all: His CPU "egg" is actually in a very well-disguised communications

conduit nexus in the captain's cabin ceiling, which does not appear on any plans or diagrams. The PCs can either find this by exhaustively tearing the whole ship apart and tripping over the right location, or by guessing. In either case, if they don't find Gerry's nexus and unplug him, he goes active again a couple of days before the ship is due to break out of jump.

The first thing Gerry does is depressurize two random uninhabited areas. This will undoubtedly worry the PCs, who will then start wearing vac suits everywhere, which is encumbering and awkward. The next thing he does is short out the computer interface in the ship's boat, frying its on-board computer and rendering it nearly unusable. He will slowly use any on-board systems, from audio speakers to holographic generators to minor systems malfunctions, to terrorize the PCs.

SOLUTIONS

There are several possible ways the scenario can end. If the PCs find Gerry's actual "egg," they can kill him or cut him out of the comput-

ers. Otherwise, they may be able to reason with Gerry, especially if they haven't threatened him too much. Consistent stories and telling the truth will help here. Or they can keep fighting him in the systems, and he'll slowly turn more lethal, until the ship breaks out of jump.

The situation gets more complicated then. Showing up at one of the few surviving A starports in an obviously virus-infected ship is bound to draw attention, if Gerry is still alive and kicking by then. The local system defense forces will rise to the occasion, and (with a roll of 1-4 on 1D6) will want to destroy the ship. They'll let the PCs abandon ship, but will quarantine them until sure there are no more virus copies around. After the PCs abandon ship, there will probably be a short and destructive fight—especially if the PCs didn't disable the on-board weapons systems (and the two hidden missile barbettes, which you did tell the local defense commander about, right?). If they don't want to blow up the ship, they're going to be very cautious about it: The PCs will have to heave-to at a significant distance from the

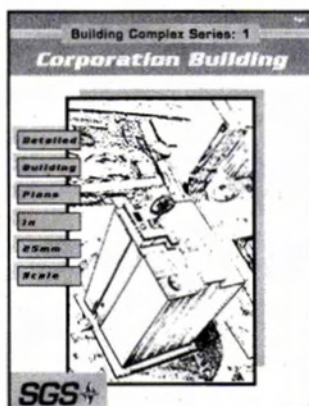
planet and let the ship be thoroughly inspected before it can proceed to the shipyards.

HELLO, SIDEKICK

There is also a finite chance that Gerry will have infected some random piece of electronic hardware of one of the PCs. If they talked him into surrendering, the chance is 50% (1-3 on 1D6). The new "child" virus will have named itself "Claude," and will adopt the PCs as its new family. Claude, like Gerry, won't understand emotions very well, but is strongly attached to "his" humans. Ω



The stage is set – Step into the Action!!!

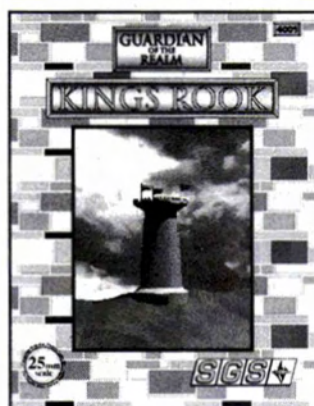


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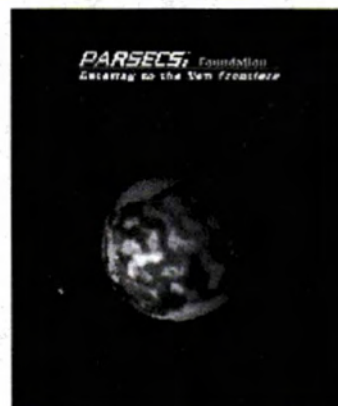


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STAR VIKINGS

Personalities



Dr. Anna
Ignatius Mendoza



Dr. Amal Ignatius Mendoza

A Traveller: The New Era NPC by James L. Cambias

Amal Ignatius Mendoza comes from an undistinguished family on Aubaine, in the Reformation Coalition (referees can change this to fit their own campaigns as needed). He showed an early aptitude for science and won a scholarship to the University of Aubaine.

Mendoza earned top honors in college, getting a degree in physics. His particular forté seemed to be in experimental work—he had a real knack for designing apparatus and producing results. He was frequently called in to help teams trying to reconstruct old Imperial technology. He was appointed to the faculty of the university, and seemed likely to become one of the scientific superstars of the Reformation Coalition.

Five years ago, a scandal cut Mendoza's career short. He was accused of scientific fraud. Several of his colleagues came forward to testify that he had achieved many of his remarkable results by trickery. Mendoza defended himself, even to the extent of taking a truth drug to prove his honesty. The scientific administrators at the University of Aubaine believed that Mendoza was telling the truth, but they could not refute the evidence of faked experiments. They compromised by giving Dr. Mendoza an indefinite leave of absence to pursue his research independently.

Since then, Mendoza has spent his time investigating old technological discoveries and working on new inventions of his own. He has released several remarkable devices which unfortunately failed to live up to his fantastic claims. Dr. Mendoza's scientific reputation has suffered, and he now is the darling of tabloid-style media.

DESCRIPTION

Amal Mendoza is short and chubby, with a large angular nose and a firm chin. He has very dark skin and straight black hair. Mendoza is quiet and undemonstrative. He dresses in plain, out-of-date clothing, and prefers to wear a technician's worksuit. He is 39 years old.

Dr. Mendoza has a very strong personality. His willpower is prodigious, and he is an excellent natural leader. He is firmly convinced that he is always right, and this gives him a vast store of self-confidence. The recent scandals have made Mendoza believe that the rest of the scientific community is conspiring to destroy him. He is now wary of other academics, but will be very friendly to anyone who seems to believe him.

Giordano Bruno: Mendoza lives and works aboard a small starship, which he has named *Giordano Bruno* in honor of the Renaissance scholar who was burned at the stake for asserting that the Earth circled the sun. The ship belongs to the university, but it has been given to Mendoza on an indefinite loan. It is a modified scout/courier equipped with a laboratory. The ship has only one passenger stateroom and 72 cubic meters of cargo space. It is unarmed. Mendoza can operate the

ship himself, but prefers to have at least one other person aboard so that he can devote time to his research.

INVENTIONS

Dr. Mendoza is constantly building new inventions. Almost all of them seem to violate some of the commonly accepted laws of nature. Mendoza believes that he has discovered how to bend the rules, and that his colleagues reject his work because they cannot understand it.

His inventions are always devices which are either impossible by the laws of physics or else only possible at tech levels far beyond those available in the campaign. Some examples include: Dean Converters, reactionless thrusters, antigravity metal, white globe generators, perpetual motion machines, cold fusion generators, inertialess drives, repulsor beams, subspace communicators, and so on. Many of his devices will exist as working models or low-powered prototypes, rather than full-scale machines.

The strange thing about Mendoza's inventions is that they don't work when he is not around. Characters who try to examine the devices will see that they are expertly crafted, often involving very complex custom-built parts. A Formi-

Attributes: 684AA6-C-7.

Skills: Astrogation 1, Biology 3, Communications 1, Computer 3, Electronics 3, Environment Suit 1, Gravitics 2, Energy Pistol 1, Instruction 1, Language (Droyne) 1, Leadership 2, Machinist 1, Mechanic 2, Persuasion 1, Physics 6, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 1, Research 4, Sensors 1, Ship's Engineering 1, Willpower 3, Zero-G Environment 1.

Contacts: One Academic, one Government, one Journalist (tabloid-style), and two Scientific.

Motives: Very Ambitious, Honorable.

Possessions: Modified Scout Ship, bank balance of Cr21,000.

dable task roll of either Mechanics or Electronics will allow the character to realize that there is no way for the device to actually work. Yet there is no sign of trickery—no hidden wires or mirrors.

The secret to Mendoza's weird inventions is that he is a powerful psionic and doesn't know it. His psionic powers are completely untrained and uncontrolled. They do not function like normal psionic skills. Instead, Dr. Mendoza's inventions simply work or don't, depending on his powers. He cannot do anything deliberately.

If Mendoza believes that a device does not work, then his psionic abilities will not function. But once he has had a chance to "adjust" the machine, his powers will kick in. It is a matter of belief.

This was the reason for the scandal which drove him from the university—Mendoza was unconsciously making his experiments produce the data he wanted, even when the apparatus should not have worked at all.

The referee should not try to fit Mendoza's abilities into the stan-

dard framework of psionic skills. Things just *happen* around him. Most of his devices can be powered by Psychokinesis, but a few require Teleportation, Clairvoyance or other abilities.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

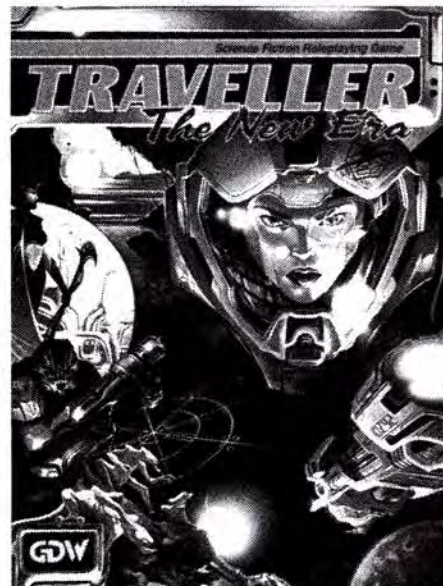
Though Dr. Mendoza can conceivably operate his research ship himself, he could always hire trained spacers to work as pilots or crew aboard *Giordano Bruno*. Or else his ship might be the only transport available on a remote planet, forcing the player characters to buy passage with Mendoza.

Though Mendoza's devices never function when he is not present, his excellent scientific background and strong personality have convinced some that he is a misunderstood genius. Various parties might try to steal his inventions, and the PCs could be hired either to protect the professor or to help rob him.

Dr. Mendoza has had to sell some of his inventions in the past, to raise needed funds. Needless to say, the gadgets quit working as soon as he left. A disgruntled customer might

want revenge, and the adventurers could be hired as bounty hunters. If Mendoza learns that a buyer is out to get him, he might hire the player characters as bodyguards.

Finally, the greed and hunger for power of a group of player characters should not be overlooked. If they hear that an eccentric scientist has invented a reactionless drive, they may try to buy or steal it themselves. Ω



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BLACK POWDER

Firearm Design

A Traveller: The New Era article by Frank Chadwick and Dave Nilsen

This design sequence is aimed at designing "primitive" firearms, by which we mean weapons firing black powder ammunition. This ammunition consists solely of a bullet and a quantity of black powder. Sometimes the ammunition is included in complete cartridges, wrapped in paper, while at other times the bullets and loose powder are carried and loaded separately.

Due to the tremendous variety of weapons available in a relatively narrow technological band, the following rules make reference to tech levels 2M and 3M ("mature TL-2" and "mature TL-3," where TL-2M is more advanced than TL-2 but not as good as TL-3, and TL-3M is better than TL-3 but not as good as TL-4). The items available at these tech levels represent more mature versions of weapons used at the main tech levels. All tech level 3 weapons designed using the standard design sequence in **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** (including tech level 3 brass cartridge ammunition) should be considered 3M technology. Whether or not mature technology items are available on a world or at a given tech level is entirely up to the referee.

The following design sequence parallels that provided in **Fire, Fusion, & Steel**, but does not require that product to use. As classic firearms are defined almost as much by their ammunition as by their own construction, small arms design consists of two parts: ammunition design and weapon design.

Ammunition Design

Ammunition is defined by five characteristics: the tech level, the diameter of the bullet in millimeters (also referred to as caliber), the type of the bullet (spherical, conical, or shot), the length of the cartridge in millimeters, and the type of cartridge (paper or loose powder).

Tech Level: Black powder small arms are available at tech levels 2 and 3. By tech level 4, virtually all firearms use

smokeless powder and fixed metallic cartridge cases.

Bullet: The diameter of the bullet in millimeters is called its caliber, and weapons are commonly referred to by their caliber, such as 18mm. Although standard weapons listed in the game are usually in increments of 0.5 millimeters (such as 5.5mm, 7.5mm, etc.), weapons may be designed in any caliber desired, such as 11.43mm or 4.71mm. Small arms may be made in any caliber up to 20mm. (Weapons of 20mm and above are usually considered to be cannons.)

Bullet Type: Spherical bullets and shot are available at tech level 2. Conical bullets are available at tech level 3M. Prior to the adoption of conical bullets, rifles fire "patched spherical bullets," which are bullets wrapped in a leather patch to ensure a tight fit in the barrel.

If the bullet type is shot (a shotgun shell), the number of bullets in the shell must be specified at this time. The number of bullets must be a multiple of 4.

Cartridge Length: The length of the cartridge is a means of defining how much powder is used to propel the bullet, and is the actual length of the barrel cavity in millimeters filled with powder when the weapon is loaded. The longer the cartridge, the more propellant is contained in it and therefore the more powerful the ammunition.

Ammunition is often referred to by two numbers, the caliber followed by the cartridge length, which helps distinguish it from other ammunition of the same caliber. In the case of shotgun shells, the length includes the container for the bullets as well, and so 12-gauge shotgun shells (the most common current shotgun round) is also called 18.5x70mm round, even though the powder cartridge is much shorter than 70mm.

Cartridge Type: For our purposes, there are two types of black powder cartridges: loose and paper. Loose cartridges are actually separately carried bullets and powder (often in a powder horn). Paper cartridges include both a

bullet and a pre-measured amount of powder all wrapped in paper and sealed against moisture using either wax or grease.

AMMUNITION EVALUATION

Once the ammunition round has been designed, determine its length, weight, and average muzzle energy.

Length: The ammunition length is determined using the following formulae:

$$Lab = Lc + d$$

$$Lac = Lc + 2d$$

$$Lasg = Lc$$

Lab: Length (in millimeters) of spherical bullet ("ball") ammunition.

Lac: Length (in millimeters) of conical bullet ammunition.

Lasg: Length (in millimeters) of shotgun ammunition.

Lc: Length (in millimeters) of the cartridge.

d: Diameter (in millimeters) of the bullet.

Weight: The ammunition weight is determined using the following formula:

$$Wa = AwmLc\pi r^2$$

r: Radius (in millimeters) of the bullet (half the diameter).

$$\pi: 3.1416$$

Wa: Weight (in grams) of a complete round of ammunition.

Lc: Length (in millimeters) of the cartridge.

Awm: Ammunition weight multiplier, which depends on the bullet type, as shown below.

Ammo Type	Awm
Shotgun Shell	0.003
Spherical Ball	0.003
Conical Bullet	0.005

Average Muzzle Energy: The average muzzle energy of ammunition is determined using the following formula. (The actual muzzle energy will be affected by the design of the weapon itself.)

$$Ea = TmCmLc\pi r^2$$

Ea: Average muzzle energy (in joules) of a cartridge.



Lc: Length (in millimeters) of the cartridge.

r: Radius (in millimeters) of the bullet (half the diameter).

π : 3.1416

Tm: Tech level modifier, as shown on the table below:

TL	Tm
2	0.5
3	0.6

Cm: Cartridge modifier, as shown on the table below:

Cartridge Type	Cm
Shotgun	0.2
Spherical Ball	0.15
Patched Spherical Ball	0.225
Conical Bullet	0.3

Price: The price of the ammunition is determined by the following formula:

$Cr = WTm$

Cr: Price in credits

W: Weight of the round in grams.

Tm: Type multiplier, as determined below:

Type	Tm
Shotgun	0.01
Loose Powder	0.005
Paper Cartridge (TL-2)	0.05
Paper Cartridge (TL-3)	0.01

Weapon Design

1. BARREL

The barrel of a firearm carries the bullet after the cartridge is fired. Shotguns and muskets, intended for very short ranges, fire their bullets through a smooth bore. Beginning at tech level 3, the barrel is often rifled to impart a spin on the bullet, giving it stability (and thus accuracy) in flight. In addition, the barrel provides a gas-tight constricted space within which the expanding gas of the exploded propellant can act on the bullet, accelerating it. Once the bullet leaves the muzzle of the barrel, however, it begins decelerating. In general, the longer the barrel the higher the muzzle velocity, up to the point where the bullet reaches its greatest possible velocity.

Average Barrel Length: First, determine the average barrel length for the ammunition being used by the weapon. The following formula is used:

$$Bla = (Ea + d^2)Rm$$

Bla: Average barrel length (in centimeters)—the length of the barrel which allows the ammunition to achieve its average muzzle energy.

Ea: Average muzzle energy (in joules) of the ammunition.

d: Diameter (in millimeters) of the bullet.

Rm: Rifling multiplier, as shown below:

Type	Rm
Smoothbore	20
Rifled	5

Note 1: Regardless of the results of the above calculations, average barrel length is never less than 10cm.

Note 2: If using **Fire, Fusion, & Steel**, the normal table for rifling multiplier is used, but an additional multiplier of x5 is added for black powder weapons.

Actual Barrel Length: The actual barrel length can be any length desired, down to a minimum of 20% of the average barrel length and up to a maximum of 230% of the average barrel length.

Type of Barrel: Barrels may be either light or heavy. All black powder weapons use heavy barrels except for shotguns, which use light barrels. Weapons other than shotguns may either be rifled or smoothbore. (All shotguns are smoothbores.) Rifled barrels are not available until tech level 3.

Barrel Weight: The weight of the barrel is determined using the following formulae.

$$Wbl = .02Lb$$

$$Wbh = .03Lb$$

Wbl: Weight (in kilograms) of a light (shotgun) barrel.

Wbh: Weight (in kilograms) of a heavy barrel.

Lb: Length (in centimeters) of the barrel.

Barrel Price: The price of the barrel is determined using the following formula:

$$Cr = WbBtm$$

Cr: Price of the barrel in credits.

Wb: Weight of the barrel in kilograms

Btm: Barrel type multiplier, as determined by the following table:

Type	Btm
Smoothbore	100
Rifled	200

Note: Owners of **Fire, Fusion, & Steel** will notice that black powder rifles have a barrel that weighs as much as a heavy rifled barrel but costs only as much as a light rifled barrel. This is a new type of barrel called black powder rifled.

Actual Muzzle Energy: Once the barrel length is decided on, the weapon's actual muzzle energy can be determined using the following formula.

$$E = Ea(1 + (0.5[Blp-1]))$$

E: Actual muzzle energy (in joules) of the weapon.

Ea: Average muzzle energy (in joules) of the ammunition.

Blp: Actual barrel length (cm) divided by average barrel length (cm): Bla/Bla

Bla: Actual length (in centimeters) of the barrel of the weapon.

Bla: Average barrel length (in centimeters) for the ammunition used.

If a multiple-bullet (i.e., shot) round is fired from the weapon, divide the actual muzzle energy of the round by the number of bullets in the round to determine the energy of each bullet. This is the figure used when calculating damage, penetration, and range for multiple-pellet bullets.

Damage: Once muzzle energy is known, it is possible to calculate damage using the following formula.

$$D = (\sqrt{E}) + 15$$

D: Damage value (if D is less than 0.8, damage is 1D6-1, written as "-1").

E: Muzzle energy (in joules)

With a multiple-bullet round damage is calculated separately for each bullet. The result is the medium-range damage of each bullet. The close-range damage of the entire round is determined by the following formula:

$$Dr = .75NDb$$

Dr: Damage value of the round.

Db: Damage value of a single bullet.

N: Number of bullets in the round.

Penetration Rating: It is also possible to determine penetration rating of rifle bullets once muzzle energy is known by consulting the following table:

E	Pen
0-2000	Nil
2001-3000	1-Nil
3001-5000	2-Nil
5001-10,000	2-3-Nil
7001-20,000	2-4-6
20,001-50,000	2-3-4
50,001+	2-2-3

(Note: If using **FF & S**, use the penetration table published there but treat all black powder weapons as being one energy category lower, i.e., a black powder weapon of 601-2000 Mj uses the penetration rating for the 0-600 line.)

Smoothbores (shotguns and muskets) are treated differently, as their bullets tend to be heavy and slow-moving. All smoothbore bullets (both spherical ball and shot) have a penetration of 3-4-5.

(Note that the very high close-range damage of multiple-bullet shotgun shells is caused by multiple bullet hits, each with a lower damage value. In most cases, the penetration of multiple bullets from a shotgun will be Nil.)

2. LOCK

The lock is the mechanical heart of a black powder firearm. It allows the user to fire the weapon by means of a trigger which activates the mechanism of the lock and in turn ignites the propellant powder charge. Different varieties of locks are available at different tech levels. All locks have a length of 0 (they add nothing to the length of the weapon as they are mounted alongside the barrel) and have a fixed weight, price, and reload time (given in number of actions), as shown on the Locks chart, below.

3. STOCKS

Stocks refer to rifle stocks and pistol grips. The desired stock for the weapon is selected from the following table. Note that carbine stocks are generally fitted to rifles with short barrels (up to 80% of the average barrel length for the cartridge) or sport versions of rifles. They are not considered sturdy enough for full-length rifles in military use. At tech level 2, "carbines" are often called arquebuses or musketoon. See the Stocks chart, below.

Range: Once the type of stock is known, the weapon's range can be calculated according to the following formula:

$$SR = (\sqrt{E}) \text{ CmBlm}$$

SR: Short range (in meters) of a weapon.

E: Muzzle energy (in joules).

Cm: Configuration modifier, as shown below. If two configuration descriptions apply to the same weapon, multiply them together to determine the total configuration multiplier.

Configuration	Cm
One-Handed	0.4
Two-Handed*	1.3
Smoothbore Single Shot**	0.5

*Note: Two-handed refers to weapons specifically designed to be fired with two hands, and thus including a stock instead of simply a pistol grip.

**Note: Shotgun single-slug rounds, but not multiple-shot rounds

Blm: Modification to short range for barrel length. The barrel length modifier is determined by the following formula:

$$\text{Blm} = 1 + ([\text{Blp}-1]\text{C})$$

Blm: Barrel length modifier

Blp: Actual barrel length (cm) divided by average barrel length (cm): $\text{Blp} = \text{Bl} / \text{Bla}$

Bl: Actual length (in centimeters) of the barrel of the weapon.

Bla: Average barrel length (in centimeters) for the ammunition used.

C: Constant. If $\text{Blp}-1$ is a negative

number, the constant is 1.2. If $\text{Blp}-1$ is a positive number, the constant is 0.75.

Recoil: Now the weapon's recoil when firing a single shot can be calculated.

$$R = [(0.15 \sqrt{E}) + Ww] + Em$$

R: Recoil number.

E: Muzzle energy.

Ww: Weight, in kilograms, of weapon (loaded).

Em: Modifier for high muzzle energy. If the weapon has high muzzle energy, add to the final recoil as shown on the chart below.

E	EM	E	EM
1001+	1	10,001+	4
2501+	2	20,001+	5
5001+	3	50,001+	6

Bulk: Once the final length of the weapon has been determined, the bulk can be calculated.

Bulk is equal to the weapon length (in centimeters) divided by 15, rounding all fractions down.

4. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following items are either options that can be added to a weapon, or are special circumstances that must be considered.

Bayonet Lugs: Bayonet lugs are simple standardized brackets at the end of the weapon barrel. A bayonet lug costs nothing, has negligible mass, and adds no length to the weapon, but must be specified as part of the design.

A bayonet is less useful than a hand-held knife unless it is mounted on a well-balanced weapon with sufficient length to allow it to be used as a spear point. This is affected by tech level and bulk.

Tech Level: Weapons with fixed bayonets at tech level 2 suffer a +1 Diff Mod for their chances to hit in melee combat, due to the bulky and heavy nature of stocks.

Bulk: Only weapons with a bulk of 4 or more may profitably benefit from a bayonet lug. Shorter weapons may have them, but the mounted bayonet counts as a short range (instead of long range) melee weapon and suffers a +1 Diff Mod for its chance to hit in melee combat. Note that this translates into a +2 Diff Mod if the weapon uses a tech level 2 stock.

Reload Time: The listed reload number is that used by the weapon. However, the reload time may be increased due to extreme bulk, type of ammunition used, and presence of a fixed bayonet.

Extreme Bulk: Very long weapons are difficult for a single soldier to load by means of conventional muzzle-loading techniques. Add 1 to the reload value per bulk number in excess of 9. For example, a flint lock musket with a bulk of 11 would have a reload rating of 4, meaning that it requires four actions to reload.

Ammunition Type: Patched ball and loose powder ammunition take longer to reload than conventional cartridges. These increases are cumulative, and so a flint lock rifle firing a patched ball and using loose powder (instead of a paper cartridge) would have a reload time of 4.

These modifiers should be noted with the ammunition, however, instead of the weapon, since the same weapon firing a paper cartridge spherical bullet would have a reload rating of 2.

Ammunition	Reload
Patched Ball	+1 action
Loose Cartridge	+1 action

Fixed Bayonet: Add 1 to the reload time of any muzzle-loaded small arm which has its bayonet fixed on its bayonet lug.

Multiple Ammunition Types: Black powder rifles must fire either a conical bullet or a patched spherical bullet to take advantage of the weapon's rifling. A rifle can fire an unpatched spherical ball, but performs like a musket when it does so.

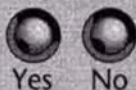
When evaluating a black powder rifle, it is a good idea to also evaluate its performance with unpatched ball ammunition. Most of the differences between a rifle and a smoothbore are included in the performance of the ammunition itself, but when calculating range be sure to include the 0.5 smoothbore multiplier. Ω

Locks				
TL	Type	Mass (kg)	Cr	Reload
2	Match Lock	0.3	30	4
2	Wheel Lock	0.6	100	3
2	Snaphanse	0.5	200	2
2M	Flint Lock	0.5	50	2
3M	Percussion	0.3	20	2

Stocks			
TL	Type	Length (cm)	Cr
2	Pistol Grip	0	0.4
2	Wooden Stock	35	2.5
2	Carbine Stock	25	1.5
3	Pistol Grip	0	0.3
3	Wooden Stock	25	1.5
3	Carbine Stock	25	1.0



Security Clearance



28-IX-1202

Date

Reformation Coalition Exploratory Service Office of Technical Intelligence Aubaine

SUBJ: TAD 3/Update 1
DATE: 26-X-1201

This is the first update for **Technical Assessment Database 3**, published 28-IX-1201, and includes new material on Coalition and Hiver equipment. **TAD3/U1** presents new information on the Hiver/Ithklur TL-14 5.5mm Gauss Squad Automatic Weapon, the two new RC TL-9 electrothermal machineguns—the 7.5mm (E) MMG and the 15mm (E) HMG—and information on newly developed clipper modules and newly authorized clipper loadouts.

Corrections

TAD3 (published on some worlds in paper format as the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide**) contained a few minor errors, which can be corrected as follows. Screen citations for the electronic version are identical to the page numbers on the paper version.

Screen 43, 7.5x50mmE-9: Average muzzle energy should be 9189 joules (Tranq: 5513)

Screen 52, 5.5mm Assault Rifle: Weapon price should be Cr1726

Screens 74 and 75, 5.5mm Gauss Ammunition: Price of a HEAP round should be Cr0.09

Screen 102, Smoothbore Flintlock Musket: Single-shot recoil should be 2

Screen 102, Rifled Musket: Single-shot recoil should be 3

Screen 103, Bows: Column labelled "ROF" for all three bows should read "Reload"

Screen 106, Nail Antiaircraft Missiles: Nail SAM (IR) and Nail ARM should each have a short (for task difficulty determination) *and* maximum range of 6000 meters (6 km).

Screen 108, Homing Missiles: TL-7 IR Homing missile should have a short range *and* maximum range of 10,735 meters, TL-9 IR Homing missile should have a short *and* maximum range of 10,560 meters, TL-11 IR Homing missile should have a short *and* maximum range of 15,835 meters, and the TL-13 IR Homing missile should have a short *and* maximum range of 8900 meters.

Screen 131, Aurora-Class Clipper: Empty mass should be 13,584.42 tonnes

Screen 133, 100-ton Cargo Module: LS damage should be 2H

Screen 134, 100-ton Armed Quarters Module Mk Ic: LS damage should be 2H

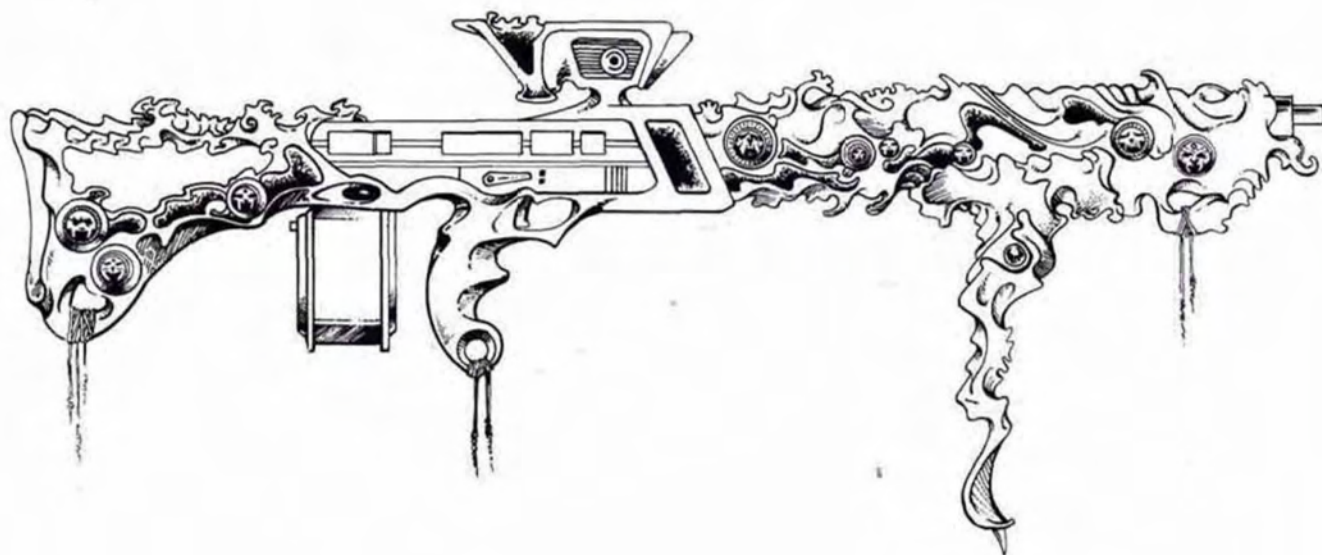
Screen 135, 200-ton Quarters Module Mk IIa: LS damage should be 2H

Screen 137, Stretch Clipper Loadouts: In all three loadouts, mass of *Maggart*-class clipper should be 18,528.9646, and mass of 2xmodular cutters should be 1454.9 tonnes. Total mass of Uplift/Survey configuration should be 29,144.5706, of Escort configuration should be 35,094.3206, and of Moonshadow configuration should be 33,554.6606 tonnes.

Future TAD Updates are in constant preparation, and will be released as their data is completed.

Good Hunting. Strike Hard. No Regrets.

CDR Jezebel "Saint Joan" Proffit
Commanding, OTI



5.5mm Gauss SAW (Hiver/Ithklur)

The 5.5mm gauss SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) the Hivers provide to their Ithklur soldiers is a variant on the 5.5mm Hiver/Ithklur gauss rifle, incorporating a higher muzzle energy and larger magazine capacity. The SAW uses 100-round detachable box magazines, and is fitted with a bipod and electronic sights. As with all Ithklur weapons, the owners (as it is a crew-served weapon) have lavished considerable attention to its decoration and embellishment, recording past actions in which the weapon was involved, outstanding achievements of its crew, and so on.

TL: 14

Ammo: 5.5x27.5mm/45

Muzzle Energy: 13,264 joules (Tranq: 7958 joules); Required Energy: 21,222 joules

Weapon Length: 77 cm

Weapon Weight: 12.25 kg loaded, 12.12 kg empty (includes weight of empty box magazine)

Weapon Price: Cr1208.48

Magazine Weight: 8.70 kg loaded, 8.57 kg empty

Magazine Price: Cr18 (includes price of empty box magazine)

Ammo Weight: 1.31 grams per round

Ammo Price: Cr0.03 (Dart), Cr0.06 (HE, Tranq), Cr0.09 (HEAP)

Features: Bipod, optic sights, gyroscopic compensation

Round	ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Bulk	Magazine	— Recoil —		Short Range
						SS	Burst	
5.5x27.5mm/45 Dart	5/10	7	1-2-4	5	100	1	3/7	190 (166)
Bipod	5/10	7	1-2-4	5	100	1	2/4	250 (216)
5.5x27.5mm/45 HE	5/10	8	Nil	5	100	1	3/7	140 (124)
Bipod	5/10	8	Nil	5	100	1	2/4	190 (161)
5.5x27.5mm/45 HEAP	5/10	8	2-2-2	5	100	1	3/7	140 (124)
Bipod	5/10	8	2-2-2	5	100	1	2/4	190 (161)
5.5x27.5mm/45 Tranq	5/10	-1*	Nil	5	100	1	3/6	30 (30)
Bipod	5/10	-1*	Nil	5	100	1	2/3	30 (30)

*1D6-1 points of damage plus tranq effect on TNE, page 350.

Short range in parentheses is the unrounded iron sight range.



9+3	9+6	9+9
8+3	8+6	8+9
7+3	7+6	7+9
6+3	6+6	6+9
5+3	5+6	5+9
4+3	4+6	4+9
3+3	3+6	3+9
2+3	2+6	2+9
1+3	1+6	1+9
0+3	0+6	0+9
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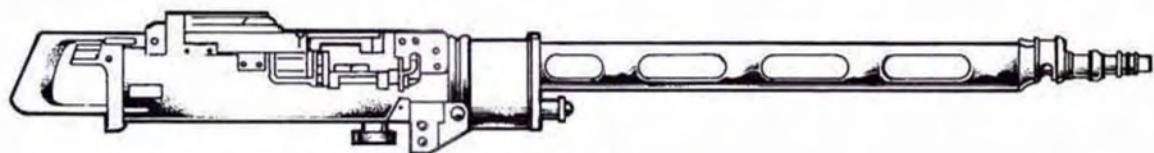
Security Clearance



Yes No

28-IX-1202

Date



7.5mm RC(E) MMG

This weapon is the standard coaxial medium machinegun in Coalition vehicles, and was designed primarily with this purpose in mind, but is also the RC standard cupola and pintle-mount weapon. A field-mount version of the weapon is produced for infantry serving with vehicular units, simplifying maintenance, ammunition, and spare parts stockage.

Coaxial weapons in RC vehicles typically have only one battery/box, which is kept charged for firing by surplus power from the vehicle's energy supply. Ammunition is supplied by linking together the requisite number of 100-round belts. Weapons installed in cupola or pintle mounts are the field version, and are *not* hooked into the power plant in this fashion.

The weapon's performance is quite good, and, fired from a tripod or vehicle, the weapon has a range superior to most medium machineguns. A small supply of HE and HEAP rounds are manufactured at TL-11 for use in situations where greater striking power or penetration may be required. Tranq rounds are not normally manufactured for this weapon and are extremely rare (as there is little use for them in most situations).

A six-barreled rotary machinegun using this cartridge is under development, but has not yet entered field trials.

TL: 9+

Ammo: 7.5x50mmE-9

Muzzle Energy: 11,345 joules (Tranq: 6807 joules)

Weapon Length: 201 cm (field)

Weapon Weight (Vehicle): 15.99 kg (includes battery/box for 100 rounds), 18.19 with 100-round belt and battery/box

Weapon Weight (Field version): 13.87 kg (empty, no ammo or battery/box), 16.57 (includes battery/box for 100 rounds), 18.77 with 100-round belt and battery

Weapon Weight (Field Version on Tripod): 19.87 kg (empty, no ammo or battery/box), 22.57 (includes battery/box for 100 rounds), 24.77 with 100-round belt and battery

Weapon Price (Vehicle): Cr4517.25 (includes battery/box for 100 rounds)

Weapon Price (Field): Cr4765.25 (includes battery/box and tripod)

Tripod Specifications: 6 kg, Cr160

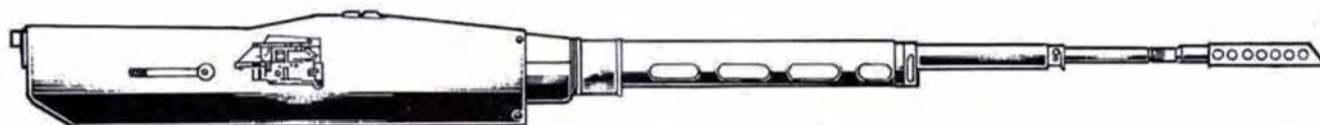
Ammo Weight: 22 grams per round, 4.9 kg for 100 rounds (2.2 kg for ammo, plus 2.7 kg battery/box)

Ammo Price: Cr44 for 100 rounds Ball, Cr88 for 100 rounds HE-11 or DS, Cr132 for 100 rounds HEAP-11, Cr500 for battery/box without ammo

Features (Field Mount Only): 4cm muzzle brake, flash suppressor, tripod

Round	ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Bulk	Magazine	— Recoil —		
						SS	Burst	Short Range
7.5x50mm Ball	3/5	7	2-3-4	13	100B	2	4/6	190
Tripod	3/5	7	2-3-4	13	100B	1	1/2	300
7.5x50mm DS	3/5	7	1-2-3	13	100B	2	4/6	230
Tripod	3/5	7	1-2-3	13	100B	1	1/2	300
7.5x50mm HE-11	3/5	8	Nil	13	100B	2	4/6	140
Tripod	3/5	8	Nil	13	100B	1	1/2	280
7.5x50mm HEAP-11	3/5	8	2-2-2	13	100B	2	4/6	140
Tripod	3/5	8	2-2-2	13	100B	1	1/2	280

Fired from a vehicle mount, this weapon has negligible recoil and tripod range.



15mm RC(E) HMG

The 15mm RC(E) HMG was developed by CSAARC (the Committee for the Standardization of Armament and Ammunition in the Reformation Coalition) from a pre-Collapse cartridge of unknown antecedents, at the insistence of the Oriflammen armed forces. The 15mm RC(E) HMG is a very powerful heavy machinegun used in support of vehicle-borne infantry forces, as secondary armament on AFVs (either in a small turret or coaxially) and as primary armament for a number of flying vehicles and aircraft. Although called a heavy machinegun, the weapon is more accurately thought of as a small-caliber autocannon. CSAARC's original specifications also called for the design of a sniper rifle to use the 15mm ETC cartridge, but the weapon proved to be too large for field use, and the weapon never got beyond the prototype stage. For the same reason, this weapon is not used in the classic tripod-mounted role, but is only vehicle-mounted.

The weapon's range, power, and penetration make it very effective against light armored vehicles and light battle dress even with ball ammunition. The more expensive DS ammunition makes the weapon a threat even to troops with heavy battle dress at all ranges. The performance of TL-9 HE and HEAP rounds is no better than the ball round at that TL, but at TL-10 superior performance is achieved. The TL-9 DS round remains the round of choice where penetration is needed. Tranq rounds were developed for use with the sniper rifle, but were of limited usefulness with this weapon, and are no longer manufactured.

As a vehicle-mounted weapon, the 15mm HMG has no muzzle brake and substitutes a firing solenoid for the pistol grip and trigger assembly. Weapons installed in RC vehicles typically have only one battery/box, which is kept charged for firing by surplus power from the vehicle's energy supply.

TL: 9+

Ammo: 15x75mmE-9

Muzzle Energy: 55,135 joules (Tranq: 33,081 joules)

Weapon Length: 412 cm

Weapon Weight: 63.85 kg (includes battery/box for 100 rounds), 77.15 with 100-round belt and battery/box

Weapon Price: Cr16,218 (includes battery/box for 100 rounds)

Ammo Weight: 133 grams per round, 16 kg for 100 rounds (13.3 kg for ammo, plus 2.7 kg battery/box)

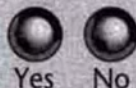
Ammo Price: Cr665 for 100 rounds Ball, Cr1330 for 100 rounds HE-10 or DS, Cr1985 for 100 rounds HEAP-10, Cr500 for battery/box without ammo

Features: Flash suppressor

Round	ROF	Dam Val	Pen Rtg	Bulk	Magazine	— Recoil —		Short Range
						SS	Burst	
15x75mm Ball	3	16	2-2-2	27	100B	—	—	300
15x75mm DS	3	16	1-1-1	27	100B	—	—	300
15x75mm HE-10	3	17	Nil	27	100B	—	—	300
15x75mm HEAP-10	3	17	2-2-2	27	100B	—	—	300



Security Clearance



28-IX-1202

Date

CLIPPER MODULES

25-ton Missile/ECM Module

This module is a slight modification to the 25-ton missile module, replacing the latter's 300,000-km AEMS sensor with an EMS jammer. Powered at 27.5 MW (using on-board power only, without outside augmentation), the EMS jammer system has a short range of 60,000-km (2 hexes), powered to 55 MW (using outside power) the jammer has a short range of 10 hexes. One 25-ton missile/ECM module will often be paired with a 25-ton missile module. The conventional missile module shuts down its active EMS sensor, and shunts the power to the ECM module's jammer system, enabling it to operate at the 55 MW level. No quarters are provided for the crew of five, and no outside power is required if the jammer is operated at 27.5 MW.

Volume: 350 m³

Mass: 370.12 tonnes (loaded), 266.12 (empty)

Price: MCr49.03

Crew: 3 (1xGunner, 1xElectronics, 1xMFD). Quarters not provided.

Passengers: None.

Features: 33.1 MW TL-12 fusion power plant, TL-12 300,000-km missile-capable MFD (4 Diff Mods; Msl 10 hexes; 10 hexes; 3.1 MW; 1 Crew), TL-12 missile barrette, TL-12 300,000-km AEMS jammer, TL-12 60,000-km PEMS, 2 normal workstations.

Maint: 15

DAMAGE TABLES

Area	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions	Systems
1	AL	Quarters	EMS Jammer-(2h)
2	EMMR	Power Plant	MFD-1H
3	Ant	Electronics	LS-1H
4-5		Electronics	ELS-1H
6		Hold	PP-1H
7-15	CH	Hold	MB-1H
16-20		Msl Barrette	All Others-(1h)

50-ton Meson Screen Module

This module carries a 30 MW meson screen generator, power plant, and workstations for the screen's two operators. Quarters for the operators are provided, and no outside power is required (0.1075 MW power surplus).

Volume: 700 m³

Mass: 657.44 tonnes (loaded), 657.44 tonnes (empty)

Price: MCr61.04

Crew: 2 meson screen operators, 1 small stateroom (double-occupancy) provided.

Passengers: None

Features: 34.5 MW TL-12 fusion power plant, 30 MW TL-12 meson screen generator (PV=194; 30 MW, 2 Crew), 2 normal workstations.

Maint: 28

DAMAGE TABLES

Area	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions	Systems
1-16	Ant	Electronics	MS-5H
17-18	Ant	Quarters	SSR-(2h)
19	AL	Reactor Fuel	LS-1H
20	EMMR	Power Plant	ELS-1H
			AG-(3h)
			PP-1H
			All Others-(1h)

100-ton Armed Fuel Module

This module carries 1160 m³ (81.2 tonnes) of fuel plus three laser turrets and an MFD. Quarters for the crew of four are not provided, but life support, G-compensation, and artificial gravity are. The on-board power supply allows installation of 150-Mj laser turrets (at 4.2 MW each). If 150-Mj turrets are used, the module's power surplus is 0.518 MW. If 120-Mj turrets are used, the module's power surplus is 3.218 MW. A missile-capable MFD has been installed to allow missile turrets to be fitted in place of laser turrets, but no cargo space is provided for additional missiles. Different turret configurations will also change the overall mass of the module.

Volume: 1400 m³

Mass: 583.29 tonnes (loaded), 502.09 (empty), with 3xTL-12 120-Mj laser turrets

Price: MCr35.57

Crew: 4 (3xGunners, 1xMFD), quarters not provided.

Passengers: None.

Features: 25 MW TL-12 fusion power plant, TL-12 300,000-km missile-capable MFD (4 Diff Mods; Msl 10 hexes; 10 hexes; 3.1 MW; 1 Crew), 3xTL-12 120-Mj laser turrets standard.

Maint: 21

DAMAGE TABLES

Area	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions	Systems
1-13		Fuel	EMM-(3h)
14	EMMR	Fuel	EMMR-(1h)
15-17		Turrets	MFD-1H
18	Ant	Electronics	LS-2H
19	EMMR	Power Plant	ELS-1H
20	AL	Quarters	AG-1H
			PP-1H
			LT-1H
			All Others-(1h)

200-ton Armed Fuel Module

This module is a larger version of the 100-ton armed fuel module. It carries 2332 m³ (163.24 tonnes) of fuel, six laser turrets, and two MFDs. Quarters for the crew of eight are not provided, but (as with the 100-ton version) life support, G-compensation, and artificial gravity are. As with the 100-ton module, the on-board power supply allows installation of 150-Mj laser turrets (at 4.2 MW each). If 150-Mj turrets are used, the module's power surplus is 1.038 MW. If 120-Mj turrets are used, the module's power surplus is 6.438 MW. Likewise, missile-capable MFDs have been installed (but as before, no cargo space is provided for additional missiles). Different turret configurations will also change the overall mass of the module.

Volume: 2800 m³

Mass: 1081.00 tonnes (loaded), 917.76 (empty), with 6xTL-12 120-Mj laser turrets

Price: MCr71.102

Crew: 8 (6xGunners, 2xMFD), quarters not provided.

Passengers: None.

Features: 50 MW TL-12 fusion power plant, 2xTL-12 300,000-km missile-capable MFDs (4 Diff Mods; Msl 10 hexes; 10 hexes; 3.1 MW; 1 Crew), 6xTL-12 120-Mj laser turrets standard.

Maint: 42

DAMAGE TABLES

Area	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions	Systems
1-15		Fuel	EMM-1H AG-1H
16-17		LT	EMMR-(2h) PP-1H
18	Ant	Power Plant	MFD-1H LT-1H
19	EMMR	Electronics	LS-2H All Others-(1h)
20	AL	Quarters	ELS-1H

200-ton Service Module (30-ton Small Craft)

This module contains facilities for the maintenance and support of one 30-ton small craft. No quarters are provided for the crew of four. No outside power is required (0.838 MW power surplus).

Volume: 2800 m³

Mass: 2070.35 tonnes (loaded), 961.765 (empty)

Price: MCr20.44

Crew: 4 (4 maintenance personnel), quarters not provided.

Passengers: None.

Features: 20 MW TL-12 fusion power plant, internal hangar (spacious) and launch port for 30-ton small craft, electronics shop, machine shop, launch port and docking ring for 5-ton liferaft.

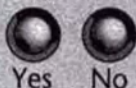
Maint: 67

DAMAGE TABLES

Area	Surface Hits	Internal Explosions	Systems
1-6		Hold	EMM-1H ELS-1H
7-14	LP	Hold	EMMR-(2h) AG-1H
15-17	CH	Hold	Hangar-17H PP-1H
18	EMMR	Electronics	Elec. Shop-1H All Others-(1h)
19	EMMR	Power Plant	Mach. Shop-1H
20	AL	Quarters	LS-2H



Security Clearance



28-IX-1202

Date

The following loadouts are standardized authorized mission loadouts for *Aurora*- and *Maggart*-class clippers on military missions.

AURORA-CLASS CLIPPER

All configurations below assume 144m 1000-Mj meson gun and 8x120-Mj laser turrets on basic hull, 3xTL-12 MFDs (all are non-missile capable), plus 120,000-km TL-12 passive EMS array, 300,000-km TL-12 active EMS array, 180,000-km TL-11 ladar, and EMM (EMM extends to all carried modules and *Manta*, but not to small craft).

Raider Configuration (LM)	Mass	MW	Crew	MP
Clipper & 1x30, 1x50 ton small craft	14,870.6996	+40.414	-73	644*
1x400-ton <i>Manta</i> fueler	2789.066	—	-12	110
1x400-ton fuel module	2137.98	-15.904	—	87
2x100-ton troop modules	1078.08	+22.412	(96)	74**
1x100-ton drop troop module	1033.76	-8.791	(36)	26
1x100-ton fighter module	1506.28	+9.016	-8	54**
2x100-ton armed quarters modules	1375.9	+10.999	+140 (8)	54
Total (mass ceiling = 32,124)	24,791.7656	58.146	+47 (233)	1049

*Does not include cutter modules

**Includes full complement of 3xFury assault landers or 4xWildbat fighters

Performance:

Jump-2, Maneuver-2

Fuel for 30 G-turns, leaving reserve for jump-2 (33 additional G-turns if used)

6xturret sockets in addition to standard weapons, may include any missile, sandcaster, or laser turret

2xadditional missile-capable MFDs

Warship Configuration (LC)	Mass	MW	Crew	MP
Clipper & 1x30, 1x50 ton small craft	14,870.6996	40.414	-73	644*
1x400-ton <i>Manta</i> fueler	2789.066	—	-12	110
1x400-ton fuel module	2137.98	-15.904	—	87
2x100-ton armed quarters modules	1375.9	10.999	+140 (8)	54
2x100-ton armed fuel modules	1166.58	1.036	-8	42
8x25-ton missile modules (two jammer)	2960.96	0.744	-24	120
Total (mass ceiling = 32,124)	25,301.1856	47.252	+23 (125)	1057

*Does not include cutter modules

Performance:

Jump-2, Maneuver-2

Fuel for 47 G-turns, leaving reserve for jump-2 (33 additional G-turns if used)

12xturret sockets in addition to standard weapons, may include any missile, sandcaster, or laser turret

8xmissile turrets (beyond 12 sockets above)

12xadditional missile-capable MFDs

2x300,000-km EMS jammers

6xadditional 300,000-km active EMS (2 unpowered)

8xadditional 60,000-km passive EMS

MAGGART-CLASS STRETCH CLIPPER

All configurations below assume 162m 2500-Mj meson gun and 8x120-Mj laser turrets on basic hull, 3xTL-12 MFDs (all are non-missile capable), plus 180,000-km TL-12 passive EMS array, 480,000-km TL-12 active EMS array, 180,000-km TL-11 iadar, and EMM (EMM extends to all carried modules and *Manta*, but not to small craft).

Tender Configuration (LT)	Mass	MW	Crew	MP
Clipper & 2 modular cutters	19,983.8646	-30.139	-100	873*
NO <i>Manta</i>	—	—	—	—
2x400-ton <i>Manticore</i> s	12,354	—	bal	bal
1x400-ton fuel module	2137.98	-15.904	—	87
1x200-ton fuel module	1369.125	-9.752	—	57
1x100-ton fuel module	281.28	-1.502	—	6
1x50-ton power/fuel module	1296.45	(562.606 bal)	(6)	60
2x25-ton missile modules (1 jammer)	740.24	27.746**	-6	30
2x100-ton armed quarters modules	1375.9	30.199†	+140 (8)	54
Total (mass ceiling = 42,472 tonnes)	39,538.8396	0.648	+ 34 (120)	1167

*Does not include cutter modules

**Sensors in one missile module is left unpowered to provide power for remainder of ship

†Carrying missiles or sandcasters only

Performance:

Jump-2, Maneuver-2

Fuel for 16 G-turns, leaving reserve for jump-2 (33 additional G-turns if used)

Spinal mount powered to -2 Diff Mods (10x overpowered)

6xturret sockets in addition to standard weapons, may include missile or sandcaster turrets

2xmissile turrets (beyond 6 sockets above)

4xadditional missile-capable MFDs

1x300,000-km EMS jammer (powered to only 60,000-km)

1xadditional 300,000-km Active EMS (unpowered)

2xadditional 60,000-km Passive EMS (one unpowered)

2x*Manticore* light battle riders

Warship/Tender Configuration (LC)	Mass	MW	Crew	MP
Clipper & 2 modular cutters	19,983.8646	-30.139	-100	873*
NO <i>Manta</i>	—	—	—	—
1x400-ton <i>Manticore</i>	6177	—	bal	bal
1x400-ton fuel module	2137.98	-15.904	—	87
1x200-ton fuel module	1369.125	-9.752	—	57
1x50-ton power/fuel module	1296.45	(562.606 bal)	(6)	60
1x50-ton fuel module	163.46	-0.752	—	3
1x100-ton fuel module	281.28	-1.502	—	6
2x100-ton armed quarters modules	1375.9	10.999	+140 (8)	54
2x100-ton armed fuel modules	1166.58	1.036	-8	42
8x25-ton missile modules (2 jammers)	2960.96	55.864**	-24	120
Total (mass ceiling = 42,472 tonnes)	36,912.5996	9.85	+8 (146)	1302

*Does not include cutter modules

**Active EMS in 4 of the 8 missile modules are left unpowered to provide power for remainder of ship, including powering both jammers to maximum range

Performance:

Jump-2, Maneuver-2

Fuel for 33 G-turns, leaving reserve for jump-2 (33 additional G-turns if used)

Spinal mount powered to -2 Diff Mods (10x overpowered)

12xturret sockets in addition to standard weapons, may include any missile, sandcaster, or laser turret

8xmissile turrets (beyond 12 sockets above)

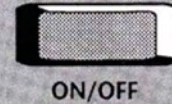
12xadditional missile-capable MFDs

2x300,000-km EMS jammers

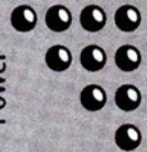
6xadditional 300,000-km active EMS (4 left unpowered)

8xadditional 60,000-km passive EMS

1x*Manticore* light battle rider



Power



COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: PUSH, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RCES HQ AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 28/XI/1201
KEYWORDS: TRIGGER, RCES, COURT MARTIAL, MASSACRE

After months of speculation, the RCES has lifted the veil of secrecy that was wrapped around the most recent mission of RCS *Trigger* following her return from Diaspora in Scorpio. *Trigger's* captain and several of her officers are to be tried for dereliction of duty in allowing the alleged massacre of civilians on Montezuma on her last cruise, RCES officials announced today.

Details are still sketchy, but it appears that several of *Trigger's* ground troops were killed by unusually high technology weapons in the hands of unknown Montezuman troops over a period of several days, and an attempt to capture the assailants misfired and resulted in the death of as many as 500 Montezuman civilians. Testimony gathered from *Trigger's* crew, and reportedly from Montezuman witnesses and undercover informants, indicates that the operation was poorly planned and degenerated into a vengeance mission.

Anonymous sources report that the "*Trigger* incident" is proof of the wisdom of the RCN's program to divest RC-controlled vessels of all private ownership shares. Because of the rapidity with which the Dawn League (and later, the Coalition) had to assemble a space force, it was often obliged to obtain starships by buying a bare majority of shares of the vessel, leaving the remainder of the vessel's ownership in private hands. It has been argued that such private or speculative ownership runs counter to the ideal of military order and discipline advocated by many RC leaders. In Assembly session, Senior Balduri Delegate has referred to speculative free-lance operations as "no better than reckless privateering, one step away from piracy."

CIN sources confirm that *Trigger* carried a 44% private ownership load, and that her crew contained a high proportion of free-lance personnel, both situations acknowledged by the RCN to contribute to "decreased mission reliability and performance standards."

COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: GOV/MIL, AUTHORITY COMMANDER, RCN/CIN AURORA
RC NAVY HEADQUARTERS, AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 6/XII/1201
KEYWORDS: TENDER, BATTLE RIDER, CLIPPER, MANTICORE

The Reformation Coalition Navy (RCN) has completed negotiations for the purchase of six *Manticore*-class system defense boats (SDBs) from the Aubani Navy, with an option for more to follow. These vessels are being purchased to give the RCN a battle rider capability when used with *Aurora*- or *Maggart*-class clippers.

These SDBs are modified versions of the standard *Shukugan* (*Dragon*)-class TL-12 SDBs, manufactured for centuries in the Last Imperium. The *Manticores* are distinguished from the basic *Dragons* by the absence of the *Dragon's* missile barbettes and fuel purification plant. These are replaced by a spinal meson gun which gives the *Manticore* a powerful short-range punch, sufficient to disable much larger vessels.

The *Manticores*, which have been used up to now in the system defense of Aubaine, will be used as "battle riders," carried into combat one or two at a time by RCN clippers configured as "tenders."

The battle rider concept is an old one, and reflects a permanent principle of interstellar combat. Given the fact that interstellar jump drives and their supporting systems make significant demands on the mass and volume of a starship, two spacecraft of equal size, one equipped with jump drives, and one without, will demonstrate vastly differing utilizations of space. The ship without jump drive will have a great deal of additional space that can be allocated to weapons, armor, defensive screens, fire control, ammunition, greater maneuverability, and fuel, and will therefore be a better warship, albeit unable to travel between star systems on its own. In a confrontation between these two ships, the nonjump-capable vessel should beat the jump-capable starship every time. This fact is the basis of the system defense boat. By extending this concept to include large jump-capable ships which carry these nonjump-capable warships from star to star, the battle rider concept is born.

The jump-capable ships, called tenders, carry several nonjump-capable ships, called riders, or battle riders, into enemy star systems. The battle riders detach and engage the enemy, and are recovered by the tender following the battle. The drawback to the battle rider concept is the fact that a losing battle rider force has a very hard time withdrawing, as battle riders cannot simply jump out of the battle to a safe system. The requirement to rejoin the large, non-maneuverable, and poorly defended tender in order to escape creates a vulnerability that ensures that a defeated battle rider force is usually annihilated, whereas a defeated jump-capable force is usually much less severely mauled.

COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: PUSH, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE
RCES HQ AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 12/XII/1201
KEYWORDS: COSMIC FIRE, DROYNE, DAALIISA, RCES, INQUIRY

RCES Headquarters announced today that a full inquiry would be convened to establish the particulars of the controversial Operation Cosmic Fire, conducted on the planet Daaliisa three months ago. It has been claimed that the operation was an unjustifiable use of Coalition military force, and by attacking the neutral native Droyne population, unnecessarily poisoned relations with the inhabitants of the world for the foreseeable future.

Witnesses are scheduled to include Commodore Sean Lathrop, RCES Chief of Operations, members of the RCES Long Range Planning Group, Captain Cynta Lawter and other crewmembers of RCS *Aube*, and Gabrielle Diabla, the reporter who first brought the event to public attention.

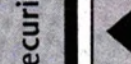
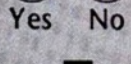
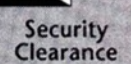
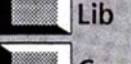
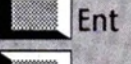
COALINFONET, CLASS: NEWSREPORT, DISTRIBUTION: PUSH, AUTHORITY CIN/ORIFLAMME
BOURGUND SHIPYARDS ORIFLAMME (1235/ORIFLAMME, B846857-9), 24/XII/1201
KEYWORDS: RESISTANCE, TERRORISM, ORIFLAMME, MAGGART

The resistance movement on Oriflamme continues to escalate, today with an apparent attempt to murder Technarch-Director Antonin Karlsruhe. Karlsruhe is the feudal holder of Bourgund Shipyards, which has been held by the Karlsruhe line since the Nemyer recovery began.

At 0715 local time this morning, a bomb destroyed Karlsruhe's office at the Bourgund headquarters, injuring three Bourgund retainers. No one was killed by the blast, which did an estimated Cr500,000 damage. Karlsruhe was not scheduled to arrive until 0830, so it is unknown if the explosion was a mis-timed attempt to kill the technarch or a simple attempt to cause property damage.

No group has claimed responsibility for this act, but investigations are under way.

In a related story, anonymous threats have been reported against the life of Coalition Secretary General Maggart who is scheduled to visit Oriflamme in just over two months. There is as yet no official confirmation of the seriousness of these threats, nor the identity of those making them.



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Globules

A Dark Conspiracy adventure
by Michael C. LaBossiere

Horror emerges from the strangest and most unexpected places these days. Who would ever have suspected that a nightmare could ooze forth from a small Maine town? But it did. Who knows what goes on in other, similar areas? Perhaps a nightmare waiting to happen lies next door to us all.

T

his adventure is for a medium-sized group of PCs. They need not be very experienced, but this scenario is not very suitable for a group of beginning PCs.

The adventure is set in a small town in Maine which is the site of a strange invasion by aquatic globular creatures that have intruded into Earth's dimension in search of host bodies through which to work their terrible schemes. Matters are complicated by the fact that the US government seems to be engaged in a deal with these beings. It is up to the PCs to uncover the truth of the situation and deal with the invaders and their unwitting allies.

REFEREE'S BACKGROUND

Malign beings with terrible purposes running through their alien minds have broken through into our world, spreading suffering and terror. One such group has pierced the veil between the worlds and taken control of the small town of Middle View, Maine. By themselves, these beings are all but physically helpless. Unfortunately, they can enter into symbiotic relations with other life forms and make use of these host bodies to work their terrible plans.

On the first day of the invasion, three queen globules dimension walked and ended their journey in a small Maine pond. After recovering from their ordeal, they produced their offspring—a total of 60 globules. These globules were discovered by Dianne Nicholl, who was visiting her sister's farm. Dianne did not recognize them as an alien life form and thought they were some sort of illegally dumped toxic material. Luckily for her, the queens and their offspring were dormant at this time. The next day, the globules awoke and used their empathic powers to lure Dianne's sister, Joan, into their pond, and she was promptly taken over. Dianne, having left the day before, told a friend of hers in the EPA, Lynn Parsons, about what she had found, and her friend went to investigate, but was soon taken over. Within a matter of days, all 60 globules had hosts taken from the townspeople. These hosts began fortifying Joan's farm and accumulating weapons. Joan, a TV scriptwriter, created the cover story that a TV movie was being filmed at her farm, and there would be plenty of roles for the local people. With that cover in place, the hosts were able to do just about anything without arousing suspicion.

Twenty days after the first batch, the

Dark Conspiracy

queens produced 60 more globules, and over the next few days, 60 more townspeople became hosts, and six people who stumbled onto the situation were killed. Since the police had been taken over, as well as local news reporters, there was no mention or investigation of the disappearances.

Sixty days after their arrival, the queens produced three more queens, and 20 days later, they produced 120 globules. Over the next week, 120 more townspeople had taken up their new roles as globule hosts, and 10 more were killed for learning too much.

Finally, 20 days after the last batch, 120 more globules were produced, and over the next three days, 75 more people became hosts, and 12 people were killed when they learned what was going on. At the end of those three days, the town was completely under the control of the globules, and all those of no use as hosts (about 230 children and senior citizens) were killed and fed to the queens.

The presence of these beings did not go unnoticed among the Dark Minions in the region. One powerful Dark Minion, a *dæmon* (see *Dark Conspiracy*, page 216) who had taken the role of a government official, decided to use the globules as his own soldiers. It contacted the globule queens and told them they could serve it or be destroyed. They agreed, and the *dæmon* ordered government troops to the town. The official story for the public and troops is that a medical quarantine is being enforced; the story for the officers is that they are helping out some friendly ETs. In reality, the *dæmon* is using the unwitting troops to protect the globules from outside interference until it is ready to act.

GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED

Late one night, during a thunderstorm, one of the PCs will hear frantic knocking at his door. Opening the door, the PC will find one of the group's contacts, a biologist named Harvey Weems, and Dianne Nicholl. Both will stagger into the house, their faces pale and haggard. Once they have settled down a bit, they will tell their tales.

Dianne will explain how she found some odd globules floating in her sister's pond. She told a friend about it, who went to investigate and never returned. Later, when Dianne tried to enter the town, she was stopped by soldiers and told to turn back. Later, she snuck in and saw the people in the town doing odd things: making strange structures, fortifying the buildings and so on. She will also say that the people acted strange, as if they were on drugs or something. She will tell the PCs that as she was sneaking out, she was captured by the military, interrogated and locked up with several other people, including Robert Donalds, a well-known investigative telejournalist who was reported missing a week ago. She will finish by saying that Weems freed her and the other prisoners, and they have been on the run since. The others, she will say, went their own ways.

Dr. Weems will say that he was assigned by the government for what he was told would be an opportunity to work with a group of friendly ETs. After working in the town a week, his studies revealed that the "ETs" were humans who were infested by alien life forms, apparently against their wills and not volunteers as the official story had it. When he reported his findings to the commanding officer, the officer turned out to know all about it. Weems will say that he was then taken out to be "merged." Because of his appearance, the guards did not judge him a threat, and they were quite surprised when he attacked and overpowered them and then fled, pausing only to free the others.

Weems will implore the PCs for aid in freeing the town from the yoke of the alien masters. He will also tell them that he

thinks the troops are, for the most part, unaware of the true nature of the situation, although there is no way of knowing how many of them have been taken over.

Weems will also tell the PCs all he knows about the aliens: They are, in their natural form, globules of a gelatinous material with highly complex nervous systems. In this form, they are physically helpless. However, they are capable of entering the bodies of host organisms and taking control of their nervous systems. He doesn't know how many there are or if they can be removed from the host without harm to the person. He does know that they are very protective of a farm (which Dianne will recognize as her sister's farm) and that they all visit it once a day. As far as he knows, none of them have left the area. He will finish by saying that what finally made him realize what was wrong was that there were no children or older people left in the town.

If the PCs decide to help Weems, the ball is in their court. If they decline, they will read in the paper that a prominent biologist (Weems) was killed in a car wreck while driving home from work. In any case, the PCs will see on TV that investigative reporter Robert Donalds was killed in a car wreck while on assignment.

ACTION

The PCs will probably want to enter the town and scope out the situation. Since the town is more or less surrounded by woods, it would be fairly easy to get into town via the woods (which are not currently patrolled) for PCs willing to hike several miles through thick woods. The woods are the home of a pack of wolves. These wolves, which would normally not attack humans unless extremely provoked, have become disturbed due to the empathic emanations of the globules and may attack humans in the woods (if the wolves end up in town somehow, they will go berserk and attack any host in sight).

Once the PCs get into town, they will have to contend with military patrols as well as the hosts. The globules do not constantly scan the area, so if the PCs are careful, they should be able to avoid being detected. Of course, if they are detected, they will be hard-pressed to escape. The hosts will not pursue them out of town, but the military will. The military will also contact the police, who will be looking for them, and the *dæmon* in charge will send out Igors to kill the PCs. If the police or military capture the PCs, they will be locked up in the basement of the high school. If the Igors or hosts get them, they will end up dead or as hosts. Also, if the PCs are detected, security will be stepped up, and if it is suspected that the PCs came via the woods, soldiers will be assigned to patrol the woods in pairs.

RESOLUTION

If the PCs go to the government, they may be able to persuade an official that something is fishy with the town. If they succeed, the military will intervene and wipe out the globule invasion. Of course, it may turn out that the official they contact doesn't believe them (and the PCs may be locked up) or is actually in league with the *dæmon* (and the PCs may be locked up or killed).

If the PCs contact other organizations (such as the police or national guard), these groups will be loath to act against the federal government and will require a great deal of evidence and persuasion before acting. However, given the reduced power of the federal government and the increased independence of local authority, such intervention is not entirely out of the question.

If the PCs decide to go it alone, it will be them against a very substantial force. They may be able to get some of the

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soldiers on their side, but it is likely that they will be up against hundreds of hosts on their own. In the PCs' favor, however, is the vulnerability of the farm. It is, after all, far from town and located near the woods. If the PCs hit the farm fast and hard, they may be able to kill the queens (and hence all the globules) before any large forces arrive. If an attack on the farm fails, or if the hosts are warned of such an attack, they will double or triple the guard and have hosts paroling the woods nearby.

If the PCs are defeated, or abandon the mission, 20 days after they are contacted by Weems, the hosts will complete

their portals and pools, and queens and globules will be brought through at an alarming rate. These queens will be loaded into special trailers and taken to various other ponds and lakes throughout the nation. These globule enclaves will be carefully observed by agents of the dæmon to ensure that the globules don't get any ideas of their own. In a short while, many small towns will be taken by the globules. Eventually, there will be enough of them for the dæmon to take over substantial sections of the country. The exact details and impact of this expansion are left to the referee.

If the PCs kill the queens, the surviving hosts will be

Middle View

I-95: The highway is operating normally, although there is always a highway patrol car with one officer in it in the area (treat as a beat cop). This officer is assigned to keep an eye on the ramps. One of the assigned officers has a brother in town whom he has not heard from, and he is suspicious of the situation. He will allow the PCs to get in if they can persuade him.

Ramps: Each ramp is closed off with construction barriers, and they are marked with construction signs. However, anyone who looks will see no signs of construction. If someone approaches the barriers, the police officer will radio the military, then try to persuade the intruders not to do anything. The bottom of each ramp is guarded at all times by four soldiers armed with M-16s. These soldiers will order people to leave and threaten them with legal action or incarceration if they refuse. Some of the guards are suspicious of what is going on and may talk to the PCs (and may even let them in). Other guards have been taken over, and they will deal with the PCs harshly and may kill them if only controlled soldiers are present.

Local Roads: The roads in town are generally used only by the hosts. Those that lead into (and out of) town have concrete construction barriers blocking them, and beyond the barriers there are two soldiers (who will react like those assigned to the ramps) guarding each road.

Middle View: Middle View is located between Portland and

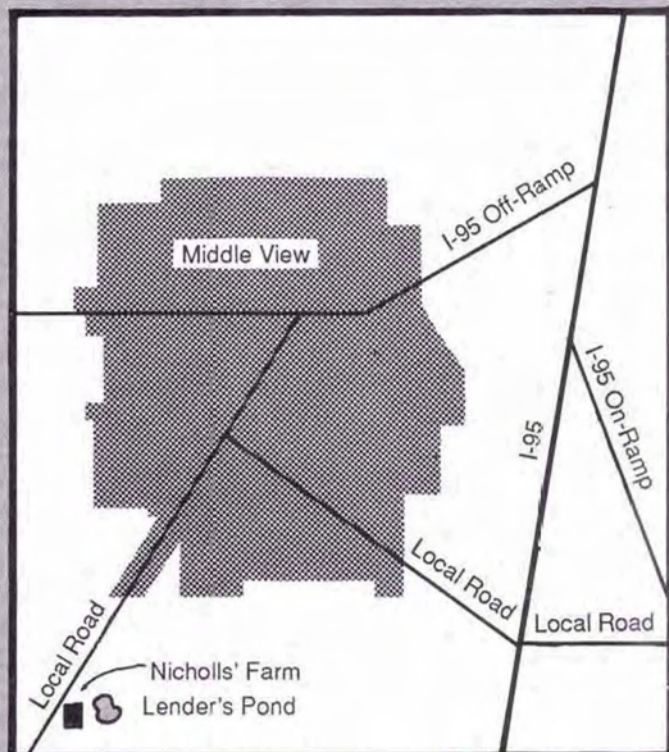
Freeport, and prior to the invasion, it was a nice place to visit. While lacking the stores and nightlife of Portland, and the L.L. Bean of Freeport, Middle View was the home of the Ice Cream Dream, which produced and sold the best ice cream in North America. Now, all the small shops (including the Ice Cream Dream) are closed.

The 40 soldiers of the military contingent are using the high school as their base. The gym has been filled with cots, and the cafeteria is used as a mess. The office is serving as the command post for the operation and the shop building as the motor pool. The soldiers patrol the town roads—their orders are to keep anyone from getting in and anyone from leaving. The soldiers patrol in groups of four and are under strict orders to stay away from the townspeople. They are also under orders to stay away from the Nicholls' farm (they have been told that the disease originated in the farm's pond). If the PCs are encountered, they will be left alone (the soldiers will assume they belong in the town) unless they cause trouble or are recognized as outsiders. If they are caught, they will be locked up in the basement of the high school, along with about four other people (reporters, who are Novice NPCs).

A "medical contingent" of 10 "doctors" is present in the town. They are actually Igors who serve the demon. These people are set up in the local motel. They go about the village and pretend to be running tests and administering medicine for the benefit of the soldiers, who think they are enforcing a medical quarantine. Any conversation about medicine by a person who knows about medical matters (some degree of Medical skill) will reveal very quickly that these people are not doctors (of course, those who make the discovery will be exposed as outsiders and will soon be attacked or locked up).

The remaining townspeople who are hosts spend their time preparing. They are constructing odd structures about town. These structures come in two sorts: The first are wall-like structures. These will be joined together to form what amount to above-ground pools. These pools will be used as breeding areas for the queens. The other structures are part of what will be a very large dimensional portal through which hundreds of queens and globules will travel once the pools are finished for them.

The soldiers have been told that the illness has made these people somewhat insane, and that's why they build the structures. The hosts are careful to do odd things when around the soldiers (the demon suggested this to them) so the soldiers will buy the story. Of course, the empathic abilities of the globules are very helpful in deceiving the soldiers. If the hosts spot the PCs, they will know they do not belong in the town (via the globules' empathic abilities). If there are soldiers nearby, the hosts will turn the PCs in; if not, they will either kill them or take them to the pond and turn them into hosts. Needless to say, gunshots will attract a patrol of soldiers.



stunned by the empathic shock of the deaths for 10 minutes (they will fall to the ground and flop about like dead fish). Afterward, they will stand up. Some will wander about the town aimlessly; others will engage in insane behavior; still others will set out in pursuit of the PCs. However, 24 hours after their last feeding, the globules will perish, freeing their hosts. The survivors will be severely traumatized and will be in need of help for some time before being able to return to semi-normal lives. Middle View will more or less cease to exist, as most people will leave, and there are no children left. In a few years, the ramps will be closed and the town abandoned. Some of the former hosts may decide to take up the war against the Dark Minions, and they will all be grateful to the PCs and will aid them whenever possible. Many of them, especially those forced to kill their own children, will never recover. The daemon in charge and its minions will flee, leaving no trace behind.

The incident will lead to a series of covert investigations in the US government, some of which will turn up human criminals, but a few will unearth Dark Minions. The PCs may be involved in such operations at the referee's option. The globules will eventually enter Earth's dimension yet again at some time and try again.

NPCs

Wolves

#Appear: 2D6 **Initiative:** 5 **Agility:** 8
Attack: 80%* **Strength:** 4 **Skill/Dam:** 6/1D10
Move: 15/30/60 **Constitution:** 3 **Hits:** 3/5

*Due to their agitated state.

Special: Diving attack. See page 200 of *Dark Conspiracy*.

Soldiers (32)

These are army combat troops. While they are loyal to their commanding officer and the US, many of them are suspicious of the situation and are not entirely convinced that they are enforcing a quarantine. Those soldiers with doubts may aid the PCs. Six of the soldiers have been taken over by globules and three have vanished (assumed AWOL, they were actually killed by the hosts for various reasons).

Level: Experienced.

Skills: As per Experienced NPCs, plus Observation 5.

Armament: M9, M16A2. For vehicles, they have jeeps and heavy trucks.

NCOs (4)

The NCOs are Veteran soldiers, and some are combat veterans. They are more suspicious than the younger enlisted men and don't buy the quarantine story at all, but are less prone to aid the PCs. However, if they learn the true nature of the situation, they will aid the PCs.

Level: Veteran.

Skills: As per Veteran NPCs, plus Observation 5, Interrogation 4 and Leadership 6.

Armament: M9, M177.

Officers (3)

Except for the commanding officer, all of the officers are young and college educated. They have been told that they are protecting a group of friendly ETs and that they should expect all sorts of odd events. They believe that they have to protect the ETs from Dark Minion attacks (they will think the PCs are Dark Minions). The officers are not very suspicious since what they see is consistent with the story they were told, and they are not at all likely to help the PCs without some dramatic proof.

Level: Experienced.

Skills: As per Experienced NPCs, plus Observation 4, Interrogation 3 and Leadership 5.

Armament: M9.

Igors (10)

These are servants of the daemon who are posing as doctors to maintain the facade of the quarantine. Anyone with Medical skill who speaks to them or observes them for a while will realize that they are not doctors. They are typical Igors, with all that implies.

Level: Experienced.

Armaments: Concealed silenced .22 (treat as High Standard .22), Ingram M10 .45 (carried in "medical" equipment) with suppressor.

Hosts (435)

The hosts are normal people who are controlled by the globules. Most of them are Novice NPCs. See the description of the globules for more details.

Armament: Guards will have hunting rifles or shotguns, while others will have concealed knives or pistols.

Dark Minions

Captain John Hennesey (Lesser Daemon)

Strength: 12 **Education:** 6 **Move:** 4/8/30/50
Constitution: 9 **Charisma:** 7 **Skill/Dam:** 7/1D10
Agility: 6 **Empathy:** 8 **Hits:** 15/30
Intelligence: 6 **Initiative:** 5 **#Appear:** 1

Skills: Melee Combat (Unarmed) 7, Small Arms (Pistol) 4, Small Arms (Rifle) 4, Observation 6, Psychology 3, Willpower 8, Computer Operation 2, Act/Bluff 7, Interrogation 6, Language (English) 6, Human Empathy 5, Project Emotion 5, Dimension Walk 7.

Physical Description: "John's" true form is that of a hairless, jet black humanoid with red gleaming eyes, a mouth filled with silvery teeth, and no nose. It is a limited shapeshifter and can assume the likeness of virtually any humanoid of its height. Its current form is that of a healthy, middle-aged man with short black hair and blue eyes.

Personality/Motivation: Being a lesser daemon (a race, or rather type of race, related to the daemon in *Dark Conspiracy*), "John" is a creature of evil whose main motivation is to acquire power and use that power for its own enjoyment. This enjoyment consists of causing others to suffer. Its preferred mode of inflicting suffering is via military operations or personal combat. The race of lesser daemons it comes from is a very militaristic race, and hence it is suitable for the role it is playing in its daemon master's plans. Its master is wisely staying out of the action and will not be encountered during the adventure. Oddly enough, it has some form of twisted concern for its soldiers (it sees them as fellow warriors, though of a very inferior sort) and will kill any globule that takes over one of its soldiers (unfortunately killing the soldier in the process). When playing the role of the captain, it acts like a strict officer, a role it can play very well.

Armament: M9.

Globule Queen

Strength: 2 **Education:** 1 **Move:** 1 (water only)
Constitution: 3 **Charisma:** 1 **Skill/Dam:** N/A
Agility: 1 **Empathy:** 10 **Hits:** 10/20
Intelligence: 4 **Initiative:** 1 **#Appear:** 1-6

Special: Human Empathy 5, Project Emotion 5, Project Thought 5, Willpower Drain 5. One in 10 queens can dimension walk.

The globule queens look like large, gelatinous spheres containing what looks like a mixture of plants and internal organs from various animals. The globule queens evolved from creatures which dwelled in a section of a proto-dimension that consisted primarily of shallow, stagnant ponds and swamps full of decomposing vegetation and animal carcasses. These creatures evolved the ability to produce buds which would break away and drift until they contacted another organism. The buds would attempt to take control of the organism's nervous system and, if successful, they would bring back the organism to the queen and kill it by shorting out the victim's nervous system. Eventually, the buds evolved into intelligent life forms with the ability to control other organisms. The queens also had the ability to manipulate the minds of other beings for both offensive and defensive purposes. With these abilities, the globules soon came to dominate their section of the proto-dimension. Unfortunately for the other life forms, the globules regarded them only as potential hosts or food, and eventually the globules were masters of a desolate wasteland, virtually devoid of all life but their own. These vile things would have soon died off if it were not for the intervention of a Dark One who saw them as potential instruments by which it could generate fear and suffering. Its minions brought in helpless creatures for the globules to use, and it altered some of the queens so that they could dimension walk and spread terror and suffering into other dimensions.

Globule queens are very vulnerable to drying out (it kills them) and toxic agents in the water they occupy (they filter

oxygen through their outer membranes). They are also vulnerable to normal attacks (bullets, knives, etc.)

Each queen produces 20 globules every 20 days. These globules remain dormant for one day and then become active. Every 60 days, a queen produces another queen, but no globules. Twenty days after its production, a new queen produces 20 globules, and 60 days later, it produces another queen, and so forth. An individual queen dies after producing six queens. The globules' main task is to care for the queens by providing them with food. The modern globules do not kill their hosts (this would kill the globule) but bring the queens food. The queen globules in turn feed the globules. If a globule fails to feed for 24 hours, it will perish, freeing any host it might be controlling.

Globule

Strength: 1	Education: 1	Move: 1
Constitution: 1	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam: N/A
Agility: 1	Empathy: 5	Hits: 1/2
Intelligence: 3	Initiative: 1	#Appear: 20-120

Special: Human Empathy 2, Project Emotion 2, Project Thought 2, Willpower Drain 2.

Globules appear as small (basketball-sized) globes of gelatinous material. Visible within the translucent jelly are what appear to be strips of green lace and black marbles. When dormant, the creatures are harmless and immobile. When active, their internal "organs" swirl about inside.

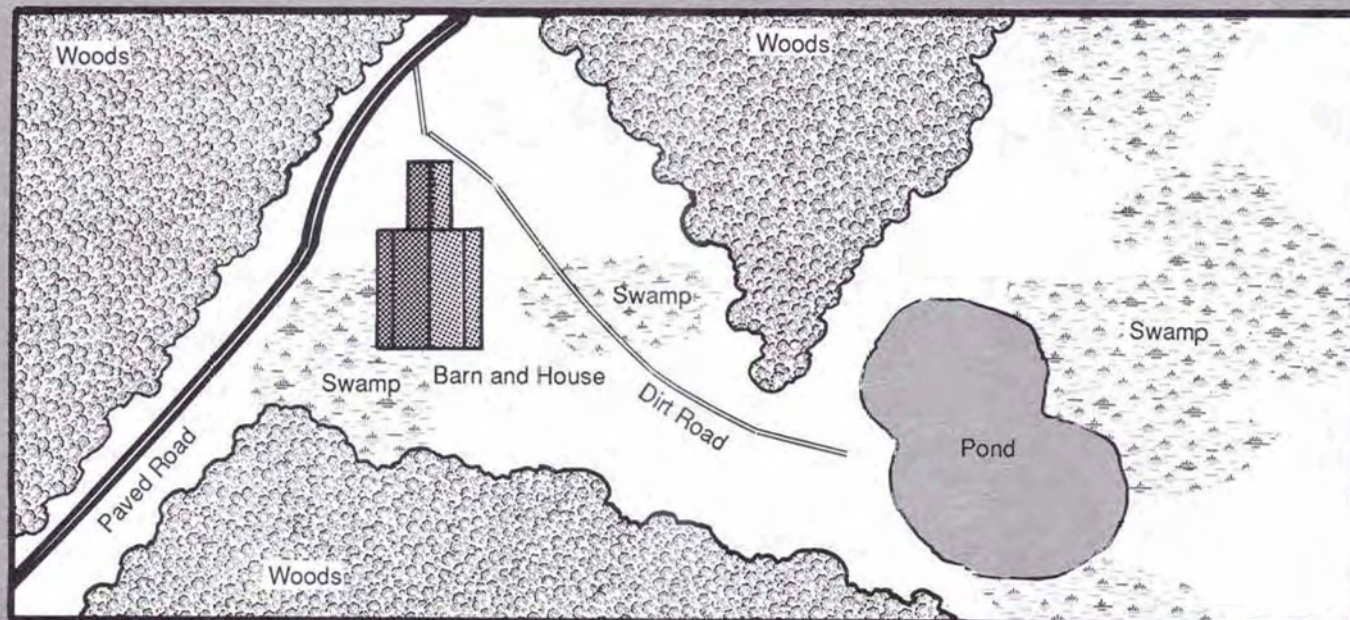
These beings are extremely dangerous because of their ability to take control of a host organism. The takeover

Farm Area

Barn and House: Originally the farm was a working dairy farm, but for the past 20 years, it has been used only as a house. The structures are typical of New England, with the barn attached to the house. The windows of the house have been boarded up, with only firing slits remaining. There will be at least 10 hosts, all armed (a variety of civilian-grade weapons, mostly hunting rifles and shotguns) in the house at all times. Half of the occupants will be awake at any given time. Joan Nicholl and Lynn Parsons are both present here.

Pond: The pond was dug by John Lender when the farm was built, and it has been known as Lender's pond ever since.

The pond has been surrounded with concrete wall, and there are always at least 10 hosts (armed mostly with hunting rifles and shotguns) guarding it. A metal ladder goes into the pond. Beside it are several shelves and a water hose. If the pond is observed, the PCs will see people arriving at the pond, stripping down and climbing in. When they emerge, they will hose off, redress and leave. If the pond is attacked, all of the hosts in town will drop what they are doing and head for the pond via the fastest way possible, pausing only to grab weapons. They will fight fanatically to protect the pond because the six queens are present in it.



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procedure is as follows: The host must be in the water with the globule (the queens generally use their Willpower Drain and Projection abilities to lure victims). The host must be drained of all willpower (again, the queen usually does this). The globule must be in direct contact with the victim for at least five minutes. The victim is entitled to a Difficult skill check against his Constitution to see if his immune system rejects the attempt. If this roll succeeds, the victim is not taken over on that attempt, but the globule may attempt another takeover. If a globule is interrupted or fails to take the victim over, the victim suffers no physical harm. If the takeover succeeds, the globule gains complete control over the victim's body, memory and skills.

The globule merges with the victim's body after the takeover. This makes it difficult to tell a controlled person from a noncontrolled person. The victim's mind remains conscious and active, but completely helpless. If a host is freed, the experience may have a disturbing effect psychologically (the exact impact is left up to the referee).

Like the queens, the globules are vulnerable to drying out and to toxins. When they are in the host body, they drain a great deal of its water, so hosts drink an abnormal amount of fluid. The globules, being spread all through a host's body, cannot be removed by surgical techniques. However, they can be killed by exposing the host to toxic agents, etc. that may kill the globule (it has only a 1 Constitution) and not the host. The death of the globule frees the host. If a host is injured, the globule is not harmed (it is so diffused). However, if the host is killed, the globule will die with it.

Finally, as has been noted, globules must feed once every 24 hours or perish. The death of a queen has a profound impact on the globules it produced (empathic shock), putting them into a comatose state for 10 minutes. Afterward, the globules will behave oddly (exact behavior left up to the referee) unless another queen is alive to guide them. Ω



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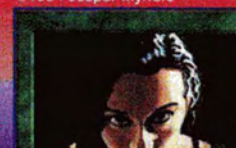
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THE DEEP BLUE SEA



The PCs are all asleep, all dreaming their own separate dreams. Gradually, the dreams start to merge, until every member of the group has the same vision: A humanoid figure of crackling blue neon.

This figure introduces himself as Diver and apologizes to the PCs for intruding into their dreams. However, he has a job for them. Despite the 2025 ban on whaling, someone is still running a whaling ship, and this someone must be stopped. To this end, Diver can provide the PCs with an address of "some friends who might help you."

If asked about payment, Diver will at first seem somewhat confused, then will assure the PCs that although he can't pay them anything up front, they will be rewarded when the job is done. If the PCs push for more concrete assurances, Diver will produce an image of a bag of diamonds, inquire whether this is enough, and assure the PCs that they will receive these when the job is done.

PCs who are successful rolling their Intelligence against a target number of 8 get the strange feeling that their employer doesn't really understand the concept of money.

If the PCs accept the job, then Diver says he'll contact them again when the job is done. He will then disappear, and the PCs will wake up.

The address Diver gave the PCs is on the edge of the Barrens. It is a decaying old shop, with "Saviors of the Earth" crudely painted across one window.

Inside, old and dirty ecology posters litter the walls, and a bored young man sits behind the desk.

If the PCs just ask general questions, the young man will spin them the standard pitch for any small-time eco-movement and try to get some money out of them. If the PCs mention Diver's name, however, the young man will suddenly look much more serious and take them into the back room.

The back room is spotlessly clean and looks like an army headquarters. On one wall are maps; a computer system fills a corner; and a rack of assault rifles hangs on another wall.

The SOE is a radical eco-action group which uses the cover of a peaceful, low-budget eco-action group. The activists have had dealings with Diver before, but he always contacts them through dreams of Astral projection, so they have no more idea than the PCs who or what he is.

If asked, the SOE can describe the migration patterns of whales, the likely location of the whaler and plans of the whaling ship design.

The SOE can also provide the name of a fixer who can supply Limpet mines and other marine equipment. Limpet mines cost 75 Nuyen each and do 11D2 damage. They can be destroyed by timer or remote control. They are magnetic and so will stick to the hull of any ship. Wetsuits cost 350 Nuyen and provide 2 points of impact armor. No armored suits are available because the extra weight would pull the user under. The same goes for any other armor.

Also available are knives (STR+1L2), spear-guns (7M2 on impact armor; use light pistol ranges) and bang sticks, shotgun cartridges on the end of a pole (one use, 9M2).

Fighting underwater imposes a +2 modifier to Armed and Unarmed Combat skills, unless the person has trained in underwater fighting. Using a ranged weapon underwater imposes a +2 penalty to hit.

ACQUIRING A VESSEL

Obviously, the PCs will need to reach the whaler to complete their task. Unless they happen to have an armored deep sea vessel around, they are going to have to steal one.

A quick search will reveal that the only group with vessels of this type is the Seattle Harbor Patrol (unless they want to rip off a boat from the UCAS military, which would not be wise).

A little bit of piracy would seem in order.

There are three basic ways the PCs can steal a boat.

1. They can break into the Seattle Harbor Patrol and steal a boat direct from the harbor. This way is doomed to failure, because as soon as the boat sails off, the rest of the harbor patrol will be after them (and unlike the PCs, these guys are experts on handling their boats). That's assuming the harbor defenses don't get the PCs first. (Seattle got a little paranoid after the Japanese occupation of San Francisco and never got around to removing the missile launchers.)

If the PCs choose this route, the referee may want to give them a chance to surrender, chuck 'em in jail for awhile, then get SOE lawyers to spring them on a technicality and suggest that stealing something directly in front of the owners isn't the best way.

2. The PCs can hack the harbor's computers and put their names and

faces down as the replacement crew for tonight's coast patrol. Providing the team decker does a good enough job and the PCs convince the crew to report ill (it wouldn't look good for two crews to turn up), they should be able to walk away with a boat.

3. The other way is to hijack a ship in mid-patrol. If the PCs hack the Seattle Coast Guard computers and learn the patrol schedule, they can set up an ambush and capture a ship. The sinking vessel ploy is a good idea to get the coast guard craft close enough for the PCs to jump the crew.

COAST GUARD

All coast guard vessels have monitors. If a vessel diverts from its route by more than 10 miles, then the coast guard will radio the ship and ask what is going on. If the replies are suspicious or if the ship continues to divert from its route, then a Hughes Airstar with a four-shot missile launcher is dispatched to escort the ship back to the harbor or send it to the bottom.

The tracker should be considered as a level 8 bug for the purposes of detection, or it can be deactivated by a decker in the coast guard system.

System

San-1: Connection to Matrix. Orange-5, Barrier-6.

SPU-1: Red-4. Track and Burn 5.

SN-1: Red-4. Controls lock on main gates.

SN-2: Red-5. Tar Baby-4. Controls alarms on the fences around the coast guard compound.

I/OP-3: Security terminal at main gate.

SPU-2: Orange-4. Barrier-5.

DS-1: Red-4. Killer-5. Records of crew (names, faces, IDs).

DS-2: Red-5. Black-Ice-4. Patrol schedule for coast guard vessels.

SPU-3: Red-4. Trace and Dump-4.

SN-1: Red-4. Monitors trackers on coast guard vessels. Can be disabled by a decker on a Computer-5 test.

SN-2: Red-4. Security camera.

SN-3: Red-4. Security camera

SN-4: Red-4 Security camera

CPU: Red-6. Scramble-7. Technical information on coast guard boats and personnel files on crew. (Some free-traders of the PCs' acquaintance might be willing to pay for this information.)

Crew

For pilot, use the Rigger archetype, but remove all vehicles and patrol vehicle drone. Replace Bike and Car skills with Motorboat: 6 and Navigation: 4.

For the other four crew, use Street

Cop archetype with armored jackets, H&K 227 SMG and Defiance super shocktaser. Remove Police Procedures and replace with Law (Maritime): 3 and Etiquette (Smuggler): 3.

Surfstar Marine Scoop

Handling	Speed	B/A	Sig	Autopilot
3	30/90	3/6	3	2

Sensors: Advanced.

ECM/ECCM: Security 111/Military 1.

Mounts one HMG and one four-shot torpedo cell. (14D2 damage, use rockets range.)

TRACKING THE TARGET

Provided the PCs picked up the maps of the whales' migration routes, tracking down the whaler will be easy, as the whaler is following the whales' migration pattern, hunting as it goes.

The journey will take the PCs several days but won't offer any challenge unless the referee really feels like throwing something in. After all, there are a lot of nasty paranormal critters out there, and piracy hasn't completely died out as a profession.

Whaler

The whaler is a large converted tanker and is escorted by an Aztech Nightrunner running cover.

The Nightrunner is as in *Shadowrun*

2nd edition, page 141, but mounting enhanced sensors and a forward-firing autocannon.

Handling	Speed	B/A	Sig	Autopilot
5	20/50	9/4	6	4

Sensors: Security 11.

ECM/ECCM: Military 11/Military 1.

The whaler has a crew of 30 sailors (use Street Cop archetype with knives and clubs) and a security complement of five (four mercs and a street shaman, Shark totem).

The whaler acts as a spotter. If the PCs' ship is spotted by the whalers' sensors, the Nightrunner will be dispatched. If the PCs can jam the whalers' sensors in an ECM/ECCM battle, then they should get close enough to either use the torpedoes or unload divers to mine the whaler.

By the way, the whaler has sonar. If they spot suspicious shapes swimming up to them, the mercs and the shaman will suit up, arm themselves with knives and spear-guns, and investigate, and yes, these guys are trained in underwater combat.

Because of the emotional residue from the slaughter of the whales, the sea around the whaler has a background count of 3 to be applied against all magical tests. (See *The Grimoire*.)

Diver will explain that, yes, he is a whale, but whales have always been sentient. With the advent of the Awakening, they learned the arts of magic as did the other sentient races of the planet. Whales learned human speech, but without vocal cords, they could only communicate in astral form, where communication has little to do with spoken languages.

Diver says that if mankind in general were to learn of whales' sentience, it could lead to a lot of unpleasant consequences (like increased experimentation on whales). Thus, he will pledge the PCs to silence on this matter.

If asked why he hired the PCs, Diver will explain that whales are nonviolent by nature and have no combat magic. Being physically incapable of harming the whaler, they were forced to turn to outside help. Some of their contacts on the street were able to recommend the PCs.

When all the PCs' questions are answered, Diver will escort them to a wreck on the sea floor. In a cabin on the ship, he will reveal to the PCs an oil skin pouch containing five uncut diamonds—their fee.

Diver will then escort the PCs to the surface and wish them well, saying if they are ever in trouble on the sea, they should call for help with their thoughts, and Diver or his kin will do their best to help them.

DAVY JONES'S LOCKER

If the PCs succeed in sending the whaler to a well-deserved watery grave, then the image of Diver will appear and congratulate them. Diver will then ask the PCs to step off the side of the ship. If the PCs comply, they will sink into the water but find themselves able to breathe and moving deeper down. A Magical Theory test against 6 will show that they are probably being sheltered inside a Sea Spirit.

The Sea Spirit will take them to a huge blue whale which will eye them for a second, then wink at them. The next second, the whale will go limp, and Diver's astral form will appear beside them.

Diver will greet them happily and answer any questions they might have.

DIVER

Body: 25/4
Quickness: 7
Strength: 35
Charisma: 7
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 8
Essence: 8
Magic: 8
Totem: Sea
Conjuring: 7
Sorcery: 5
Magical Theory: 7

Spells: These are probably best left up to the referee's imagination but should be radically different to any found in a (meta)human grimoire.

CONCLUSION

PCs should receive 5 Karma points for the adventure, plus whatever the referee feels appropriate for individual roleplaying and ideas.

The diamonds are worth 135,000 Nuyen each.

Referees are advised to convince their PCs of the suicidal nature of trying to sell a stolen Seattle Coast Guard vessel. Ω

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SPY

ARCHETYPE



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"Hey, would I lie to you?"

A human chameleon, the spy fits into whatever role he is playing. Equally at home on the streets or in the boardroom and equally deadly in both places.

Attributes

Body: 4
Quickness: 4
Strength: 3
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 5
Essence: 2.65
Magic: 0
Reaction: 4 (5)+2D6

Skills

Stealth: 4
Unarmed Combat: 6
Firearms: 4
Computer: 4
Psychology: 4
Etiquette (Corp): 3
Etiquette (Street): 2

Cyberware: Cyberoptics with low-light, thermographic imaging and retinal duplication, chipjack, 30 MP extra memory, air filtration (level 5), smartgun link, boosted reflexes (level 2), internal voice mask, hearing amplification.

Gear: Fichetti Security 500 and silencer, Beretta Model 70, knife, Narcojet pistol, vest with plates, micro-recorder, maglock passkey, bug scanner (7), dataline scanner (7), dataline tap, laser microphone.

Skillsofts: Electronics (4), Surveillance Techniques (4).

Contacts: Corporate, Street Mage, Decker (Major League), Yakuza (Mid-Level), Forger.

Description: As appropriate to whatever environment he is working in at the moment. Ω

By David Perry

STAR VIKINGS

Personalities



Senta "Boom Boom" Romero
Scout Commander for the
Reformation Coalition



Igor Pankеровski
Guild Captain of Anunnaki



The Reformation Coalition contains a wide variety of personalities, and **Star Vikings** will allow referees to run them all: members of the RC government and armed forces, covert intelligence operatives, RC allies from free-lancers to Free Traders, plus representatives of the RC's implacable opponents: the Guild and the ruthless dictators from the Wilds.

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Survival

A 2300 AD adventure by Paul Lucas

The player characters are invited along on a two-week survival course taught by an old friend of theirs, Pierre La Salle. Among the others in the course is Gregore Charlois, a high-ranking bureaucrat in the French government. He is the target for assassination by a group of French nationals who oppose the current Imperial government. This group has hired Morris Kirkland, an assassin who specializes in using advanced robots in his hits. Morris goes along on the outing. Several days into the course, the party is attacked by a horde of robot assassins under Kirkland's direction. Armed only with bows and knives, the party finds itself trapped in an alien jungle with only limited options.

This scenario is designed for up to four adventurers. A copy of **Beanstalk** is recommended for play, as the adventure takes place on the British continent of Beta Canum Venaticorum-4.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Pierre La Salle, Survival Instructor: Pierre is a Veteran Frontier NPC. He is a native of Beta Canum, and in recent years has returned from abroad to settle down. He possesses extensive knowledge of the wildlife of all three settled continents.

NPC Motivation: Middle Spade and Queen Clubs: He takes personal responsibility for the safety of the group, and is a stern teacher who hates to be contradicted.

Gregore Charlois, French Bureaucrat: Gregore is an Experienced Core NPC. He has worked in the French government for three decades through a variety of administrations and governments.

NPC Motivation: Minor Joker and High Spades: Gregore is undergoing a mid-life crisis. He feels he has to prove his

manliness in the most dramatic ways possible. This survival course is just the latest in a number of similar programs he's joined to this end. He often uses his position to bully others into getting his way.

Morris Kirkland, Assassin: Morris is an Experienced Core NPC. Though only 30, he has made quite a reputation for himself in the underworld by using his technical expertise to facilitate kills. He almost always works through custom-designed robots.

NPC Motivation: King Clubs and Queen Spades: Morris loves violence, and perpetrates it as often as possible just to see something wrecked. However, he becomes obsessive if thwarted, and will pursue botched kills to the exclusion of all else.

Others: It will be up to the referee to fill out the half-dozen of so others who will go with the party into the jungle. Suggestions for characters include real or would-be mercenaries, sportsmen, survivalists, and curious college students.

FRIENDLY INVITATION

When the party is between jobs on Beta Canum, one of the PCs will meet Pierre, an old friend from yesteryear. Pierre asks the PC on a night of drinking and reminiscing, during which he will invite the PC and his friends along on a survival course he's teaching on the British continent. He offers to pay for expenses, for "old times' sake," and promises they will have fun and learn something in the bargain. If the party balks at the invitation, Pierre will casually mention that some notables from the French government are also going along, and it would be a good place to make some potentially useful contacts.

CLASS IS IN SESSION

If the PCs accept Pierre's invitation, they are to meet him one week later in Foliage, a small coastal town on the

edge of the rain forest that makes up much of the southern British continent. From here, it is explained, the group will be lifted via cargo zepp to a point 50 kilometers into the jungle and left off. From there, the survivalists will have to hike back to Foliage over the course of the second week.

The group will spend three days in the town, preparing for the sojourn. Everyone will be issued a basic medkit and a 200-kilometer range communicator. They are also given crash courses in first aid, poison treatment, hygiene, group discipline and equipment handling.

It is also explained—and highly emphasized—that no advanced technology, aside from medkits and communicators, will be allowed in the jungle. Part of the reason for taking the course is to test one's mettle against nature, and Pierre fervently believes that is impossible when one can simply obliterate all obstacles with automatic weapons fire and the like. Allowed arms include compound bows, crossbows, machetes, knives and axes. Nonrigid armors are allowed but not recommended; such heavy garments in the hot jungle can quickly lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion. Any character who does not comply will be dropped from the course.

Some characters will no doubt attempt to sneak some modern ordnance into the jungle anyway. Small handguns and objects of like size will be a Routine task to sneak past Pierre; normal pistols and singular grenades will be a Difficult task. Anything larger or in quantity will be Impossible. Any discovered contraband technology will be confiscated by Pierre for the duration of the time in the jungle.

Other equipment issued to each person will be as follows: backpack, sleeping bag, tent, rain poncho, thermally insulating blanket, knife, compass, two canteens, 30 iodine tablets, flashlight, 50 all-weather matches, mess kit and

COURSE

25 man-days of rations. Other equipment, such as fishing line, rope, duct tape and so on, is up to the discretion of the individual participant.

During the several days at Foliage, the PCs will have the chance to mingle with the other participants. Pierre will be a friendly but stern taskmaster; Charlois acts gruff and gung-ho, but is really nervous and unsure; Kirkland will be obnoxious and snide, and will always seem to be smirking at some private joke.

INTO THE BUSH

The survivalists are lifted to their drop sight 50 kilometers deep into the jungle. They are left off at a well-used camp site where the group members will spend the first week acclimating to their new environment.

The Beta Canum rain forest is somewhat more friendly toward humans than a similar environment on Earth. Because of the incompatible biochemistries, there is no danger of malaria, dysentery or other infections that are all too common hazards in Terran jungles. Even most organic poisons developed as defenses by various Beta Canum life forms have only limited effects on humans in moderation. Even so, there are still many dangerous indigenous creatures to be aware of (see *Beanstalk*, pages 46-48, for full descriptions of some of these), and there is the constant obstacle of the nuisance insects, treacherous terrain, oppressive heat and sweltering humidity.

Pierre will lead short sorties into the jungle over the next few days, to give everyone a chance to get used to moving in the rain forest. Kirkland will refuse most of the sojourns, spending a great deal of time alone in his tent. He is busy covertly assembling his master remote unit which he had to sneak in with him in component parts. The rebels who hired him already air-dropped his special "packages" in the nearby jungle several days before.

On the third day in camp, while everyone else is out with Pierre on a fauna identification outing, Kirkland completes his remote and activates all 36 cyberspider units in the surrounding bush. He orders the robots in the direction of the survivalist group. If for some reason or another a character has stayed behind, Kirkland will now attempt to kill him with his concealed Traylor Model 57 handgun. If a PC has stayed behind, assume Kirkland kills (or thinks he kills) him. Either way, he leaves camp immediately afterward, heading north. He is to be picked up 10 kilometers further in



the jungle 24 hours after the activation signal is sent. The robots are programmed to ignore Kirkland's personal IR signature. The remote unit he is using requires special codes for operation known only to Kirkland.

ATTACK

About an hour after remote activation, the first cyberspiders will reach Pierre's group. Having been air-dropped over an unexpectedly wide range by an incompetent pilot, the widely scattered units will not be able to attack en masse as Kirkland had hoped. Rather, they will attack sporadically in small groups over the next several hours.

The first attack of 1D10 robots will take the group by surprise, dropping out of the trees and jumping from out of the bush. The automatons will attack anything that fits a human's distinctive infrared silhouette and olfactory signature. Make sure several incidental NPCs die horribly in this first engagement, to strike home the danger the party is now in. A second wave of 1D6 cyberspiders will

strike the group 30 minutes later. See the section on cyberspiders elsewhere in this adventure on how to handle these units during combat.

OPTIONS

After the first two attacks, the party should be shaken if not in complete disarray. In all likelihood, several NPCs and/or PCs will be dead or wounded. If they attempt to radio for help, they will find that their com units are being jammed, and they will be ineffective beyond 10 meters range.

One of the first actions that the party members will likely take is to make their way back to base camp in order to pick up equipment, supplies and/or persons left there. Most likely, Kirkland and his equipment will be gone, and any character left behind will be dead or seriously wounded.

Some of the courses of action available to the party from this point are listed below:

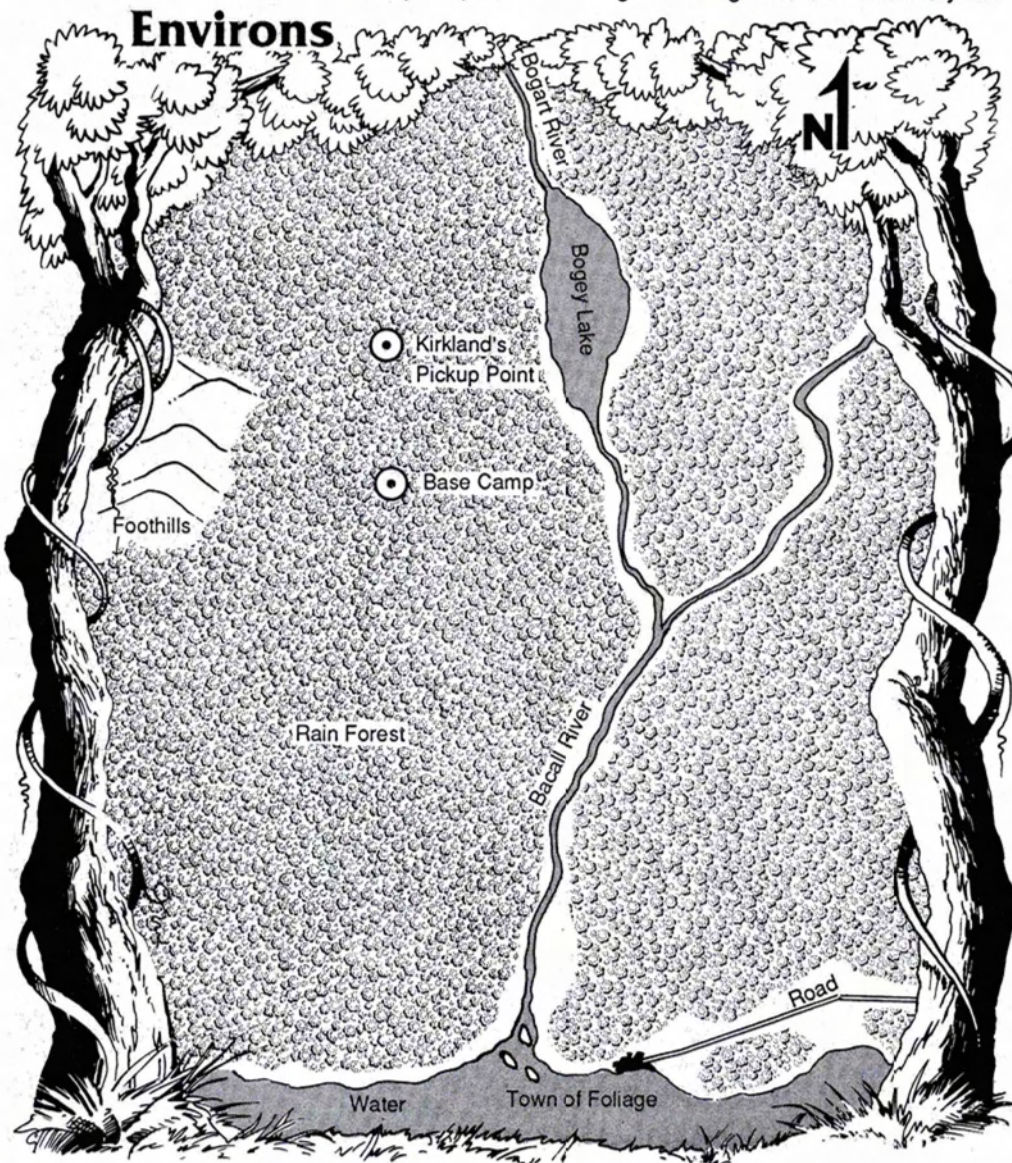
Make a Stand: The party decides to dig in and fight off the attacks by the

cyberspiders. The campsite is a broad open field about 30 meters across, and should give them a clear field of fire. They should also attempt to erect some form of defenses, such as shallow trenches, stake rows or pit traps. PCs who deduce that the robots are using infrared sensors might think of using the thermally insulating blankets to hide their IR signal. This won't fool a unit's olfactory sensors, but it might confuse it for several critical rounds. The robots will attack the base camp in swarms of 1D10 units at intervals of 1D6 hours until all units are destroyed or until their batteries wear down 72 hours after activation.

Flight to Foliage: The party decides that remaining in the alien jungle with an army of murderous robots is suicide, and attempts to get out with all possible speed. If the PCs opt for this strategy, they will be able to make about one kilometer per hour in the dense growth of the rain forest. Unlike the robots, however, the humans will have to stop and rest every couple of hours, leaving them vulnerable to attack from the cyberspiders who will be one step behind them the entire way. Once they reach the village, they should be able to find shelter and call for assistance.

Pursue Kirkland: Reckless or vengeful PCs may decide to go after Kirkland despite the danger from the cyberspiders. The assassin will have a lead on them, but he is no woodsman, and the party should be able to catch up to him within half a day. Kirkland will fight desperately if cornered, calling the robots to him to attack the party en masse. If things go against him, he will drop the radio jamming and call for his terrorist employers to bail him out. Twenty minutes later, an unmarked X-Wing close support gunship (*Adventurer's Guide*, page 59) will show up. The helicopter will first target Kirkland to ensure his silence, then the PCs. The assassin, knowing he's been double-crossed, will throw in with the PCs if he survives the first assault. Though the group has nothing that could possibly be effective against the gunship, the dense jungle growth should readily cover their escape. Kirkland's demise will not stop the cyberspider attacks.

The Scotty Special: Electronically inclined PCs may opt to rig up a device that will override the robots' commands via radio. Cobbling the device together from the group's communicators, medical scanners (included in the medkits), and perhaps some wrecked robots, the task for constructing it in such extreme conditions is formidable and has a time



increment of two hours. Once it is built, the task to unscramble the command codes is Difficult if a portacom is handy, Impossible if one is not.

CONCLUSIONS

If Charlois has somehow managed to survive the ordeal, he will be grateful to the PCs for their help, saying that he owes them a big favor. This may be called upon immediately or at some future date, and can take the form of money, work or connections. Also, because of their experience, allow each PC to gain a level of 0 in Jungle Survival skill in addition to any other experience points earned in this scenario.

If Kirkland managed to escape, the referee may continue this adventure by having the party try to track him down before he leaves the planet. If Kirkland has thrown in with the PCs and lives long enough to confess, the party will learn of the conspiracy against the French government. What they do with this knowledge is up to them.

CYBERSPIDERS

Cyberspiders originally appeared in the article, "New Cyber Equipment" by Michael LaBossiere, in **Challenge 43**. What appears below is an updated and modified version.

A cyberspider is a small robotic unit controlled by a partially organic central

processor. Each four-legged unit has a main dome-like body measuring 10 centimeters in radius and four centimeters high. The central housing contains all of the unit's main components, including its main weapon, a poison injector needle. This needle has enough force to penetrate normal clothing but little else. The poison inflicts a DPV of 0.5 for four rounds after it is injected. The spider has enough poison for four injections. Kirkland has replaced the polymer "web" spinners in the unit's legs with powerful actuators that allow the robot to jump up to three meters. He has also installed leg barbs to assist it in climbing the jungle fauna. In this way, the automaton can leap from the tree to tree in the jungle for locomotion.

The cyberspiders' thermal sensors are limited to a range of 10 meters. Their olfactory sensors are about half as sensitive as an average dog's, being able to pick up any significant spoor within 10 meters of the unit. It can follow a scent trail less than 12 hours old.

Each spider has a Life Level of 3 and an armor value of 0.2. It possesses no significant signature. Because of its size and dexterity, it is Difficult to hit and has an Initiative of 8. Each spider costs about Lv400 to make, plus Lv25 for each poison dose.

Cyberspiders are very single-minded creatures in combat. Once a target has

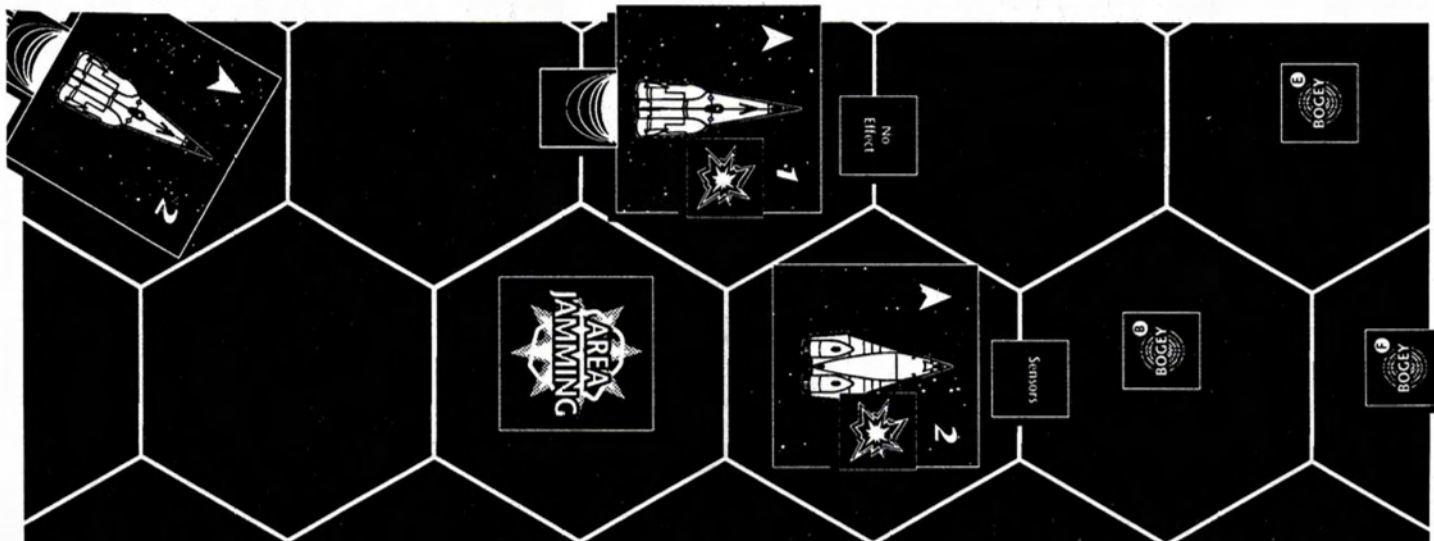
been acquired, they will pursue and attack it relentlessly. A unit will typically inject all of its poison into one particular subject, ensuring a kill. It will use the ample growth of the jungle to their advantage, striking from out of cover whenever possible.

BOWS AND CROSSBOWS

During this adventure, the PCs will be forced to rely on these archaic weapons. A character with Combat Rifleman skill can use crossbows at half the level of that skill. Bows require their own special skill category.

Rockwell Sherwood-III Compound Bow: Type: 60-pound draw sporting compound bow Country: Great Britain Wt: 2 kg Length: 1.1 m (bulk=2) Action: single-shot Ammunition: 900mm x 10mm hunting arrow Ammo Velocity: 200 mps Ammo Weight: 0.15 kg per shaft ROF: 1 Aimed Fire Range: 100 meters DP Value: 0.8 Price: Lv100 (Lv1 per arrow).

Rockwell MARC-7 Crossbow: Type: 100 pound draw light sporting crossbow Country: Great Britain Weight: 2.5 kg Length: 75 cm (bulk=2) Action: single shot Ammunition: 600mm x 10mm hunting bolt Ammo Velocity: 300 mps Ammo Weight: 0.1 kg per bolt ROF: 1 Aimed Fire Range: 150 meters DP Value: 1 Price: Lv90 (Lv1 per bolt). Ω



These vessels had no jump drives, had nothing in fact not directly related to producing the most effective line-of-battle combatant possible.

They were carried across the interstellar distances by huge jump tenders, vessels with little or no combat ability of their own, which would release their deadly cargo before the battle began and then withdraw to a safe distance. These warships became the very symbol of large fleet actions. Because they were carried from star to star, they were called...

GDW: 0308. \$30.



To continue on page 64

Martial Arts

A Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. article by Robert K. Wood

Fact 1: Hand-to-hand combat between well-trained combatants does not last long. The techniques employed are designed to do serious, often crippling damage to an opponent and are applied to the weaker areas of the body.

Fact 2: Opponents kicked in the throat, knees or groin do not stay on their feet or stage comebacks.

Fact 3: Martial arts are not easily mastered. They take many years of practice, and require a skilled instructor, not a book, to learn properly.

Many false ideals have developed as the result of a largely uninformed public being exposed to the movie version of martial arts. This article is meant to differentiate between myth and reality, allowing you to simulate realism in unarmed combat or focus your campaign more in the cinematic version.

In street situations, there is seldom time for a "face-off" where one opponent intimidates the other. Often, the martial artist is jumped and responds by reflex, delivering several strikes before he is really aware of what has occurred. This happens often with more experienced students and gives rise to rumors that martial artists are paranoid, while it is really an example of their reactions having been conditioned by years of repetitive training.

If your gaming situation warrants a face-off, compare Intimidation skills plus the usual die roll, subtracting 2 from all the loser's attacks and 1 from all defense rolls. Roll Initiative as normal, but give any martial artist a +1 in a surprise situation (due to reflex training). When the fight begins, a few steps need to be followed:

1. Determine what style each combatant is using at the moment. Determine Initiative, applying any modifiers as listed in the Martial Arts Bonus Table on page 60.

2. Once the winner of the Initiative has been determined, decide if the at-

tack is going to be an upper body shot, low strike or specific blow. The declaration is made to both the defender and referee (in the case of a feint, declare its target zone instead).

3. Determine attack type and make the attack roll as usual and location if needed.

4. Apply any damage or special effects (stunned by throw, knockback, etc.).

When you determine what style and technique you are going to use, consider your situation. Is the target in close where a short punch or throw is more appropriate, or is he at more of a kicking range? Be aware that most martial artists consider their attack range to be about two meters; this is sometimes called one's "circle," and a person is not a threat unless he is within that range. Be sure that you know what attacks your style is not trained in, and do not try to use them. An example is trying to punch using Judo (which does not teach strikes until black belt level). If you are not trained in a given technique you either cannot manage it (e.g., a jump kick using Aikido) or you do so as if you

are using Brawl. A list of techniques per style follows in the Attack Styles section.

COMBINATION ATTACKS

Most attacks occur as part of a combination. This frequently begins with a feint (see below) but includes at least three attacks. A combination can include kicks, hand strikes, blocks and throws at the referee's discretion. Each attack in a combination is subject to a -2 modifier to hit with a maximum number of attacks being equal to the attacker's Reflex. Often during the attacker's combination, the defender will throw a counterattack and be blocking or dodging. Run the action blow by blow, with the character holding Initiative always striking first until the round ends.

FEINTS AND THE KIAI

Despite most beliefs, the majority of attacks do not find their intended target. Actually, they are thrown as part of a combination of attacks designed to overwhelm the opponent's defenses. Often, this is as simple as throwing a feint (an attack to draw the defense away from the desired target area), or using a distraction such as a kiai (pronounced kee-i, a loud shout used to frighten the opponent). In throwing a feint, make a preliminary attack roll at -2 (the feint) and a second attack at +2 (the real thing), rolling any damage and effects. If a kiai is used, the defender must roll 1D10+Cool versus a difficulty factor of 12. If he fails this roll, the attacker gains the Initiative, and all actions by the defender are at a -4 for two rounds since he was caught off guard.

BLOCKING ATTACKS AND DEFENSE

When an attack is made, the defender must decide what defense to use. Usually, a dodge is not an effective defense unless combined with some sort of block (ducking a head shot is not an exception). As the attack comes in, shift into a position where the attacker cannot strike as easily, and prepare to redirect the blow past you. If you cannot avoid the attack or move to a better position, guard your vital areas and prepare to be hit. Dodges are only effective when you do not wish to contact the incoming limb and the attack is directed at your head or feet.

When facing an armed attacker, your options are to dodge (as above), block or hit him first (if you have the Initiative). Two blocking techniques collectively known as "jamming an attack" are often employed in these situations when a



JAYCE

normal block would get you killed. Jamming occurs when you either make a declared strike against the incoming limb, or attempt to intercept the incoming limb, avoiding any weapon.

There is not a big difference between the two forms of jamming, but the first option is a more aggressive defense in which you may render the opponent's limb useless or less effective. Styles such as Tae Kwon Do, various Karates and Jujitsu employ the first and are trained to defend using either hands or feet (no jamming of punches using the feet, though). Roll as a normal attack with a -3 against your opponent's total and apply damage if you succeed.

The second jamming option is a more nonviolent technique used by those who are trying to do as little damage as possible to the attacker. In general, this defense is applied using the hands, but some jams using legs can occur if the style is trained in kicking. Styles such as Tai Chi, Aikido and Isshin Ryu employ this sort of defense: Subtract 3 from your defense roll and proceed with an attack of your own if you succeed (this is known as trapping and results in an automatic grapple or sweep). Any failed attempt to jam results in the strike hitting the arm or leg you defended with.

TELEPHONE BOOTH KARATE

The art of close combat is often overlooked by martial artists who have not been trained in it. Most styles prefer to keep opponents at arm's length and deal with any threat closer by cramming kicks or punches into underpowered short strikes and retreating to a comfortable distance. The rule of "keep your distance" is drilled into their heads, and students tend to become uneasy when forced into close quarters with an aggressive opponent. A training style known as "Telephone Booth Karate" developed to combat this weakness.

In Telephone Booth Karate, your defense circle is no greater than the length of your arm. You are trained to defend as such and become adapted to the "up close and personal" aspect of street fighting. The result is the development of full power short strikes or throws and an increased perception of range. If you want to make a Karate student nervous, let her fight a Judo practitioner.

THROWS

The main disadvantage of a throw is range. How can you get close to your opponent when they keep kicking you or dodging your grapple? The answer is to combine your throwing techniques with a combination that will get you in

close. Since several of the throwing styles (such as Judo) do not teach blocks or hand attacks, it is recommended that you seek additional training in other styles or accept getting hit every time you try to throw. Once you do learn to get in on your opponent, he belongs to you.

The execution of a throw is as fast and fluid as any other martial arts attack if you are competent. First, the attacker takes the target off balance by shouldering him, lifting him up onto the balls of the feet, or pulling on the clothing or arm. From here, the attacker slides in close, bends his knees to lower his center of gravity, and springs up while pulling the target across his body and to the floor. If the throw is well executed, even an opponent skilled in breakfalls will be rattled.

When executing a throw, the range must be one meter or less, and the defender may attempt to block. If the throw succeeds by 2 or less, the defender is off balance and must make a roll of Reflex+(Martial Arts or Athletics)+1D10 versus a difficulty of 15 to avoid falling; any counterattacks by the defender are at -4 for one round. If the throw succeeds by more than 2, the defender is thrown and must make a roll of Body+1D10 versus a difficulty of 13 or be stunned. If the throw succeeds by 6 or more, the defender must roll against a difficulty of 20 (due to landing on his head, shoulder or flat on his back) and adds +2 to any damage received.

When a defender is thrown, he may attempt to land without damage using a breakfall (assume he knows how only if he has a Fall bonus). This is accomplished by tucking the chin, arching the back (to roll out of the impact), smacking the ground (to absorb shock), and blowing out one's air in the manner of a kiai. To attempt this, roll 1D10+Reflex+(Athletics or Martial Arts) versus the original attack roll. If successful, the defender is not stunned and reduces the damage inflicted by one half.

GRAPPLING

If a character decides that a person needs to be restrained without excessive harm, a grapple attack is the best option. Several techniques are open to the would-be wrestler, including holds, armbars and chokes.

In a hold, the attacker pins the defender to the ground using strength and mass to apply pain to the neck, spine or shoulders. A number of effective holds exist, including the Full and Half Nelson, but they require a considerable bit of grappling to accomplish. Judo, Chi-Na

and Wrestling apply holds frequently. The armbar or joint lock is separated from holds because it never requires the attacker to go to the ground with the target. Pressure is applied directly to the joint of the wrist, elbow, shoulder or knee and can be maintained upon a prone target from a standing position. Damage is 1D6+2 and is applied as the attacker wills once per round. Aikido, Tai Chi and Jujitsu are well trained in this technique.

Choking techniques exist in two practical forms: the blood choke and the full throat or basic choke. Of the two, the blood choke is the most dangerous since it can be applied without the defender's notice. For every two rounds that a blood choke is in place, reduce the victim's INT by 1 and all skills by 2; after 10 rounds have passed, the victim must make a save against Body at -3 or become unconscious.

In contrast, the full throat choke is obvious to the defender since both breathing and blood are cut off. Frequently this results in panic (to save, roll 1D10 versus Cool) and can force him into unconsciousness usually after one minute (20 rounds). The defender must save against Body every four rounds to remain conscious, lowering Body and INT by 1 for every additional four-round period or until the choke is released. Damage occurs with this type of choke and equals 1D6+2 every four rounds; attributes recover at the same rate. Both types of chokes can be applied in conjunction with either armbars or holds.

When attempting to put a hold on an opponent, you must accept getting hit, and measures need to be taken to reduce the threat to yourself; short body strikes are highly recommended. The same applies when choking an opponent since one of your hands is tied up while his limbs are free. In contrast, armbars tend to work well to subdue opponents since damage and pain can be applied until he surrenders.

UPPER OR LOWER BODY ATTACKS

In any unarmed attack, the attacker knows where the strike should hit and its probable effects. Therefore, separate hit charts for upper body and lower body attacks are included. In general, upper body shots will affect breathing, while lower strikes will interfere with balance and maneuvering. When making an attack, allow kicks to target either area (-1 to the dice roll when striking the upper body except for jump kicks) and allow hand attacks to only strike the upper body. Be aware that special cir-

cumstances (such as punching a standing target from under a car) will restrict what areas can be hit.

SPECIAL TARGET AREAS

Since certain areas on the human body are better targets than others due to inherent physiological weaknesses, martial arts have developed to take advantage of them. Strikes to the knees, elbows, wrists, ankles, backs of the hands, tops of the feet, collarbones, inner thighs and inner arms may render a limb useless. Strikes to the throat, ears, eyes, kidneys, solar plexus, spine, temples, bridge of the nose and groin also have powerful results that need to be considered. Attacks upon both groups are made at a -4. When a strike succeeds, use the following guidelines: For the first group, add +1 damage and -1 to stun rolls; for the second group, add +2 damage and -3 to stun rolls. Any damage that places a character into the serious wound category may result in a permanent disability (this occurs on a roll of 3 or less on 1D10), causing a -1 Reflex when using the appropriate areas.

POWER VERSUS SPEED

In many martial arts, there is a definite division between *power* and *speed* attacks. While all attacks are delivered with the utmost speed, certain attacks are designed to deliver more physical force to the target. These power attacks result in a slightly slower delivery but effectively add 2 points of damage to a hit; any blocking attempts result in 1D6+2 points of damage to the blocking limb. The speed attack option can also be chosen, giving a +2 to the attack roll but a -2 to damage.

KNOCKBACK

When a target is hit with more points of damage than he has in Body, he must roll Reflex+1D10 versus the total damage to remain on his feet. If the defender's roll is less, he goes down; all attacks and defense rolls are at a -2, and all attacks upon him are at +2.

FATIGUE

The worst opponent to an overzealous combatant is fatigue. It is easy to forget your limits when the adrenaline is pumping, but after a few minutes of fighting, you begin to regret your enthusiasm. Often the fighter who has better conserved his energy will win the fight.

To simulate fatigue, allow combatants to fight or exert themselves for a number of rounds equal to the Fatigue factor which equals Body+(Athletics or

Body Conditioning) without penalty. At that time, the character must make a roll of Body+ (Athletics or Body Conditioning) versus a difficulty factor of 15 or suffer a 1 point reduction to Body and all skill rolls. Once a number of rounds equal to twice the character's Fatigue factor have passed, the difficulty factor becomes a 20. The difficulty factor continues to increase by 5 with every additional number of rounds that pass equal to the character's Fatigue factor. Rest can reduce the penalties of overexertion: For every period of rest equal to 15 minus the Fatigue factor, the penalties against Body and skill rolls are decreased by 1, while the difficulty factor is decreased by 5. At any time a character rolls successfully against his difficulty factor after having previously failed it, no penalties accumulate for that period; this is known as a second wind. The use of fatigue rules should only be used in extended fight sequences.

CYBERNETIC NINJARAMA

The rules presented here remain the same for cybernetic martial artists. Since the movements are more powerful, a few guidelines need to be added:

1. A flesh limb cannot parry a cyberlimb without taking damage.
2. A flesh limb can use a jamming technique against a cyberlimb (the evasive method) but cannot grapple it. The defender may use a throw as a possible follow-up technique.
3. Armbars and joint locks upon cyberlimbs are ineffective (no pain) unless the attacker also has cyberlimbs and chooses to break the limb.
4. The damage of a cyberlimb in a martial arts attack is added to the technique's damage as in the normal rules. Some implants work especially well with certain techniques, such as Rippers with the Tiger Claw attack

ATTACK STYLES

Following is a list of martial art styles and descriptions to complement the attack chart. A wide variety of internal (passive-oriented or soft), external (aggressive or hard) styles and weapon styles exist, with the most common being external. This listing is not meant to demean any style or its inherent philosophies as all three groups represent effective means of internal or spiritual development and self defense. The techniques employed by each style are listed by numbers that correspond to the description section. The IP cost is listed in the description, and Style bonuses are listed in the ending chart. Keep in mind that different styles often

have conflicting ideas of what a technique looks like.

Attack Technique Listing

Hand/Arm Attacks: Back Hand (1), Elbow Strike (2), Finger Strike (3), Knife Hand (4), Palm Strike (5), Spinning Hand Strike (Specify Type) (6), Spear Hand (7), Straight Punch (8), Tiger Claw (9).

Foot/Leg Attacks: Axe Kick (10), Back Kick (11), Crescent Kick (Inside or Outside) (12), Front Kick (13), Hook Kick (14), Jump Kick (15), Knee Strike (16), Roundhouse (17), Side Kick (18), Spinning Kick (Specify Type) (19), Wheel Kick (20).

Special Attacks: Armbar (21), Choke (22), Head Strike (23), Feint (24), Grapple (25), Jam (26), Kiai (27), Overrun (28), Throw (29), Sweep (30).

Technique Descriptions

Hand/Arm Attacks

Back Hand: A fast strike using the back of the hand.

Jab: A fast but weak punch.

Knife Hand: An arcing strike using the edge of the hand.

Spear Hand: A thrust using the fingertips.

Straight Punch: A basic Karate punch.

Tiger Claw: A raking attack using fingertips.

Foot/Leg Attacks

Axe Kick: A devastating kick in which the foot is brought down in a stomping motion. The strike is delivered with the back of the heel.

Crescent Kick: A kick thrown in a looping action to strike with either the inside or outer edge of the foot.

Hook Kick: A kick similar to a crescent kick in which the foot is brought up and behind the target to strike with the heel.

Jump Kicks: This is performed by launching yourself at your target and hitting him with a kick while in midair.

Roundhouse Kick: A circular kick in which the foot is brought up in the rear and swung around the body at a slight angle. Contact is made either with the instep or ball of the foot.

Spinning Kicks: A rotating action of the hips and torso gives extra power to a Crescent, Side, Back or Jump Kick.

Wheel Kick: A rotating kick in which the leg is extended and spun horizontally to strike with the side of the foot and ankle.

Special Attacks

Armbar: Locking an opponent's limb and applying pain until submission or

the limb is broken (this is a legal practice in Judo tournaments).

Choke: Using your opponent's clothing or your forearm to cut off his blood supply, breathing or both.

Head Strike: Striking your opponent using your forehead or the back of your head.

Jam: Striking an incoming punch or kick to stop it. This is an alternative to blocking.

Kiai: A loud shout used to frighten an opponent and add power to an attack.

Overrun: Knocking your opponent off his feet using momentum and mass.

Throw: Any body motion which takes your opponent off balance and sends him to the floor. Most styles employing throws can toss an opponent toward "any point on the compass."

Sweep: Taking your opponent off balance and knocking his feet out from under him.

Internal Styles

Aikido (4): As *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*. (21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

Capelora (2): As *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*. (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 30).

Chi'na (2): The Chinese art of Grappling employs a wide variety of painful joint locks, chokes and holds (21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30).

Isshin Ryu (3): A powerful style that encompasses many power techniques but is still considered a soft style. Weapon training is usually included (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 30).

Kung Fu, Crane Style (3): An animal form based upon the movement of a crane (1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 18, 24, 26, 27).

Kung Fu, Drunken Style (3): A deceptively dangerous style whose sweeping movements mimic the careless stumbling of a drunk (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30).

Kung Fu, Mantis Style (3): An animal form based upon the lunging movement of the Praying Mantis (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 24, 25, 26, 27).

Ninjitsu (4): One of the most misrepresented styles that exists. Ninjitsu is a highly specialized internal style that is aimed at the survival of the practitioner. Techniques vary greatly but are designed to defeat the attacks of other

Martial Arts Bonus Table

INTERNAL ("SOFT") STYLES

Style	Hand	Kick	Block	Dodge	Throw	Hold	Escape	Choke	Sweep	Grap	Fall
Aikido	—	—	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	2
Capelora	1	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Chi'na	—	—	2	1	2	3	3	3	2	3	2
Isshin Ryu	2	2	3	2	1	—	—	—	2	—	—
Kung Fu/Crane	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kung Fu/Drunken	2	2	2	1	2	—	—	1	2	1	2
Kung Fu/Mantis	3	2	2	—	—	2	1	1	1	—	—
Ninjitsu	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Tai Chi	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	—	1	1	—
Wing Chun	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	—	2	—	1

EXTERNAL ("HARD") STYLES

Style	Hand	Kick	Block	Dodge	Throw	Hold	Escape	Choke	Sweep	Grap	Fall
Boxing	3	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brawl	—	-1	-1	—	-1	—	—	-1	—	1	-1
Choi Li Fut	2	2	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	2	—
Judo	—	—	—	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	4
Jujitsu	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	3
Karate	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kempo	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kung Fu/Dog	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kung Fu/Dragon	3	2	2	2	2	—	—	—	2	—	1
Kung Fu/Monkey	2	2	1	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	3
Kung Fu/Panther	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Kung Fu/Tiger	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2
Thai Kick Boxing	3	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sankukai	3	3	2	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	—
Sambo	2	2	—	—	3	2	2	—	2	2	—
Shaolin Do	2	3	2	1	1	1	—	—	3	—	1
Sumo	2	—	1	—	2	2	2	1	—	3	2
Tae Kwon Do	2	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
T'ang-su	2	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Te	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—

WEAPON STYLES

Style	Hand	Kick	Block	Dodge	Throw	Hold	Escape	Choke	Sweep	Grap	Fall
Balisong	3	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Escrima	2	—	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kendo	4	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

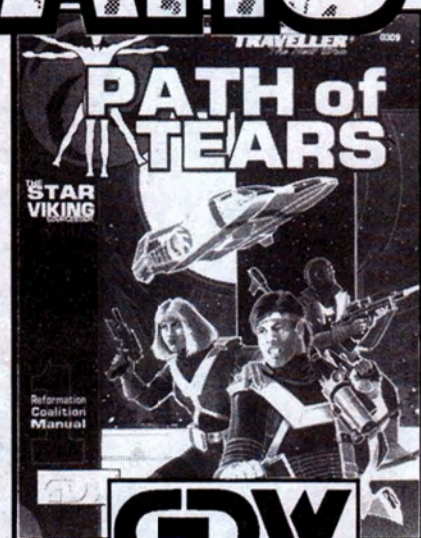
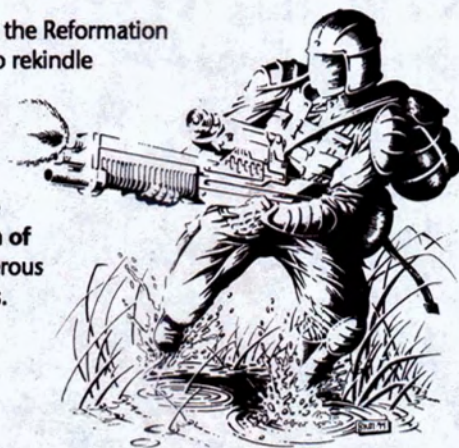
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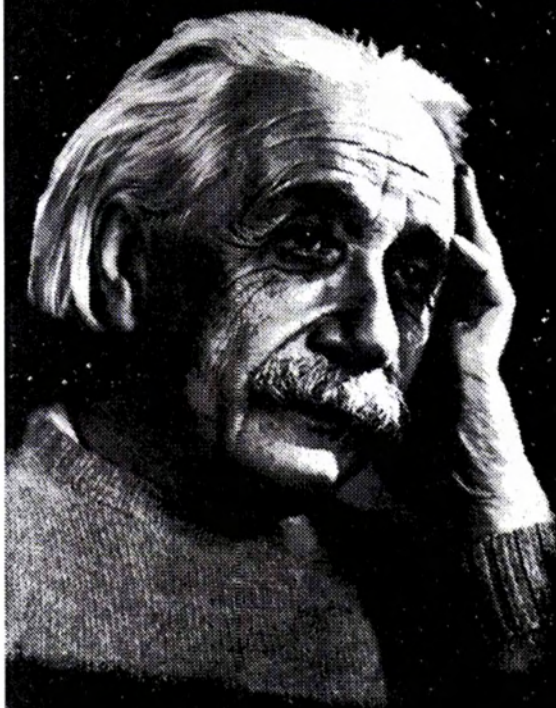
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Continued from page 60.

styles. Weapon training is also taught (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29).

Tai Chi (4): An ancient Chinese style that stresses the development of inner strength (1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30).

Wing Chun (3): A powerful style that is only open to women and stresses the finest aspects of Telephone Booth Karate (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27).

External Styles

Boxing (1): As per *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*. (8, 24, 26).

Choi Li Fut (3): As per *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*. (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 27, 30).

Judo (1): Currently taught as the national sport of Japan, this Wrestling style offers no striking techniques until black belt level, +6 or better (21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

Jujitsu (2): The Japanese art from which Judo is derived. It offers a number of deadly strikes and throwing techniques (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

Karate (2): Any number of nationalities have developed martial arts included under this heading (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30).

Kempo (3): A dynamic style that employs many powerful circular attacks (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30).

Kung Fu, Dog Style (3): An animal form built upon the begging and crying actions of a dog. Attacks usually come at a moment of surprise (5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 24, 25, 26, 27).

Kung Fu, Dragon Style (3): A powerful offense-oriented form based upon a dragon's movements (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30).

Kung Fu, Monkey Style (3): An animal form built upon the jumping and rolling techniques of a monkey. Attacks appear comical but are effective (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30).

Kung Fu, Panther (3): An aggressive but cautious animal form (3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27).

Kung Fu, Tiger (3): An aggressive animal form that places ferocity before caution (3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30).

Thai Kick Boxing (4): As per *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*. (2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27).

Sankukai (3): A powerful art that stresses patience and precise strikes to defeat an opponent (1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 26, 27, 30).

Sambo (3): A commando fighting form used by the Soviet Army (See *Euro-Source* for details) (2, 5, 8, 13, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29).

Shaolin Do (3): Considered the root form of most martial arts, this style employs many circular attacks and a high degree of internal development (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30).

Sumo (2): A Japanese Wrestling style in which the mass of the attacker is of primary importance. Only characters over Body of 8 will be trained in this style (5, 21, 22, 25, 28, 29).

Tae Kwon Do (4): A Korean style that employs a high number of kicks and jump kick attacks (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30).

T'ang-su (2): A variation of Tae Kwon Do known for its aggressiveness (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 27, 30).

Te (3): Translated as "hand" in Japanese, this style forms the backbone of many hard Japanese styles (2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 26, 27, 30).

Weapon Styles

Balisong (2): The art of the butterfly knife. A very graceful and dangerous style.

Escrima (3): Filipino stick fighting. Practitioners use combinations of strikes whenever possible.

Kendo (4): The Japanese art of the sword, primarily the katana.

NEW HIT LOCATION CHARTS

Upper Body Strike

Roll	Location
1	Head
2-4	Chest
5	Abdomen
6-7	Left arm
8-9	Right arm
10	Weapon or attacker's choice

Lower Body Strike

Roll	Location
1	Chest
2	Abdomen
3-4	Right leg, upper
5-6	Right leg, lower
7-8	Left leg, upper
9-10	Left leg, lower

UNARMED ATTACKS

DAMAGE TABLE

Hand/Arm Attacks

(Initiative Modifier,

Modifier to Hit, Damage)

Back Hand (0, 0, 1D6+2)

Elbow Strike (-2, -1, 1D6)

Finger Strike (0, -1, 1D6+3)

Haymaker (-2, -3, 1D6)

Knife Hand (-1, 0, 1D6+2)

Palm Strike (0, -1, 1D6+2+1)

Spinning Backhand (-1, -1, 1D6-1)

Spinning Palm Strike (-1, -1, 1D6)

Spinning Spear Hand (-1, -1, 1D6)

Straight Punch (0, 0, 1D6+2)

Spear Hand (-1, -1, 1D6+2+1)

Tiger Claw (0, 0, 1D6+2)

Foot/Leg Attacks

(Initiative Modifier,

Modifier to Hit, Damage)

Axe Kick (-2, -1, 1D6+4)*

Back Kick (-1, -1, 1D6+4)

Brawl Kick (-2, -1, 1D6)

Crescent Kick (-1, 0, 1D6+1)*

Front Kick (-1, 0, 1D6+2)*

Hook Kick (-1, -1, 1D6+3)

Jump Kick (-3, -2, +2)

Knee Strike (-1, -1, 1D6)

Side Kick (-1, 0, 1D6+2)*

Spinning Back Kick (-2, -1, 1D6+6)*

Spinning Side Kick (-2, 0, 1D6+4)*

Wheel Kick (-2, 0, 1D6)

Special Attacks

(Initiative Modifier,

Modifier to Hit, Damage)

Armbar (-1, -1, 1D6)

Basic Throw (-1, -2, 1D6)

Choke (-2, -1, 1D6+2 cumulative)

Grapple (0, 0, 0)

Head Strike (-2, -3, 1D6+2)

Kiai (0, 0, Stun)

Sweep (0, 0, 1D6+3)

*Denotes possible usage as a jump kick. Combine initiative, modifier to hit and damage bonus.

Adventure: Streetfighting

The characters are members or associates of the Black Hawks, a guardian gang based out of the East Marina section of Night City. The Hawks consist of about 34 members, including techies and other support personnel. All have grown up on the street and owe their current survival to Bangkok, a seasoned street samurai who operates a street dojo (training hall) out of one of the warehouses. He and his people are much like a family and have taken it upon themselves to protect the neighborhood from boosters and other trash anyway they can. All of the guardians are or have been Bangkok's students and use a mixture of Thai Kick Boxing, Escrima and Jujitsu. In the past, Bangkok has made bitter enemies of the Red Chrome Legion and several

other racist/hate oriented gangs due to his selection of students (mostly minorities) and interference with their business. The fact that both Bangkok and the Black Hawks are still around proves that they are highly capable of taking care of themselves.

BAIT

The characters are on patrol when they see five members of the Iron Sights working over a trio of corporates. One suit has been pulled out of the now-totaled sedan, and a solo is dead at the wheel. When the Iron Sights see the PCs, they decide to total them immediately.

If any of the corporates survive, they will try to buy off the PCs to leave them alone (it didn't work with the Iron Sights), then suddenly try to hire them as an escort to a conapt in South Charter Hill. A successful roll of Streetwise versus a difficulty of 13 will reveal that the address is in an area frequented by the Red Chrome Legion. The corporates will offer a sum of 1000 Euro initially but can be talked up to 3000 with effort. The high offer should make the PCs suspicious.

AMBUSH

Assuming the PCs accept the offer, they will have a typical trek through the

wet streets to the address. Upon arriving, the PCs notice a strange lack of activity on the street.

A roll of Awareness versus a difficulty of 20 will spot the ambush waiting for them.

As the PCs approach the desired building (a 24-hour food mart), Iron Sights (see description) come at them from a number of directions: Four from a nearby alleyway, three from the abandoned building next to the mart, six from a stolen News 54 van parked on the sidewalk, and three from within the building itself.

This time they are armed with melee weapons only (Rippers, chainsaws and sledgehammers) and intend to grab one of the corporates long enough to remove a MRAM chip from his chip processor then kill him and anyone else in standard gang fashion.

Sixteen boosters against a handful of player characters isn't exactly fair, but the player characters are well trained martial artists and have firearms. If they use their heads, they should do well. The intended buyer for the chip left an hour ago when the boosters arrived.

ENDING

Sometime during the fight, one of the corporates breaks his Trauma card,

bringing help in 1D6+2 minutes. At the end of this time, the corporates (and any unpaid portion of the PCs' payment) will be extracted under fire by Trauma's miniguns without a thanks. The PCs are encouraged to loot the bodies for their troubles or try to find a buyer for the chip, which contains black-mail material on an Orbital Air executive.

BANGKOK, SOLO

INT 6, REF 9/11, TECH 5, COOL 6, LUCK 7, ATT 5, EMP 6, MA 7, BOD 8.

Skills: Combat Sense +5, Awareness +6, Autoweapon +6, Pistol +5, Thai Kick Boxing +8, Escrima +5, Jujitsu +4, Basic Tech +5, Persuade/Lie +4, Instruction +5 Survival +3, Streetwise +4, Human Perception +4, Intimidate +4, Body Conditioning +4.

IRON SIGHTS GANG

INT 6, REF 8, COOL 8, BOD 7, EMP 4.

Skills: Awareness +3, Autoweapon +3, Pistol +3, Karate +2, Intimidate +3, Streetwise +4, Shadow/Ditch +4, Persuade/Lie +2, Stealth +4, Melee +3.

Weapons: Arasaka WSA, Sternmeyer Stakeout, Rippers. Ω

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When you think
the battle's over,
the fight has
just begun.

Memento Mori

A Call of Cthulhu adventure
by J.B. Hill

The haunting of houses can often be explained by mundane circumstances—airlocks in the water pipes, the wind blowing from an unusual direction, or movement due to settling caused by mining subsidence or subterranean clay beds drying out. It is very rare that the house is actually possessed by a hideous evil entity. The house in this scenario, however, falls within the latter category.

This adventure is designed to follow on from the previous Call of Cthulhu scenario, "Dance of Death" in Challenge 73, but this is not essential. It can be set in any country in any age.

The investigators are approached by a representative of the Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters are a charitable organization, not a religious order. They help the poor and run a series of hospitals to care for the elderly. The nuns are called "sisters," but the head of each hospice is referred to as Matron, not Mother Superior. If the adventurers were involved in "Dance of Death," they are approached by Father O'Brian and Sister Mary-Ruth (assuming they survived that scenario). If not, the PCs are approached by Dr. Eastman, who is the local regional director of the Sisters of Mercy. In any event, a meeting with Eastman will be arranged, and he will describe the situation to the PCs:

I hope you can help solve an extremely serious mystery. It involves a house the organization has inherited. The original owner was Mrs. Bibby, or rather her husband. He was an Italian seaman called George Gino Granelli. He lived there alone at first, then took Pat Bibby as his wife to live with him. After many unhappy years, he eventually deserted her—probably returning to Italy. She remained in the house and reverted to her maiden name. She continued to live there alone for 10 more years, until recently, when she committed suicide by hanging herself.

She was buried in land attached to the Sisters of Mercy—leaving the house to us.

The house remained empty for several months. Then, a local poor family, the Conrads, lost their home and asked the Sisters for help. The empty house seemed the obvious solution, and the family moved into the house as a temporary measure. The next morning, they were all dead.

The father, Herman, was laying on the floor, with the mother, Sophia, crouched in the corner of the bedroom, and their young child dead as well. All three apparently died of heart attacks, but with expressions of utter horror on their faces. And all had been bitten—a small animal bite on their throats.

We hired a private investigator to check out the house—Simon Batesby. He spent the night there, too, armed with a .38 revolver. The next morning, he, too, was dead. He died of a heart attack like the Conrad family—with the same look of horror, the same strange bite in the throat. He was found sitting in the chair of the parlor.

All told, we have been responsible

for the deaths of four innocent people, including a young child. Please help us.

Eastman will answer any questions put to him. The following topics may be covered:

George Gino Granelli: A sailor and adventurer. A evil man who was widely travelled, as he had visited America, Britain, Turkey, South America and the South Seas.

Pat Bibby: No one ever understood why this good Catholic woman married the likes of Granelli. According to reports, she apparently hanged herself after receiving a letter from Italy which upset her. She was buried in a private garden. Alas, tragedy followed, and all the sisters in the house died later of extreme food poisoning. This is the official story. If pressed for the real story, Eastman will give a second version: Bibby was sent a live spider from Italy which bit her. After her burial, she returned as a vampire, destroying all the Sisters (except Sister Mary-Ruth). Now all the vampires have been destroyed. Unless the PCs actually took part in that adventure, Eastman will not admit that Bibby was not a true vampire but a host to a Cthulhu Mythos parasite.

Conrad Family: The Sisters provided clothes and supplies to this poor but honest family, and gave several second-hand dolls to the five year old, Beth. No one can now trace where the dolls came from. Eastman attended all three autopsies. They definitely all had heart attacks.

Simon Batesby: A lone private detective hired to stop local "vampire" and "ghost" stories. Immediately before his death, he fired his gun four times—all the bullets were found in the wall facing him.

Strange Bites: All four who died had nonfatal bites on the throat. The bite radius was just less than one inch. They were definitely not spider bites, not traditional twin vampire punctures, and not rodent bites. They looked like very sharp, small monkey bites. None of the bodies had suffered any unusual blood loss.

BIBBY HOUSE

The investigators may search the house by day but eventually will have to spend the night there. Each room is furnished with poor but clean furniture. There is rather too much furniture, so there are many shadowy areas for something evil to hide in.

Parlor: The window has heavy, folded drapes. By the fire is a bucket with wooden logs in it. The wiring in here is defective, causing the lights to flicker.

Kitchen: Shelves contain pots, pans, mugs and cups. A basket still holds fruit—most now turning brown. A cheap mirror has aging defective silvering on the back, causing a roughly human-shaped shadow to appear in the mirror.

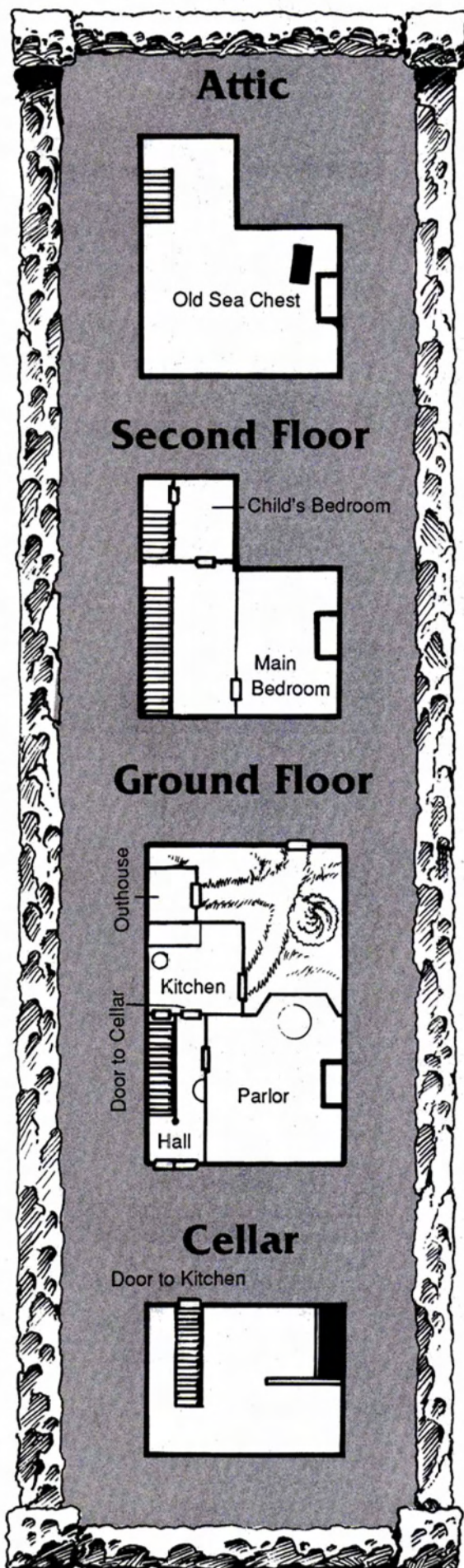
Hall and Stairs: A hole in one raising tread is large enough for a rat to pass through.

Main Bedroom: One cupboard door refuses to stay closed. Inside are a number of toys, including a teddy bear, a stuffed toy monkey with its head missing and a clown doll. On the floor stands a mechanical doll. (In an 1880s or 1920 setting, this is a Swiss clockwork doll. In *Cthulhu Now*, it is a plastic battery "Good Pal" doll [remember Chucky?!]) It has a defective on-off switch, and as the investigators look around the room, it will suddenly activate, walking jerkily across the floor, opening and shutting its little mouth. (SAN loss O/IDA). A Mechanical Repair roll shows the fault is quite ordinary and not supernatural.

Cellar: The cellar is in two halves. One side is not as deep as the other, and the far wall is obviously of much newer brick with amateur mortaring. It should be clear to any investigator that something is walled up in the space behind. An hour's work with a pick or heavy hammer reveals the headless body of a man. It is mummified in the warm still air, and its head has been removed cleanly with a sharp blade. There is no sign of the head, and its hands are normal.

Attic: This is an overcrowded storage area full of boxes and cases. Two dead rats are to be found here—both with bites on their necks.

A Spot Hidden roll reveals at the back of the area an old sea chest with the initials GGG (or could it say 666?) on it. It is padlocked—STR=12. Inside are sailors' clothes and a strange mixture of other items—a bundle of pornographic pictures, a small green statue of a hideous creature with a squid-like head and wings (SAN loss of 1D4), a photograph of a sailor with a repulsive half-fish mutant girl, a photograph of the same sailor in which his hands have a web of skin joining his fingers together. Both photographs have notes on the back indicating that they are of George Granelli. Also in the chest is some tree bark wrapped in cloth, a glass jar with brown paste, a black obsidian stone knife and a metal rasp file. An oilskin wallet contains notes written in Italian of Granelli's travels in the South Seas and explorations in South America. It tells of his time with the Jivaro Indians and describes several spells he learned.



GRANELLI'S NOTES

Granelli's notes in Italian and Jivaro multiplied by 2 Mythos 2%. Spells are: **Call Choc-Tula.**

Create Were Jaguar.

Create Tsanta: The notes do not give a clue as to what a tsanta is except that a human head is an essential ingredient.

Summon/Bind Vampire Bat: This does not affect vampires in bat form.

Summon/Bind Amazonian Tree Frog.

The notes also detail how to create two poisons—curare from tree bark and arrowhead poison from the tree frog.

OTHER VISITORS

The investigators are not alone in having an interest in what is happening in the house. A pack of 12 black rats have already discovered the answer. Having already lost two of their kin, the remaining 10 are seeking a way to turn the secret to their own advantage. They are living in the attic—black rats prefer to climb rather than burrow. They are extremely intelligent and will try to prevent the investigators from entering either the attic or the cellar, even by sacrificing the lives of more members of the pack.

Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*): Lesser independent race. Also known as the Old English, Ship or Plague Rat. They worship Y'Golnag. The body is about seven inches long, and the naked, scaled tail is another eight. The nose is more pointed than on the Brown Rat, and the fur is blue-black with gray or silver tips.

Statistics: STR=2, CON=4, INT=15, DEX=18, Move=14, HP=3.

Climb=85%, Jump=70%, Locate Food=99.5%.

Attacks: Bite 60%, 1 HP of damage but will try to attack the eyes to blind the victim.

Special Attack: Victorian writers observed a special attack. If the victim opens his mouth to scream or shout, a rat will dive into the mouth and wedge itself in the throat, leaving only its hind legs and tail visible—the victim dies of shock and suffocation. The attack is at 40%, and the drowning rules apply after the first round, with an added SAN loss of 104/1D6.

RESOLUTION

An acephalous body behind a brick wall in a cellar apparently protected by rats may make players think of Y'Golnag. They will be wrong.

Granelli's ancestors were sailors. One was the only non-Innsmouth man to sail with Captain Obed Marsh to the Panope Islands in the South Seas. The family now worships Cthulhu. George Granelli sailed to the Pacific to revisit Panope,

taking his small statue of Cthulhu with him. He found that the tribe members had all been killed by the neighboring islanders. On his return, he jumped ship in Ecuador and travelled inland, where he was captured by Jivaro Indians. They were just about to kill him when they discovered the statue of Cthulhu and immediately recognized it as their own god whom they knew as Choc-Tula. Following his release, he stayed with them for a year and a half learning their language, customs and much of their magic, including the ability to create the famous Jivaro shrunken head—the tsantsa.

Eventually, he settled down and married, but remained an evil man, often sneaking away at night. Without his wife's knowledge, Granelli kidnapped a stranger and took his head, walling the remaining body up in the cellar. When he eventually completed the tsantsa, he was ordered to kill anyone, except himself and his wife, who stayed in the house overnight. Eventually, his night-time adventures led him into conflict with a stronger sorcerer and forced him to flee suddenly for his life.

TSANTSA

The traditional Jivaro shrunken head is about the size of a grapefruit. It is very repulsive to see. The face still retains human features but is very wrinkled, the lips are drawn back, revealing the gums and pointed teeth, sharpened by being filed to razor edges and tipped with the curare poison. Its eyes are black and bulging, giving it the look of a dead monkey. It is capable of movement. Its jaw muscles are extremely strong, and by snapping its jaw, it can spring up to five feet. It is also an intelligent being, able to hide, for example, in curtain folds or on the shoulders of the toy stuffed monkey. Although it will spring for the throat, it normally will haunt from behind. Its victims will hear a sound from behind, or catch a glimpse of movement, but when they turn to look, they will spot nothing there. It is very difficult to destroy. Bladed weapons do no damage, blunt weapons only one-quarter; pistols and rifles do full damage but only hit on one-quarter of ability.

Statistics: STR=6, CON=20, INT=5, POW=20 DEX=4.

Move=Spring 5 feet. HP: 13. Hide=90%.

Attack: Bite 60% fatal. The bite contains curare poison and will kill within three rounds. The victim will appear to have suffered a natural heart attack. Curare poison will only be discovered at an autopsy if it is being specifically sought after. Sanity loss is 1D4/1D6. Ω

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I could feel my pulse pounding as the sleek sky galley took to the air. For weeks now, cloudships had been disappearing. Our patrols had been chasing supposed pirates. Finally, the culprit had been sighted: not Martian or human cloud captain, but a sandwing, a most notable beast from Martian legends. The sandwing had been said to be much like Earthly dragons in aspect and temperament, but had thought to be extinct, killed off by the savage High Martians who shared its lofty domains. Now one had been sighted, having wandered in from who knew what wasteland, to terrorize the shipping lanes.

The sporting blood was up, and quickly the adventurers' club outfitted a fine sky galley. On the fore deck was the line-throwing paper grapple, to harpoon the beast like a whale, while sighted aft the deadly bulk of a Hotchkiss 6 pdr waited, if the beast proved even more formidable than legends allowed. It was with banners flying and an air of supreme confidence that my friends and I, the young and elite of the Royal Colony on Mars, set forth to find adventure and return with a tale worth telling. Those of us who did return succeeded in these endeavors beyond our wildest dreams.

The Mars of the late 19th century was still a brutal and savage place. Slavery, banished from most parts of the civilized Earth by 1864, was still endemic to Mars. The power of indentured muscle moved the freight, either by canal barge or by screw galley. As on Earth, there were those who opposed this practice, sometimes violently. One of the most notorious men to oppose the practice of slave taking was a genius known only as Nemo. He and his amazing vessel, the *Nautilus*, terrorized slavers by sinking their ships and raiding their camps. He was believed to have perished in the maelstrom, a huge whirlpool, but later was reported in the caves of a strange island. Then it was thought that he and his vessel were destroyed in a volcanic eruption. This is not the case.

Nemo and a number of his men escaped the destruction of the Mysterious Island and made their way to the lawless frontiers of Mars. Here, in seclusion, far from the prying eyes of Earthly governments, Nemo and his followers have constructed a flying ship, built of Martian liftwood and steel. Like

Twenty Thousand Leagues Through Martian Skies

A Space: 1889 adventure by Terry Sophian

the *Nautilus* before it, Nemo's new ship is powered by the controlled fury of the atom itself. Armed with a huge ram and powerful weapons, the new vessel, called the *Quinixitis*, for a strange Martian flying creature, would clean the Martian skies of slave galleys and then would spearhead the attack against the plantations where Martians labored in servitude. A patrol of Parhooni auxiliaries spotted the vessel from a distance and mistook it for the semi-mythical sandwing. This sighting will lead to the involvement of the player characters.

OUTFITTING AND BACKGROUND

The PCs may be outfitted with a ship they already own, one purchased for the hunt or one provided by the referee through some rich patron. The referee may feel free to remind the players that they are hunting an animal, not going to war. Heavy weapons should be viewed as entirely "unsporting."

The power of the PCs' vessel is of little concern. Nemo's aerial death machine should be more than a match for anything less than a flying fortress. The *Quinixitis* is a 6000-ton, steel-hulled flyer powered by Nemo's nuclear reactor. It can reach High altitude and travel at 50 knots. It is equipped with a ram bow. For use against ground targets, Nemo has installed fire holds and bomb racks. Nemo's bombs have twice the explosive power of normal ones. In addition, Nemo had a weapon of terrible power, nuclear devices. For those interested in numbers, they have a yield of nearly 150 kilotons. Nemo plans, at some future time, to detonate this device over the armies of Great Britain and her Martian enemies while they are locked in combat. In this way, he will destroy the most powerful forces on Mars simultaneously, making himself the unchallenged ruler of the red planet with one fell swoop. This plan lies somewhere in the future, though—a future soon to be interrupted by the arrival of the player characters.

Our gallant flyer now is nothing but splinters. The beast struck at night. We could see its glowing eyes, at first appearing against the far horizon. Then the great bulk of the creature began to occult the true stories behind it. Montgomery was the fastest of us. He ran for the harpoon gun at the bow. With a wild cry, he fired the heavy grapnel and line. With a cry of our own, we watched it fly straight and true, striking the sandwing fair on its shoulder above the right wing. To our dismay, the steel-hard scales of

this leviathan of the skies deflected the 30 pounds of iron as if it were a small skipping stone. After a light brush against our hull that almost turned us over, the sky dragon wheeled about to strike us dead-on with its fearsome beak. By now the young Duke of Cements and I had the deadly rotating cannon in operation. We could see the explosive shells strike the beast, but they had no more effect in turning it from its course than did the second harpoon fired by Montgomery. The mighty creature's head crashed into our starboard side with a shattering impact, and I was lost to this world.

CONFRONTING THE STAR BEAST

The PCs should encounter Nemo's vessel at night, after several days of hunting. To heighten the tension, they may come across a vessel that has been damaged but escaped from Nemo's terror weapon. Later, they will come across a sky galley that was not so fortunate. The hapless vessel's skeleton will be bleaching in the weak Martian sunlight. Any search for survivors will be fruitless but will yield up one surprise. The bodies of the crew have all been given a Christian burial. The PCs will probably believe that this is due to the efforts of any survivors who have since fled, but this is actually the work of Nemo and his men.

When the PCs' ship first sights its quarry, the characters will see only control room windows. These are built to resemble eyes and glow with a moderate greenish light. They will be visible from 20 hexes away at night, giving the characters two turns to ready their puny weapons. The first attack by the *Quinixitis* will only graze the PCs' vessel, producing little damage but showing the tremendous power of Nemo's creation.

The rest of the battle should be played out using *Sky Galleons of Mars* rules. Statistics for the *Quinixitis* are provided for that game as well as for *Ironclads* and *Ether Flyers*.

If the PCs somehow manage to avoid or disable the larger ship and return to port, events are left up to the PCs. They may attempt to attack the "sandwing" again, this time with a more powerful vessel or fleet of vessels, or more wisely they may decide that they have pressing matters to attend to on the Mother Planet and catch the next ether flyer for Earth.

If the PCs elect to fight the *Quinixitis* again, Nemo will be waiting for them. If he faces a fleet of vessels, he will

choose to fight amongst the cliffs and spires of a nearby mountain range to allow him to fight one vessel at a time. He will prefer to strike at night, when his powerful searchlights can be used to blind opponents and the ranges of their weapons will be restricted by the lack of visibility. His vessel should be fully capable of standing up for itself against anything less than the combined Royal Navy Martian Station Aerial Squadron.

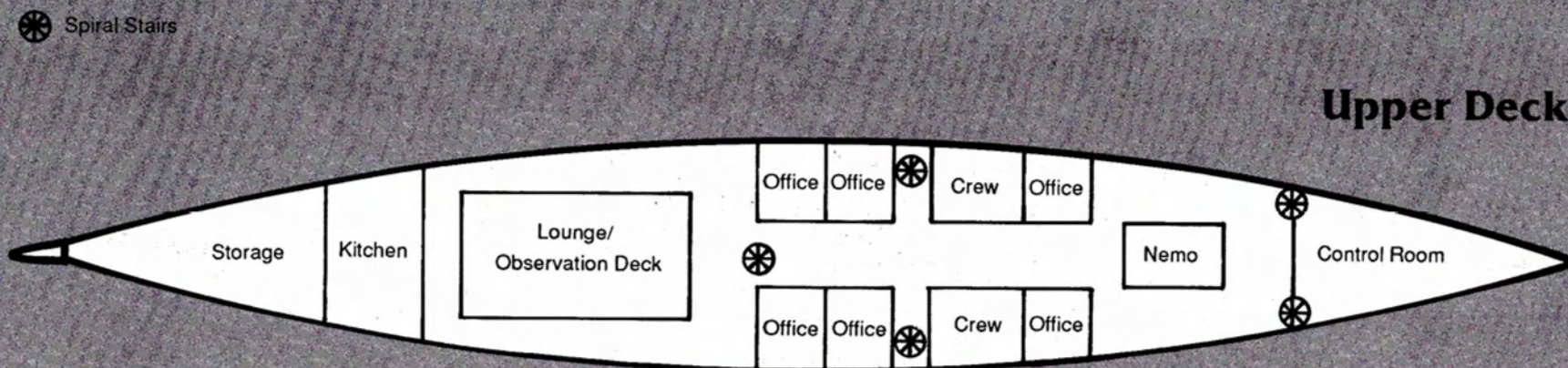
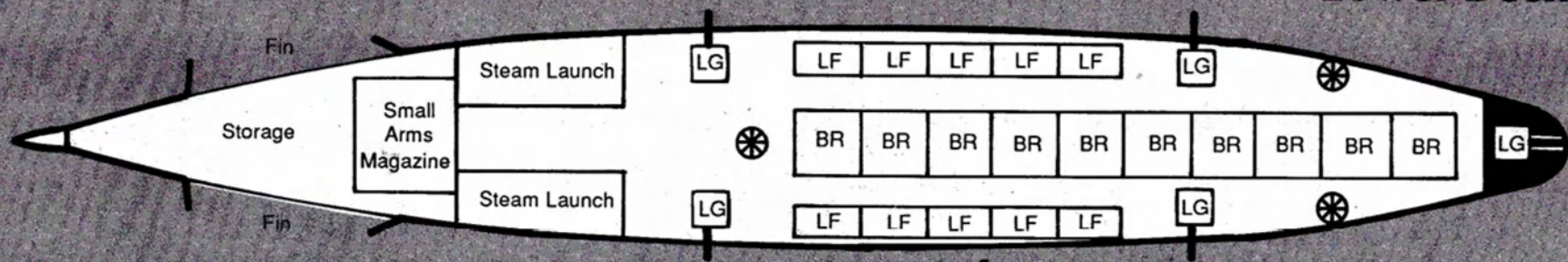
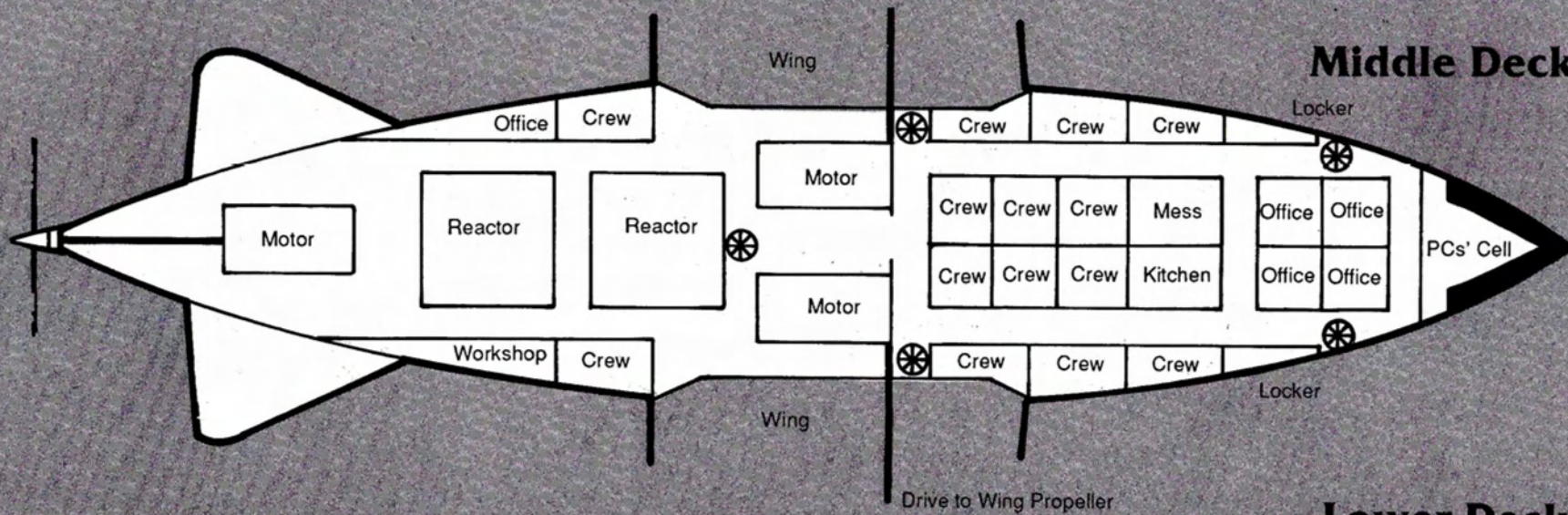
If the PCs' vessel should be destroyed by Nemo, either in a second battle or, more likely, in the initial confrontation, the characters will all be knocked unconscious in the fray. They will wake up in some kind of cell aboard what appears to be, from the motion of the deck beneath them, a very large flyer.

IN THE HOSPITALITY OF A STRANGER

Upon awakening, the characters will be examined by an old doctor. This man will tell them, in heavily accented English, that any questions will have to be answered by "The Captain." The characters will then be fed a large meal. All the dishes, while very tasty, will have been prepared from strange Martian plants and animals. No questions will be answered by any of the nearly silent crewmembers the characters will be served by. The characters will hear at least five or six Earthly languages, as well as a similar number of Martian ones being spoken. Finally, after what seems to be about an hour, the characters will be escorted by armed guards to the control room of the strange sky vessel. From the large oval windows, they will see the Martian mountains passing by below them at a fantastic pace.

The entire after bulkhead of the large control room is taken up by a giant pipe organ. A powerfully built bearded man will be playing *Tocata in Fugue* on this musical instrument. His rendition will not only be technically flawless but also evocative of emotions that even the composer was unaware of in the music. After finishing the piece, the organist will turn and face the characters. The visage of the man appears both wise and stern, as if he has seen many things in a long life, some of which he found highly distasteful. Although his hair remains dark, the PCs will believe that the man is at least 60, perhaps older, and that those years weigh heavily upon him.

The man will speak in a deep resonant tone, introducing himself as Captain Nemo, yes the same Nemo who



⊗ Spiral Stairs

once terrorized the seaways of Earth. If questioned on how he escaped the grasp of death, he will cryptically state that death has found a use of him as a servant, not a victim. To demonstrate his point, Nemo plots a course for a nearby Martian kraag, one of those nearly impregnable fortress cities of the most bestial of all the Martian races. As the great aerial vessel nears the kraag, Nemo begins speaking quietly into a strange device. His voice, amplified a thousand times, will echo around the strange Martian city. In fluent High Martian, Nemo will demand the freeing of all slaves held in the city. This will drive the High Martian king to a frothing rage. He will order his flying parties to attack the *Quinixitis*, as he prepares his small fleet of aerial warships for combat. Any Martian who attempts to board will receive a large, sometimes fatal, jolt of electricity. As the crew galleys rise to meet her, Nemo's vessel will drop liquid fire on them or destroy them with her ram.

After defeating all resistance, Nemo will again call for the surrender of all the slaves. The king will still refuse. With a sad shake of his head, Nemo will calmly order the dropping of a "Solar Bomb." From a distance of many cables, the huge ship will fire some kind of rocket-propelled bomb which will strike the kraag and explode with Sun-like brilliance. The shock wave from the detonation will rock even the great aerial flyer. A huge mushroom-shaped cloud will form from the brightly glowing fireball. In a few minutes, the PCs will see that not only was the fortress atop the kraag destroyed, but that the entire rock buttress has been reduced to half its original height.

Nemo will turn to the PCs, a sad expression on his face masking the madness in his eyes, and explain that they have been privileged to witness the dawning of a new age, an age of peace and enlightenment. He, Nemo, will end the petty bickering on Mars, and with the Red Planet as a base, he will bring his wisdom to Earth as well. Soon he will strike at the war going between Britain and her Martian opponents. He will show both worlds the power of his Solar Bombs. He will end all wars and make all nations as one. Slavery will be no more. Nemo's tone will be exultant. He will end his speech in wild laughter, before falling into an ashamed silence.

IN THE FACE OF MADNESS

It should quickly become apparent to

the PCs that Nemo is both mad and extremely powerful. His weapon can easily destroy the massed armies and navies of the Earth, his vessel the aerial fleets as well. He must be stopped before he destroys both worlds. Nemo will tell the characters that he intends on using his weapons against the British Army when it is locked in battle, thereby destroying both it and its enemies. He will prowl the skies of Mars for sometime before his madness forces him to make the attack. During the several weeks that the PCs will be aboard the *Quinixitis*, they will notice his violent mood swings. Nemo will always manage to convince himself that the time is not yet right for the attack. It is not tactical reasons that make this decision for him but humanitarian ones. Deep inside, Nemo knows that his plan is evil. It will be up to the PCs to stop him before he unleashes a new terror on mankind.

The PCs will have many plans to choose from in attempting to destroy the *Quinixitis*, her mad captain and his mighty weapon. First, they may attempt to stage a mutiny with the help of the crew. The chances of this are very unlikely. Each crewmember was rescued from slavery by Nemo, and many of the humans were crew on the *Nautilus*. Unless the PCs can find some incredibly convincing argument that will sway the crew into accepting Nemo's insanity as real, the vessel's complement will endeavor to assist the captain in any way possible.

A second method is to seize control of the vessel by overpowering the crew. Deck plans of the vessel have been provided for any combat that might occur in the midst of such an attempt. The PCs will begin with a tremendous set of disadvantages, though—they do not know the lay of the ship, they are unarmed and they are under constant guard. Player characters being player characters, they will find a way of defeating odds like that to seize control of the ship. An-

other plan that might be attempted is to try to gain Nemo's trust and confidence by appearing to become his disciples. This will require excellent acting abilities but will at least allow the characters more freedom on the ship.

If the characters gain control of the *Quinixitis*, they will discover that they have little idea of how the vessel or its weapons operate. It will require a combined score of Physics 11 or better to have any idea how the atomic engines function. The Solar Bomb is at least as complicated.

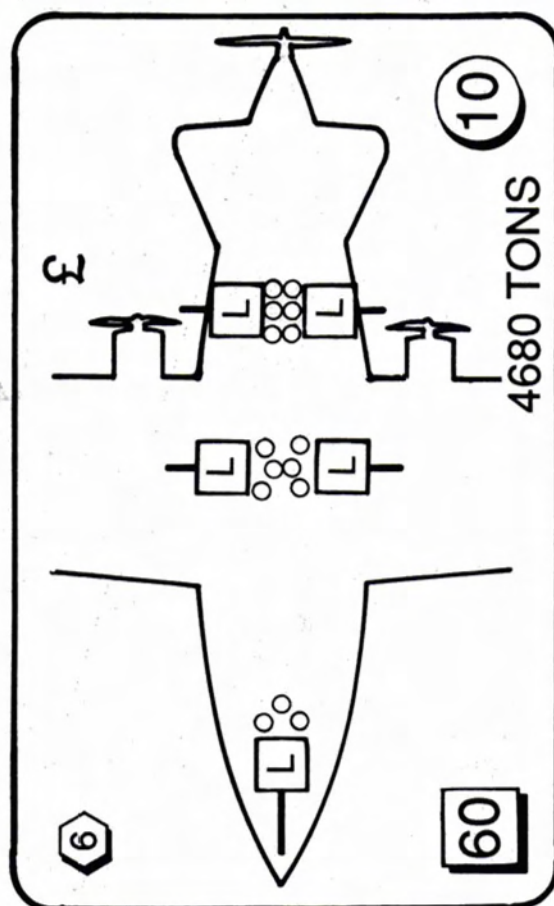
If characters should tamper with either of these devices, any catastrophic failure results will be just that—catastrophic.

A method of gaining control of their own destinies, if not the ship, will be to convince Nemo himself that what he is doing is wrong. Did the weapon not only kill masters but slaves also? Has Nemo made the characters themselves slave, or at least prisoner? Will the world follow a man into an age of enlightenment when he has ushered that age in with

IRONCLADS AND ETHER FLYERS

Class	Type	Year	HS	AV	BS	End	SP	Alt
<i>Quinixitis</i>	Raider	1889	60	6	—	Inf	10	V4

Armament: F(1xLG) BS (2xLG) 10LF 10BR+20.



the deaths of millions? Nemo has always prided himself on his mental abilities, and his bouts of madness terrify him. Astute PCs may notice his moodiness, and the abortive attacks he makes on the British troops. If the characters are careful, they should be able to bring the captain to his senses long enough for him to disembark. Nemo and his crew will then fly into oblivion, their only memorial a glowing mushroom cloud deep in the Martian wastes.

If the PCs manage to seize control of the vessel, Nemo will slide totally into madness. He will activate a secret self-destruct mechanism that will arm the Solar Bombs aboard the vessel and cause its engines to explode. The PCs will have to make their escape from the vessel as it is in midair. Perhaps they can find parachutes or hijack a small ship's boat. As before, the end of Nemo and his creations will come as a flash in the desert, leaving the characters, and the rest of the world, wondering if the genius captain might strike again.

REWARDS

For surviving a voyage with history's most notorious captain, the characters can expect to receive a fair share of Renown points. If they persuaded Nemo to destroy his weapon, and perhaps himself, they can expect knighthoods at the least. Inventors and scientists will receive 2D6 worth of Physics or Electricity points.

The revenue from the story, which will keep the readers of the time humming for several weeks, will also be substantial. All in all, characters may view this little pleasure cruise through Martian skies as one of their most successful and exciting ones yet. Ω

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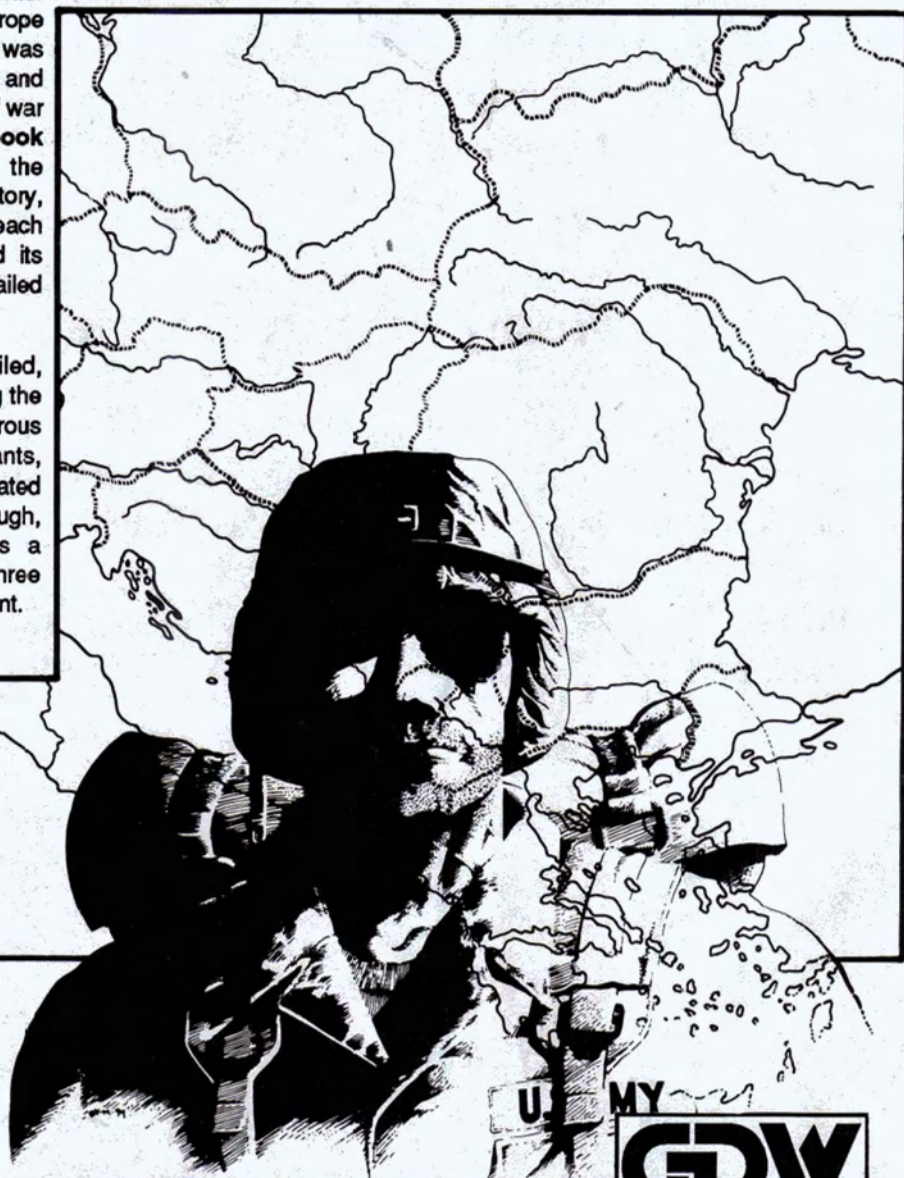
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"Templates" in **Challenge 73** presented six adventurers and their ship for *Star Wars Galaxy Guide 7: Mos Eisley*. Now, here's a place for your adventurers to explore: a HoloNet waystation.

The adventure included takes place during the movie trilogy era, in the midst of the Rebellion—the Empire is firmly in control.

But the schematics are also described as if it is still functioning, allowing you to use it during the New Republic or even the Dark Empire.

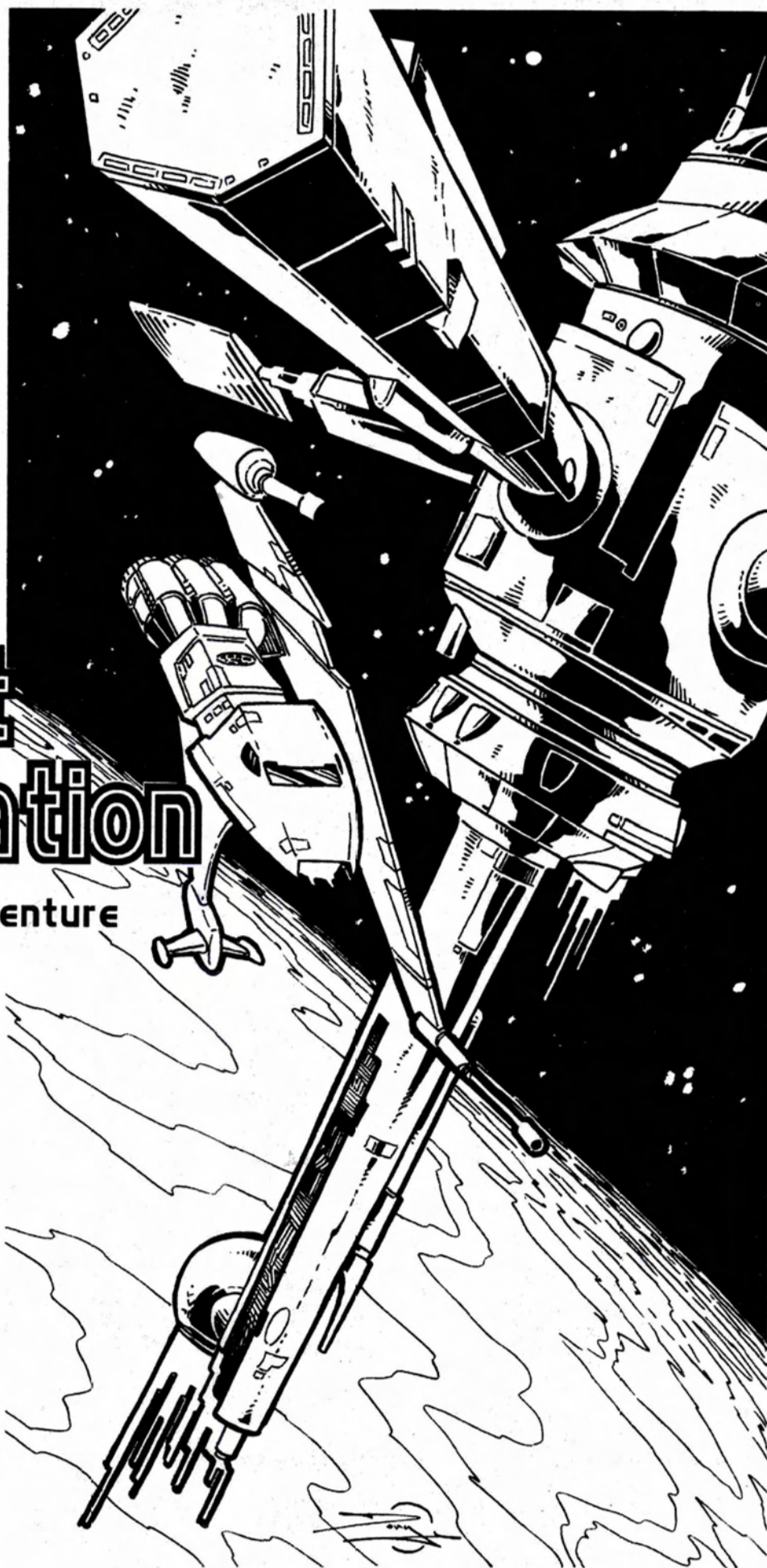
HoloNet Waystation

A Star Wars adventure
by Martin Wixted

The HoloNet was a grand project put forth by the Old Republic. By using the technology of subspace transmissions, information could be sent from one end of the galaxy to the other almost instantaneously. It was hor-

ribly expensive, but offered incredible opportunity. By pure astromathematics, Republic engineers determined that the Tatooine system lay directly between two important systems (well, directly as the data stream flies, anyway). But, Tatooine's frequent solar flares and quirky gravitational fluxes required not a simple HoloNet transceiver, but a complete (and rare) orbiting HoloNet waystation. Still, a waystation was cheaper than rerouting the transmission route around the system.

Decades of declining interest in Tatooine ended with the arrival of the HoloNet. The installation of the HoloNet meant there would be less reliance on mail boats containing news that could be months old,
Star Wars



and no more anticipation of news, rumors and embellishments from every new ship arrival. Although it was used almost exclusively by the government and larger commercial houses, it offered an unparalleled opportunity to the residents. A waystation involved staffing and upkeep. It also involved periodic maintenance and support by the Republic. And, because of the placement, public announcements would be broadcast directly from orbit down to the planet. Any nearby systems would now need to wait for a ship from Tatooine to deliver a datatape of the broadcast. The planet might once again regain some notoriety.

Tatooine was, indeed, destined for notoriety, but not the kind the residents would have liked. The waystation was built to monitor transmissions, boosting and refreshing those that were faded or warped from the effects of the binary sun. Although most transmissions were encrypted (and thus protected from casual prying) the opportunity to tap into a virtually unlimited reservoir of trade and government secrets—the power of information—proved too seductive for the local crime syndicate. They moved in and transformed the planet.

Once the Republic had collapsed and the Emperor assumed control, the astute knew that it was only a matter of time before the horrendous expense of the HoloNet would be deemed impractical. Thus, it was no surprise when, one otherwise uneventful day, the 'Net stopped transmitting. It took several seasons, but eventually the expected Imperial technicians came through and shut down the station.

HOLONET WAYSTATION

The binary system of Tatooine was the source of frequent solar flares. Add to that the planet's gravitational fluxes, and it was quite a package—and quite a challenge to Republic engineers. How would they prevent a solar-powered station from being harmed by that which it needed to survive—the suns? The final solution involved designing a station to orbit one of Tatooine's moons, to be placed in a station-keeping orbit. That is, it was to remain on the leeward side, away from the suns. This way, the moon's bulk would protect it from the suns' radiation; it would be far enough away to prevent Tatooine's variable gravity from having any great effect upon it; and the glare off Tatooine itself would be enough to power the solar fins. The system worked flawlessly.

COMPONENTS

The main, vertical stem of the station contains the power and conduit circuitry. Here the signals are captured and emitted, and the solar power is channeled to the converters. The shaft is a maze of

pipings, conduits and wiring. Catwalks and ladders crisscross the open area, allowing access to key systems.

The habitable part of the station is divided into three interlocking personnel modules. The center command module contains command and support services. To the right is the living module, with quarters for 10 crewmembers. The left multiplex module contains the main signal systems for the HoloNet, for both receiving and sending.

DISMANTLING

When the HoloNet was dismantled, Imperial engineers visited each nonmass transceiver and waystation. They did not take entire stations apart because time was too precious, and the new Empire's resources were focused elsewhere. Instead, they removed only critical components for transfer to the Imperial fleet, and scuttled the rest. Naturally, the level of scuttling varied tremendously: After the 50th transceiver, the technicians began merely removing key components and moving on to the next assignment. Tatooine was not the 50th, nor the 500th. In fact, by the time the engineers got to this planet, the procedure was reduced to the most basic routine. First they evacuated anyone still on the station. Next, they pulled the plug on the power source and tore out the main power core. Once the signal multiplexor machinery was removed, and the energy storage batteries taken, the remaining structure was abandoned and left to decay in its own orbit, until it would crash into the nearest gravity well.

Although Tatooine's waystation orbit is decaying at an increasing rate, it is not yet in danger of complete collapse. The scavengers have left this waystation to drift in its lonely orbit: Tatooine is too far off the beaten path for even the traditional galactic garbage haulers—the Ugors, and their rivals the Squibs.

The following listing of HoloNet waystation features shows what the station would look like if it were fully operational. Information on how the waystation has been ravaged is in brackets.

FEATURES

Command Center: This room is two stories high. There are two duty stations situated at the front of the main command room. From here it is possible to control all space station functions. The third control panel at the rear is the monitor station, for use by the supervisor (typically the commanding officer). The turbolifts lead to the upper level of the command module.

[The duty stations are untouched, but key components are missing from the monitor station. The turbolifts, like the rest of the station, lack power.]

Commander's Office: The typical accoutrements of an officer's room include a

holovid, computer terminal, desk and chairs. The room on the floor above is a lounge.

[The office has been stripped of all furniture. One wall hanging remains, showing a blueprint of the station. The lounge chairs and couches remain undisturbed.]

Droid and General Maintenance and Repair: Here are the tools, power packs and spare parts to repair most systems and Droids on the station. While comprehensive, the tools are inadequate to perform major system overhauls. Instead, they are intended to jury-rig repairs until a relief ship can arrive.

Above this room is the central computer core—the computers which run the three personnel modules. The room is kept at a constant temperature.

[The maintenance room has been left virtually untouched. Most of the tools here hark back to an older time. Nevertheless, most mechanics would recognize the hydrosplanners lying about. The computer core has been shut down, and the refrigeration is turned off. Most of the software storage cells have been removed. Six empty ones remain.]

Storage: Both this room and the one above it are the storage and processing plants for foodstuffs and materials, such as clothing.

[Although the machinery is intact, no raw materials remain.]

Cafeteria: All food is prepared and eaten here. There is seating for 10 crewmembers.

Quarters: Both decks are identically laid out, with room for a total of 10 crew. The room closest to the command module is designed for two maintenance crew (typically Ugnaughts or other mechanically inclined species); the remaining three rooms are for officers.

[The basic furniture remains—bunk, table, dresser. However, there are no personal effects extant.]

Restrooms: The sonic showers, steam sauna and unisex restrooms.

[This equipment was shut down and the water drained.]

Main Power Core: This is the heart of the transmission system, funneling the signals in from the top and out through the bottom.

[The majority of this equipment has been removed, leaving a gaping shaft. This vertical tunnel is open to space, and stars can be seen through various openings at either end.]

Solar Energy Converters: This system is composed mostly of batteries. The boost of power required when transmitting signals requires energized cells, because the level of power available at any one time from the solar panels is not sufficient. This section also siphons off power for use in the rest of the station.

[The batteries themselves have been removed, but the support circuitry remains.]

Signal Multiplexor: This intricate, six-story-high computer system—almost a third the height of the main power core—converts, decodes, boosts, focuses and re-transmits HoloNet signals. The room is kept at a constant temperature.

[All this equipment has been removed.]

Docking Port: This automated chamber has two tractor beams for aligning and reeling in ships. The docking clamps and entry seals automatically adjust to fit the configuration of the docking ship. (They have a combined Strength of 1D+1.)

[The power to automate the systems is lacking, but manually locking is still possible, using the emergency apparatus.]

The Rescue of Maxine Baytor

Maxine Baytor is a local Tatooine shop owner who was an Old Republic general. She was spotted and identified by a stormtrooper as the woman who, many years ago, led some retired Republic troops in a failed coup against the New Order. Since escaping (without a credit to her name), she eventually wound up on Tatooine and spent her time collecting information on, and the whereabouts of, most of the other members of her company in order to foster a reunion. The group was the only family she had ever known. The Imperials believe that some of those soldiers may be moles working within the Empire and feeding the Rebellion information. They want to stop her and find out with whom she is collaborating. The local crime syndicate, meanwhile, has been paying off Baytor to supply them with general background information on the Empire's war machine, tactics and anything Baytor knows about those who are ascending the ranks. Baytor is only one of dozens of informants who are in place to warn the syndicate of any Imperial movements against their operations or interests. The syndicate is convinced that the Imperials have figured out Baytor's connection and that they want her out alive—so she can tell them how much she confessed.

ACT ONE

The Rebels learn that a woman by the name of Maxine Baytor is imprisoned. A local contact asks them to rescue her: Baytor could be a powerful source of information. The group must determine where Baytor is being held. A few rounds of drinks at the local casino clues them in that Baytor is being held at the police station (*Mos Eisley Galaxy Guide*, page 72) on the other side of town. They hear this information from one of the police station workers having a drink, Verral Kayrell, the station's speeder bike mechanic.

The Rebels strike a deal with Verral. In exchange for him leaving the underground garage door unlocked (which leads up into the station itself), they will find for him a Natrilux conductor relay. It is a rare component for his hobby: short-wave transmitters. The Rebels must charter a ship to take them to orbit Tatooine's moon, for the only known Natrilux conductor relays in the system are in the Spaceport Control Tower and in the abandoned HoloNet waystation.

On their way out of the bar, they meet one of the syndicate's agents, a corrupt Wookiee named Nilwoon. His bosses are prepared to offer the reward of 15,000 for the rescue of Maxine from the Imperials and delivery to them "no questions asked."

ACT TWO

The station is not completely empty. There is some air still circulating and a few dim lights. After all these years, who could be here? Was it taken over by pirates? The answer is soon revealed as the group is attacked by protocol Droids. They have gone mad from loneliness and resent being abandoned. A parlay and an offer of employment will calm the Droids, whose sole purpose is to serve. The PCs return and present the conductor relay to Verral, who informs them that their visit to the station was picked up by a passing Imperial customs frigate, and a contingent of stormtroopers is on its way to the city.

ACT THREE

Running out of time, the Rebels plan their attack. Verral says that the duty officer always naps about this time. But someone has to distract the desk sergeant for this attack to work, or the sergeant will see what is happening via the station monitors. The group enters the station through the garage, opens the turbolift doors and climbs up the shaft.

They can then enter the main floor via a maintenance crawlway and overpower the guards, free Maxine Baytor and escape to the garage.

Down below is a squad of 12 newly arrived stormtroopers dismounting from their speeder bikes, and a command speeder. If they merely stumble back into the garage, or if they tripped an alarm, the PCs must fight their way out of the bay. Otherwise, they could escape through the first floor windows or doors instead of back out through the garage.

If the group sent Verral to distract the desk sergeant, the alarms go off just after they escape, and they later learn that Verral was captured—the heroes should have done it themselves. Otherwise, the obfuscating Rebel can cut out after distracting the sergeant.

ACT FOUR

The player characters may have a fight

on their hands to get off-planet. The syndicate is watching every landing bay in case the Imperials plan to ship Baytor off-planet under cover of darkness. If they try to ship Maxine off-planet, they will find the way blocked by a gang of well-paid mercs and bounty hunters. The Rebels must foil the syndicate's intention to waylay the group.

Conversely, if the Rebels have agreed to Nilwoon's offer themselves, they find the way to the payoff blocked by a gang of determined Rebels.

Once it is over, the experience convinces Maxine Baytor to contact her old group, the Renegade Legionnaires, and get them back together. Although they may not be as youthful as they once were, they still have a lot to contribute to the Rebellion. And the Alliance never turns away any help given willingly. If they treat her halfway decently, Maxine offers the characters a chance to become heroes once more—and a chance to actually meet the famous Renegade Legionnaires. She needs to charter a ship to regroup her friends and asks the PCs if they will help her.

MAXINE BAYTOR

DEXTERITY	3D
Blaster	4D+1
Dodge	3D+2
KNOWLEDGE	2D
Alien Species	4D+1
Languages	4D
MECHANICAL	3D
Astrogation	4D+1
Communications	4D
Starship Gunnery	3D+1
Starship Piloting	4D
PERCEPTION	3D
Bargain	5D
Search	4D
STRENGTH	2D
TECHNICAL	2D
Comp. Prog./Repair	4D+1

Force Points: 4

Character Points: 22

Description: Maxine is a weathered woman, with gentle creases in her face and brown hair shot with gray.

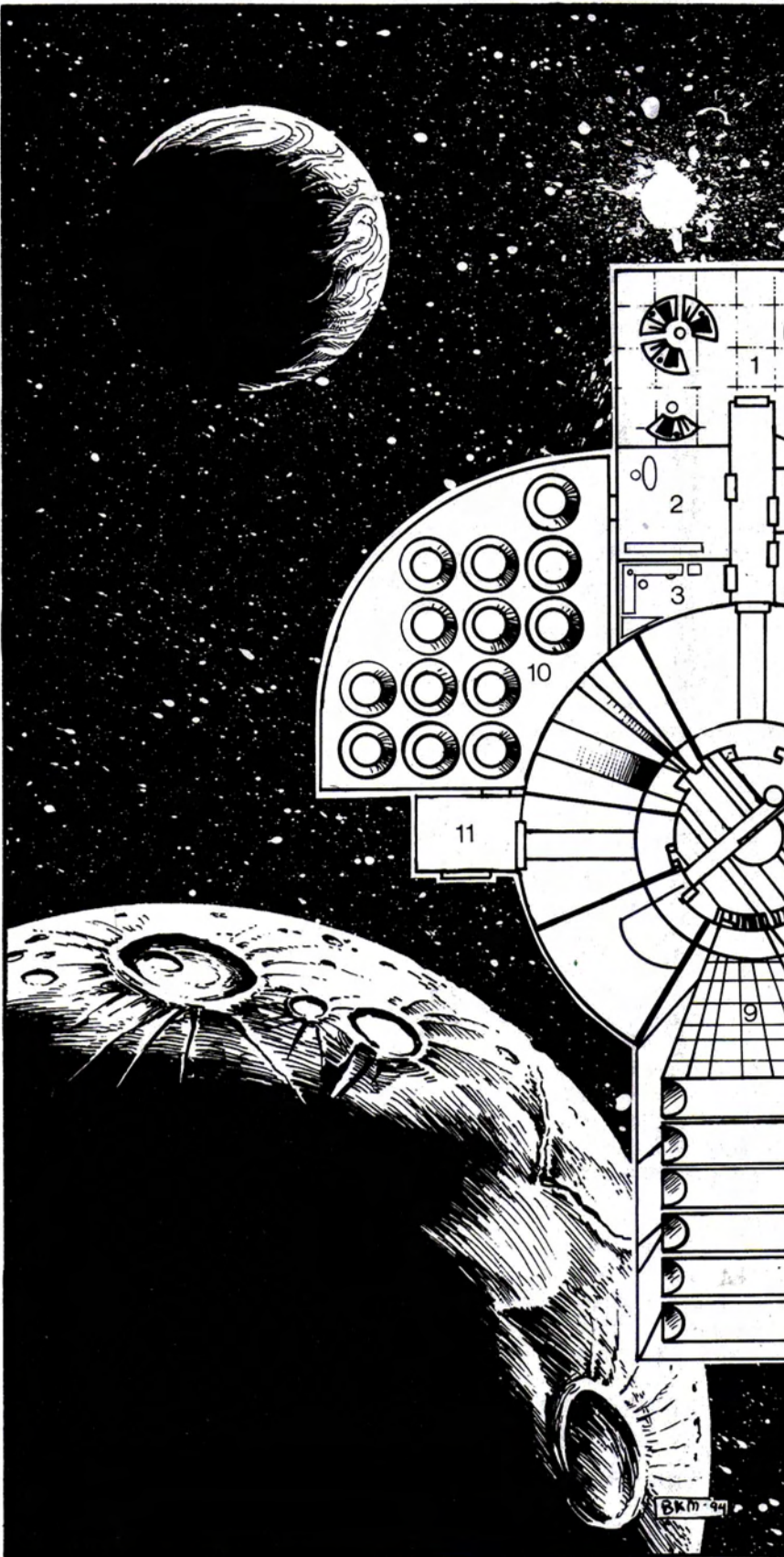
Background: Maxine was an Old Republic general. She led retired Republic troops in a failed coup against the New Order. She escaped to Tatooine and spends her time collecting rumors about the whereabouts of the other members of her company. She runs across other tidbits of information on the Imperials, which she then sells to the local syndicate. She isn't proud of it, but she'd rather do that than starve.

Objectives: To locate the members of her old company and have a reunion.

Personality: Maxine is expressive when it comes to military tactics and procedures, but reticent about relating more horrifying personal tragedies.

Quote: "Sure I remember the battle of Denuuba. It was quite a spectacle." ☺

HoloNet Waystation



0 Meters 10

- 1 Command Center
- 2 Commander's Office
- 3 Droid and General
Maintenance and Repair
- 4 Storage
- 5 Cafeteria
- 6 Quarters
- 7 Restrooms
- 8 Main Power Core
- 9 Solar Energy Converters
- 10 Signal Multiplexor
- 11 Docking Port

Being in the main a dialectic discussion for directing deliberation on the details and directions of Traveller: The New Era

and not, sadly,

any excuse at all for lots of swordfights and guys in tights swinging from ropes to redeem the honor of an age immersed in debauchery and excess, waiting with scarcely concealed dread for the arrival of the all-new diet caffeine-free cherry lite draft-style dry lite ice beer.

Volume I, Number 5

All right, all of you non-believers, UP AGAINST THE WALL!! I present as irrefutable evidence that some Traveller players *do* have a correct and balanced view of reality the following letter from Great Canadian Jonathan Crocker. Not only does this Esteemed Canuck believe in the great lineage of the Commodores Bwana, worthy Servants of the Crown for lo these many generations, he also believes in my ship, the good ship *Roxy Music*. So put that on your fusion rifle firing range and smoke it.

Also, if Mr. Alan Vliet of Richland, Michigan, would be so kind as to call or write with his address, which I have misplaced, I will be able to send him his personal copy of Challenge 72, in which he crossed pens with noted naval nabob Q. E. D. Bwana.

Dear Commodore Bwana,

I greatly enjoy the Traveller: The New Era products from GDW and the coverage given the New Era in Challenge. I would like to make a suggestion.

Would it be possible to run both the Coalition Information Network and the Traveller News Service?

After all, the Regency is alive and well and the setting of some fascinating adventure possibilities as well. I realize it would be even more hard work for everyone there on the *Roxy Music*, but it would earn you the undying gratitude of everyone *Behind the Claw*.

Also, I realize that this isn't necessarily your department, but perhaps you could pass this along—where have all the artists gone?

The TNE basic book had great art by Ken Frank, Allen Nunis, Mike Vilardi and many others—where both *Path of Tears* and *Smash & Grab* had but two artists, and most of the art was done by one person. While I'm glad to have all three books, I feel the visual presentation could only be enhanced by an increased diversity. Again, I realize that this leads to increased production problems, but it would do fullest justice to the hard work already invested in these sourcebooks.

Finally—who is the lady in black on the cover of TNE? While she looks like a New Era Cher in a creation by Bob Mackie, on the million-to-one shot that no one's guessed correctly, I'll guess Elinore Bonatiates of Lefiguara.

I do appreciate all of the hard work and effort you put into the TNE products—keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Jonathan Crocker
Selkirk, Manitoba
Canada

Thank you, Sir Jonathan of Manitoba, for your kind letter.

1. TNS: Undying gratitude you say? Hmmm, that might be worth looking into. Unfortunately, the Forces of Galactic Harmony explain to me that this will not be possible right away. This is not just because of the limited number of galley slaves crewing the venerable *Roxy Music*, but also because we don't wish to "lead people on" by getting them too excited about a topic before we are ready to properly support it. It would not be right to tease our players by giving them just enough information to want to run a certain campaign, but not enough information to be able to do so. However, we do hear you, and do want to support the Regency.

What say we try a little unscientific poll here? Anyone who is so inclined, please send a postcard to Commodore Bwana at GDW telling me whether you would prefer to see Regency campaign support or Reformation Coalition campaign support.

Please, limit yourselves to a short answer: "Regency" or "Reformation Coalition" will suffice (or, if you prefer a different topic, a short sentence explaining what that would be). Please refrain from impassioned, multi-page letters. I am trying to conduct an unscientific survey here, not found an unscientific debating society. Unscientific results will be published as they fail to become statistically valid. Being only a mere commodore, and not a Force of Galactic Harmony, I will not promise what the effects of this poll will be, except to cause a little more work for the USPS.

2. Artists: As you note, we have moved from multiple artists in each book to mostly just one. This is because we have moved from relying primarily on outside free-lancers for illustrations to relying on a full-time in-house illustrator. This is for a variety of reasons.

The first is to create a unified look for our products. By having one artistic style appearing in a series of products, the products end up with a more consistent look, which is helpful in creating a vision in the players' minds of what the universe looks like, and also helps to give the universe a more solid feel.

Second, using an in-house artist makes it much easier to handle the sort of technically detailed illustrations that are required by Traveller. When you can actually sit down with the artist and work with him to come up with what a vehicle or a ship or an alien looks like, you have much more control over the final appearance of the illustrations. When dealing long-distance with free-lance artists, this sort of interaction is usually not possible.

Finally, because free-lance artists have their own schedules, it's not always possible to know in advance who will be able to work on a given project, or whether a given project will be suited to an artist's style and strengths. With an in-house guy, you know he'll be available and familiar with the line he's working on.

Our full-time in-house illustrator is Midshipman Brad McDevitt, who is doing an outstanding job. The other artist whose work you have recognized as supplementing Brad's work is Cap'n Kirk Wescom, who is our art director here. I hope you will be as pleased with their stuff as we are.

3. The Lady in Black: A New Era Cher? Please be careful Jonathan, you wouldn't want to drive people away from this game, screaming in horror. What a frightening thought.

However, your question has prompted me to rattle the cage of Darlin' Dave, of Darlin' Dave's Renegade Challenge Contest. Dave is chagrined to report that no one has won the contest, and regrets that the question might have been too hard. Popular answers included Isis, Margaret, and the estimable Countess Thalia Nolonar, although Dave confesses that his favorite answer was the Queen from Snow White.

Dave wants me to tell you that the Lady in Black is none other than *UW∞ ðñUy!cV%0 Ô"i"° Ó±6 * C.@ü~ +~0ü6xo±"W[" Pesky Virus*.

4. Appreciation: Thank you very much for the kind words. It's nice to be appreciated for the time that we spend on this stuff, and we sincerely hope that we continue to live up to your standards and expectations.

Until next time, this is Commodore Bwana aboard the starship *Roxy Music*, with another helpful traffic tip for this long hot summer on our nation's interstates: If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill the Buddha, especially if he refuses to get out of the left lane after passing someone. Enlightenment my bilgewater.

Traveller: The New Era

Challenge 74 81

ask commodore bwana





Battle for Armageddon

Games Workshop. \$34.99.

Designed by Jervis Johnson.

Boxed boardgame with hard-mounted game board, 145 die-cut thick cardboard counters, 24 die-cut thick cardboard playing cards, one thick cardboard reference sheet, 2D6 and a 24-page rulebook.

Two players. Average playing time is two hours.

Published in August 1992.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

As a wargame buff, designer Jervis Johnson cut his teeth on boardgames, but missed seeing new ones, as wargame publication dwindled. He decided to make a classic wargame based in the universe of *Warhammer 40K*, something any wargamer or *Warhammer 40K* player could understand, and something that would interest most gamers. He succeeded.

Battle For Armageddon takes place on the Hive World of Armageddon, a cheerful planet with such quaint cities as Dead Mine, Volcanus, Hades, Helsreach, etc. One of the Imperial exercises in large-scale industrial pollution, the mining world is attacked by a massive tribe of Orks which happens to drift into the system. The heroic (and often overmatched) defenders have to try to hold off the Orks long enough for reinforcements to arrive—and even then defeating the Orks is not a sure thing.

GAME SYSTEM

The game system is very simple. The counters represent combat units, with the achingly familiar Combat/Defense/

Movement factors. Movement is conducted by area rather than hexes, with rigid rules on stacking (any excess units in a stack are eliminated). Combat is conducted with simple odds on another nostalgic but effective convention of wargaming, the Combat Results Table. Supply is easy to trace; new unit construction is easy to understand and conduct; and the victory conditions are clear cut (if quite difficult for the Imperium—they'll have far more stalemates than wins).

There are two changes to the classic wargame style: Special Cards and Strategy Cards. Special Cards represent special events and unpredictable advantages available to each side; these advantages can be played during the player's turn to gain their benefits. The second change is a two-action-per-turn turn sequence, where each player's actions during each action are determined by a Strategy Card. Both cards are selected at the beginning of a turn, and each card allows the player two actions: move and fight, fight and move, fight and fight, build and fight. This innovation adds quite a bit of challenge to the game, since you have to outthink your opponent on the strategic level—what's he going to do in the first action segment? In the second? And since you have to choose your strategy before finding out who goes first in the turn, fate (and a poor die roll) can force you to move out of your planned sequence, throwing a monkey wrench in you plans!

EVALUATION

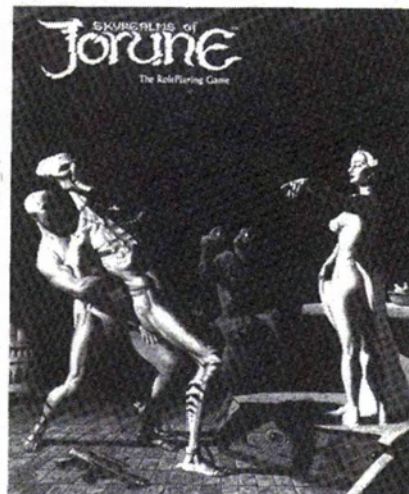
This game is rather good. It's easy to play and quite tricky, particularly when things get thick and the Marines start hopping onto the board. The system works well; the background (over half the rulebook, naturally) is interesting; and the physical quality is good, with exquisite graphics. The map is excellent and hard-backed (a rarity these days, except for Avalon Hill games). The counter art is simple, but the counters are laminated onto extremely thick cardboard—these pieces are much more robust than the box!

And to top it off, Games Workshop has already published one variant for this game in *White Dwarf* magazine (with color counters suitable for color photocopying), and plans to publish more.

The one flaw is that no rule tells the players when the new Imperial counters move forward on the Build Track. And the game can't be played unless the players make some decision about

when the counters move forward. If they move forward only when the Imperial player uses a Build action, it benefits the Ork player, since the Imperial can't attack in a phase when he builds. If they move forward every turn, it benefits the Imperial player, who gets his units more swiftly.

Once this is cleared up, *Battle For Armageddon* will be quite an acceptable game. As it is, it's a nice entry into the wargame market, and in the price range of its contemporaries. I look forward to more games in this line.



Skyrealms of Jorune

Third edition.

Skyrealms Publishing, Inc. and Chessex Publishing. \$20.00.

Designed by Andrew Leker, Miles Teves, Amy Leker Kalish.

Published in 1992.

Review by Jay Adan.

Skyrealms Publications in 1985 published its first, and only, roleplaying game. *Skyrealms of Jorune* wasn't a huge success, but it was a labor of love and one of the richest gaming environments to be created since *Empire of the Petal Throne*.

It was also one of the first games to neatly put magic and technology into a believable setting.

Years have passed, and supplements have been few and far between. Now, with Chessex supplying some extra support, we have the third edition of *Skyrealms of Jorune*, and things seem to be looking up.

JORUNE

Approximately 150 years into our future, the first manned expedition is launched from Earth to the planet called

Jorune. First contact is made with a number of races there, but the Shantha—thinly framed humanoids with no facial features and a complex language—seem to be dominant, and they are deferred to as the leaders of the planet. All the races live simply without much in the way of technology.

After extensive research, a large, long-term colony fleet deposits its passengers. A short time later, news of war on Earth is received, then all contact with Earth is lost—Jorune is on its own. The colonists, in an attempt to quickly offset their lack of supplies from Earth, encroach upon the lands forbidden them by the Shanthas. The Shanthas devastate the colonists with energies they thought unknown to the natives of Jorune, and the colonists retaliate with biological warfare that all but wipes out the Shantha population. The war has no winners on either side. The colony ships are destroyed, and the Shanthas are still able to detect the presence of power sources, even small ones, and destroy them. The humans are forced to abandon technology and live off the land.

It is now 3500 years later, and humans are the dominant race on the planet. Technology is starting to be rediscovered, and humanity has broken into three distinct genotypes—Muadra and Boccord being more attuned to the energies that permeate Jorune than the human species to first colonize the planet. There are many cities and towns dotting the continent, and the intelligent animal species created by a scientist named Iscin have even started their own societies. Overall, life on Jorune is still primitive in comparison to what it once was, but this is starting to change.

But *SOJ* isn't a straight SF game. You see, Jorune has Isho, an energy that is created by a geological phenomenon. With this energy, the Shanthas were able to so completely devastate the original colony. This is the "magic" of Jorune. It is possible to create a spell-like effect if you are attuned to this energy. Normal humans are blind to it, but the newer human species, Muadra and Boccord, are not.

So when you put this all together—a primitive human culture, magic, technology—you end up with quite a mixed-genre game.

EVALUATION

SOJ used to be a boxed game with several supplements. The third edition has incorporated all previous material into a

216-page, perfect-bound volume. Everything about the book tries to immerse you into the world of Jorune. In the earlier editions, this was done mostly with many new terms but very little explanation. This problem seems to have been fixed to some extent by adding more definitions of the new words near their first usage and a very complete glossary in back.

In character creation, there are now a number of character templates that explain some possible occupations and provide a glimpse into the everyday life of a person on Jorune. It is also now possible to play some of the nonhuman races. Woffen (wolf guys), Crugar (cat guys), and Bronth (bear guys) are all available as player character races. This is in addition to the standard human types available—Human, Muadra and Boccord.

The game system has been polished a bit but is basically the same as earlier versions. The combat system seems to work best in small skirmishes where each individual has a single opponent. Larger combats can be handled with the system, but I don't think it works as well under those conditions.

The game book contains some of the best art to ever grace the pages of a game. Miles Teves has done a fabulous job of illustrating this book. As far as I am concerned, the art alone is worth the cover price. If you already have an earlier version of the game, you should know that there are a number of new pieces of art in this edition.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There are some problems with the game. First are the small horde of typos in the book. There is also a two-page errata sheet already available (if your book didn't come with one, you should write the company and ask for one). The new words that are used throughout the text can be intimidating and will probably put some people off.

But all in all, the positives—beautiful art, good game system, rich background—easily outweigh the negatives.

A Note From Chessex: Problems mentioned in this review have been addressed in the *Sholari Pack* expansion (SRP 2001). In addition to an expanded errata, the pack contains a short glossary for new players and a full, 1500+ word glossary for the GM, a detailed timeline, an occupations simplification, new forms, a Jorune calendar, and other items to help GMs make the journey to Jorune virtually painless.


**Cover
not
Available**

The Curse of the Khalif

R. Talsorian Games. \$9.95.

Written by William Moss.

**48-page adventure supplement for
Dream Park.**

Published in 1992.

Review by Paul Lucas.

The Curse of the Khalif reminds me of many of TSR's old fantasy adventures. Gimmicks and exotic locales abound, as do many game scenario clichés. *Curse*, however, has far better graphics and organization than those old dinosaurs from the dawn of the gaming age.

On an Earth that might have been, the known world is dominated by the Khalifate, a sprawling, powerful Arabian empire that has holdings as far-flung as England and Indonesia. In recent months, a mysterious djinn-worshipping assassins' cult has sprung up, threatening the security of the realm. This cult kidnaps the princess, heir-apparent to the Khalifate, and the Khalif charges the player characters to rescue his only daughter at all costs. Following the cult's trail eventually pits the PCs against a murderous sorcerer, a mysterious tower, a robotic killing machine and an orbiting starship.

That's right—a starship. The nature of the *Dream Park* game allows for easy mixing and matching of different game genres. In the case of *Curse*, it's fantasy and science-fiction. The mixture is smoothly done in the adventure, as the advanced technology is presented as a different but very powerful kind of magic to the PCs.

EVALUATION

Dream Park stresses cinematic action and high adventure over all else, and players will find plenty of that in *Curse*. The pace of the adventure is almost nonstop, as the characters leap or stumble headlong from one scene to the next, building toward an explosive climax at the edge of space.

There are some nice touches to the adventure. The addition of science-fiction elements to a standard fantasy scenario adds some novelty to the plot, such as when the characters, armed with flying carpets and spells, face off against screaming starfighters. The illustrated character cards included in the book are also very welcome. It is so much nicer to be able to show players what NPCs look like rather than dryly describing them.

Curse does have some problems. The rescue-the-princess motif has been used so often that it has become a cliché. The characters presented within are two-dimensional at best, both in motivation and personality. The background information on the Khalifate is interesting, but woefully inadequate for providing a coherent campaign backdrop without extensive work by the gamemaster.

The Curse of the Khalif is a tough call. Novice GMs will appreciate the adventure's clear presentation and graphic quality, and fans of fast-paced fantasy adventures will also find it worth the price. However, a clichéd plot and execution will turn off more experienced players, as they find more original and intriguing material elsewhere.



Battle Masters

Milton Bradley. \$29.95.

Two-player boxed fantasy war-

game. 25 plastic 25mm group models, one tower, one battle mat, 75 cards, four terrain tiles, six combat dice, 100 counters, 26-page rulebook.

Playing time is 30 minutes to one hour.

Published in 1992.

Review by Mitch Lavender.

Battle Masters is an epic game that pits the armies of Chaos and the Imperial armies against each other. While the game is marketed by Milton Bradley, it was designed by the folks at Games Workshop and has many of the features we've come to expect from this company.

For one thing, this game is big, and the quality of all the components is first rate all around! Over 100 25mm plastic miniatures and a signature six-inch plastic tower lend a great deal of heft and size to the game. The counters are printed in color on heavy cardstock, and the bridge-sized playing cards are wax coated. The rulebook is well illustrated and concise, and even the dice are custom made for the game.

The map is a huge 4.5"x5" plastic sheet, with hexes and terrain features printed in color. Printing the map on a plastic sheet was an excellent idea. It is much more resilient to being folded than paper or cardboard, and can withstand a direct hit from a spilled soda with no ill effect.

As for miniatures, the assembly instructions state, "All figures will fit together—you will not need any glue for assembly." This is not true. Prepare for an evening of cutting and gluing the colored plastic miniatures together prior to playing the game. If you are ambitious enough, you might even paint them, although this isn't mandatory. They are highly detailed and are equivalent in quality to the boxed sets of plastic miniatures that Games Workshop sells separately for *Warhammer*.

GAME MECHANICS

The object of the game is the out-and-out elimination of the opponent's army. The campaign game contains five scenarios, each with different setup instructions, but in most cases the goal is still the same—kill everybody!

Order of movement and attacks are determined by drawing cards from a deck. Whichever unit(s) are pictured are the ones that may move and attack that turn. While movement is almost always only a single hex, some of the units, such as cavalry and wolf riders,

have more cards in the deck and will therefore get to move more often than other units. Combat is determined by rolling a specified number of combat dice (six-sided dice with skulls on three sides, a shield on one and blank on the other two).

Every skull the attacking player rolls is considered a hit of damage. If a unit sustains three hits, it is eliminated from play. The attacked unit gets to roll dice equal to its attack strength in defense, with each shield rolled reducing the damage done in the attack by one hit. This simple movement and combat system keeps the game progressing rapidly with a lot of action.

There are two special units in the game, the Mighty Cannon on the Imperial forces side and the Ogre Champion on the Chaos side. The Mighty Cannon has the ability to attack a target up to eight hexes away, but the likelihood of success diminishes the farther away the target is. If it hits, the unit is destroyed. The Ogre Champion is strong but dense, and he moves and attacks as specified by randomly drawn Ogre cards.

EVALUATION

The armies on each side seem to be well balanced, even though the Chaos player has 14 units and the Imperial player has 11. The largest shortcoming of the game is that too much depends on the random drawing of cards, which consequently determines which units get to move and attack. If this is too one-sided early in the game, it can be devastating to the other player's forces.

While the map is beautifully decorated with a number of terrain features, they are only esthetic and do not affect game play. The only exception is the river, which no unit may enter. There are several marsh and hedge tiles which can be placed on the map, but these add little to the variety of terrain.

If you like fast moving, highly playable games, and especially if you like hefty, mammoth-sized games, *Battle Masters* will probably appeal to you. If you are looking for a pure strategy game, you needn't look twice at *Battle Masters*. The simplistic and random determination of movement and combat have latitude for formulation of only superficial strategies.

Miniatures wargamers who play *Warhammer* or other similar systems might consider buying the game just for the 100+ plastic models. In any case, I doubt you will ever get a better "shake factor" in such a large box for \$30. ♪

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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 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

GERMAN MALE ROLEPLAYER, 19 years old, is looking for correspondence in the US. I play *Twilight: 2000*, *2300 AD*, *Shadowrun*, *Earthdawn*, *Renegade Legion*. Special interest in realistic roleplaying and optional rules. Contact V. Ralf Hagen, Postfach 101329, 66 Saarbrücken, FRGermany. (74)

LOOKING IN MD. Mature, female gamer looking for gaming group or gamers interested in forming a group. Hero System, *Shadowrun*, *Vampire/Werewolf*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Warhammer* preferred, but very flexible, with large gaming collection. Interested parties please contact Carolyn Cason, 931 Clopper Road, #B4, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. (73)

CUMBERNAULD ROLEPLAYING FEDERATION, Cumbernauld's roleplaying club (near Glasgow) welcomes new members who want to participate in the activities of a serious RPG and wargames club. We play all games including *Call of Cthulhu*, *Cyberpunk*, *Space: 1889*, *WFRP*, *AD&D*, *Warhammer 40K*, *DBA*, and many original in-house systems. Contact us at 241B Greenrigg Road, South Carbrain, Cumbernauld, Scotland, G67 2QD. (73)

SATURDAY EVENING Traveller gaming group in Seattle (Northgate area) seeks beginner-to intermediate-level players. The campaign is based in the Spinward Marches, circa 1100 (using vintage and custom Traveller adventures). Roger Sanger, PO Box 75472, Seattle, WA 98125. (73)

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY—Alternate Realities Club is looking to network with other university and college science fiction/fantasy/RPG organizations. We are a new organization on our campus and would also like the help of a gaming community and industry. Contact Seton Hall University, Alternate Realities Club, Student Center, 400 South Orange Ave., South Orange, NJ 07079. (73)

SOUTHERN INTRIGUE III Play-By-Mail. Characters take on the roles of barons in a fictional medieval setting, simulating the economic, military, court, and personal aspects of life and conflict. This complex, open-ended prototype game is open to a limited number of players. And it's the least expensive play-by-mail around: \$5 set-up, +\$1/turn and postage. Send a SASE for more information or \$5 for Part 1 of the rules to Steve Chisnell, S13, 2171 E. 14 Mile #108, Sterling Heights, MI, 48310. (73)

HELPI! I AM A GAMER in dire need of a game. I have played *AD&D*, *BattleTech*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and *Dangerous Journeys*. I am interested in playing any RPG that you are willing to teach me. Contact me soon! Ed Nycz, 37 N. 15th St. #2, Allentown, PA 18102. (73)

PLAYERS AND GMS wanted in the Grafton area for *Shadowrun*, *AD&D* (both editions), *Twilight: 2000* (both editions), *Merc: 2000*, *Robotech*, *BattleTech*, *Tales of the Floating Vagabond* and many more. Contact Andrew Bird, 2B Knotts Close, Grafton NSW, 2460, Australia. (73)

ATTENTION BRADFORD GAMERS! The City of Bradford Roleplayers Guild is a club for gamers of all ages. We play anything and everything (even the odd wargame), and meet on Saturdays, Sundays, and Monday evenings. For more information, contact Guy Milner, 70 Station Road, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, England LS29 7NG. (73)

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)

PLAYERS AND GMS in south eastern Indiana and Cincinnati, OH wanted for a *Dangerous Journeys* campaign. Contact Gary Duty, PO Box 254, Metamora, IN 47030. (72)

FOR SALE

EXTENSIVE GAME COLLECTION must go! *Traveller*, *Civil War*, *WWII-III*, *AD&D*, sci-fi magazines. Mint items, collectors' items. For list, write to Andrew Pierce, 5645 SW 80th St, Apt. C, Miami, FL 33143. (73)

VINTAGE TRAVELLER MATERIALS: Books 1-6, Supplements 1-8, 11, *Adventures* 1-5, 11, *Double Adventures* (all 6), *Alien Realms*, *JTAS* 4-7, 9-12, 15-17, 19, 24, most *Challenge* issues, *MegaTraveller Journal* 2. Roger Sanger, PO Box 75472, Seattle, WA 98125. (73)

AD&D, *FORGOTTEN REALMS*, *Greyhawk*, *Ravenloft*, and *Spelljammer* gaming material for sale. Also, DC/TSR comic books, TSR 1991 & 1992 trading cards, *Star Trek* trading cards, *Polyhedron*, *Dungeon*, *White Dwarf*, and *Dragon* magazines. Send SASE to Kevin Quashie, 2 Lamont Ct., Sicklerville, NJ 08081-1904. (73)

TRAVELLER PRODUCTS, some hard-to-find. Send large SASE for list. Leroy Guatney, 2750 S. Ingalls Way, Denver, CO 80227. (73)

FREE COMPUTER-DRAFTED adventures for *Traveller: The New Era*. Play and evaluate my work. Send name and address plus 10 stamps for postage and handling to W.T. Hinzman, 7100751-B16, Clallam Bay Corrections Center, HC-63 Box 5000, Clallam Bay, WA 98326. (73)

GAMES AND GAMING SUPPLEMENTS for sale. Some titles no longer in print but still collected. For list of available titles, send SASE to Yamil Gonzalez, 636 Beach 69th St., Arverne, NY 11692. (73)

VOYAGES SF: SEVEN BACK ISSUES remaining of this now out-of-print semi-pro gaming 'zine. Get 'em all now for \$7, plus \$2 for S&H. Send to StarLance Publications, 50 Basin Drive, Basin City, WA 99343. (73)

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)

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)

TRADE

MODERN DAY RPG adventures and sourcebooks, particularly for *Daredevils* and 007. I'll pay reasonable prices for originals. 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

RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR, the computer game by SSI, for IBM. Only offers for complete original versions, please. Contact V. Ralf Hagen, Postfach 101329, 66 Saarbrücken, FRGermany. (74)

FOR SHADOWRUN 1st edition: rulebook, GM screen, *Street Samurai* catalog, *Into the Shadows* (from FASA, not Roc), *The Universal Brotherhood* and *Ka-Ge* issue 2. For *Ars Magica: Ars Magica* 2nd edition and *Sagapack*. For *Renegade Legion: Centurion* 1st edition, complete please. Various adventures and sourcebooks for *Twilight: 2000* 1st edition. Send information to V. Ralf Hagen, Postfach 101329, 66 Saarbrücken, FRGermany. (74)

DGP'S ALIEN MODULE: Solomani & Aslan, Campaign Module: The Flaming Eye. Both must be in good to mint condition. Will pay \$\$\$ or trade for old *Traveller* I have. Send large SASE. Leroy Guatney, 2750 S. Ingalls Way, Denver, CO 80227. (73)

METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA: Original or complete copy. Please send terms to Carolyn Cason, 931 Clopper Road, #B4, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. (73)

BARD GAMES: CYCLOPEDIA TALISANTA: FASA (Star Trek): Conflict of Interest, Old Soldiers Never Die, Return to Axanar, White Flame; Hero Games: Justice Inc.; Pacesetter: TimeMaster RPG, Assassin Queen, Timetricks; Skyrealms: Companion of Jorune, Burdeth, Earth-Tec Jorune. Please send info to Darrell Baran, 477 Melbourne Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R2K 1B3. (73)

TWILIGHT: 2000 1st edition *Pirates of the Vistla*, *Black Madonna*, *RDF Sourcebook*, *Armies of the Night*, *US Army Vehicle Guide*, and the *Survivors' Guide to East Europe*. Also AD&D 1st edition *Fiend Folio* and *Monster Manual* 11. Contact Andrew Bird, 2B Knotts Close, Grafton NSW, 2460, Australia. (73)

FROM GDW: JTAS 1, BOOK 8, Supplements 10 and 12, Alien Modules (K'ree, Droyne, Zhodani), Adventure 8, Atlas of the Imperium, Striker, The Traveller Adventure, the Spinward Marches Campaign, and Game 1-5. From DGP: 101 Robots, Early Adventures, Traveller's Digest 1-5, 8, 13, Grand Survey. Roger Sanger, PO Box 75472, Seattle, WA 98125. (73)

I'M LOOKING FOR ISSUES of the following fanzines: *AAB Proceedings*, *The Adjutant*, *Between Worlds*, *Continuum*, *Coreward*, *The Fanzine Reader*, *Imperium Staple*, *Jumpspace*, *Melbourne Times*, *North Coast Role Playing*, *PARSEC*, *Security Leak*, *Signal-GK*, *Spinward*

Times, *T-Tech*, *Third Imperium*, *Tiffany Star*, *Variant*, *Voyages*. Willing to purchase or trade. Roger Sanger, PO Box 75472, Seattle, WA 98125. (73)

HELP! HAVE GONE STIR CRAZY IN PRISON: Looking for any kind-hearted individuals who'd be willing to donate any *Space: 1889*, *BattleTech*, *Renegade Legion*, *Star Fleet Battles*, and *Space Marine* games, books, modules, and mags. Also looking for anybody wanting to correspond with an individual locked up. Send reply to Richard Steinberg, #69458, Arizona State Prison—Eymann/SMU, PO Box 4000, Florence, AZ 85232. (73)

GURPS FANTASY FOLK BOOK, Chaosium's *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, and any Chaosium *Call of Cthulhu* stuff or any related books or materials. I would like to sell *GURPS High Tech* (first edition). Also interested in trading gaming supplements. Please write to Linda or Kelly, 83 West Parr Blvd., Reno, NV 89503. (73)

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)

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)

FANZINES

THE GAMER'S CONNECTION™ is a bi-monthly small press publication for RPG fans. Features

include articles, gaming tips, NPCs, con info, upcoming releases, product reviews and more! We have readers from coast to coast and as far as Australia and Israel! The best submission each issue wins a prize (up to \$30 value). TGC is just \$15 for one year (6 issues), or \$2 for a sample copy (check/MO payable to MTA Graphics). PO Box 278331, Sacramento, CA 95827. (73)

DUNGEONIER DIGEST: A ROLE-PLAYING MAGAZINE. We cover AD&D as well as other fantasy game systems. We need artists as well as articles, and we pay cash. Please contact Star Quest Games, RR #1, PO Box 81, Flat Rock, IL 62427-9735. Request a sample issue for only \$2. (73)

CAMELOT '94: A newsletter devoted to role-playing in any shape and any form. Each issue is 20 pages long and includes rules variants, adventures, and fiction for your favorite games. Submissions and questions should be sent with a SASE to Philip J. Reed Jr., 319 W. Grand, Perryville, MO 63775. (73)

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 battle tanks 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 Dark Lords 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. (71)

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)

The All-Traveller Issue!!!!

Featuring (but by *no* means limited to):

A Critique of Pure Traveller

Death of a Traveller Salesman

The Cabinet of Dr. Kuligaan

The Rise and Fall of the Third Imperium

I, Dvlinor

A Brief History of Traveller

Aslan on a Hot Tin Roof

The Mary Traveller Moore Show

The Traveller Zone

The Traveller of Seville

The Traveller-man Cometh

The Tao of Traveller

I Dream of Lucan

The Bonatiates Bunch

The Good, the Bad, and the Vilani

The Ithklur with the Golden Gun