No.25

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CHALLENGE
GDW's Magazine of Adventure Gaming

Fleet Escort Lisiani
by Marc W. Miller

Siege
by John M. Ford

False Knight
by John M. Ford

What Do We Do Now?
by Timothy B. Brown

Incorporating the Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society

William H. Keith's

the
JOURNAL
of the Travellers' Aid Society®

Fleet Escort Lisiani
by Marc W. Miller

Siege
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The JOURNAL of the Travellers' Aid Society®

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From the Management

Well, here's the first issue of our new format. I hope you have found it all worth the wait. Our **Traveller** readers will note that all the **Traveller** material has been placed together in a special JTAS section. Those not interested in *Twilight: 2000* can simply flip directly to the special *Journal* "cover" by looking for the black border that appears when you bend the magazine slightly.

The center eight pages of the magazine are designed to be removed. Using a tool such as a screwdriver, carefully bend up the center staples, remove the proper pages, and carefully bend the staples back down again. The miniatures rules can then be used by themselves (you may want to staple them together) and the Lisiani can be viewed in its uninterrupted glory.

The new format will permit us to do a few things that we've never been able to do before, due to space constraints, but it also raises our need for articles, concerning both **Traveller** and **Twilight: 2000**, so I urge all of you who ever thought about writing something for the **Journal** to send in an SSAE for our manuscript guidelines and then get to it.

Issue #24 feedbacked as follows;

Amber Zone: Embassy at Arms	3.70
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-Loren K. Wiseman

Just Detected:

TRAVELLERS' DIGEST

Disaster strikes aboard a Tukera Lines vessel when a passenger is murdered and the evidence points to one on the players. Can the other characters find the real killer in time? Included are complete deck plans of the 1000 ton Tukera longliner.

Other articles include a new character type (Law Enforcers), a description of forensic science at higher tech levels, an article expanding the universal task profile to handle mishaps, and Library Data of the Vland Sector.

Single issues are $3.95. Subscriptions are $14.00 for one year (four issues). On single orders direct from the publisher, include $1.00 for postage and handling.

Publisher: Digest Group Publications, 8979 Mandan Ct., Boise, ID 83709.

GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

A gaming newsletter put out by sometime **Traveller** contributor Fred Kiesche. Fred's purpose is summed up in his title. He tries to keep his readers informed about a wide variety of games and other topics. For information write Frederick Paul Kiesche III, 13 Lake Avenue, Apt 3B, East Brunswick, NJ 08816. This is a part-time, limited funds effort, so help Fred out and include an SSAE with your request.

THE PRAESIDIUM OF ARCHIVE

I've lost track of what number this is in Jeff Swycaffer's series of novels based on his **Traveller** campaign. This one concerns the governing body of the Concordat (the Praesidium) and the adventures of its First Secretary (including a rather rude move by another member of the Praesidium). As always, Jeff's novels will provide you numerous interesting adventure situations.

Paperback book, 197 pages, $2.95, ISBN 0 380 89663 X.
Author: Jefferson P. Swycaffer
Publisher: Avon Books, 1790 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

CAPS

Trantor Merchants now has their **Azhanti High Lightning** ballcap available, in addition to the 4518th Lift Infantry cap mentioned in the previous issue. Direct inquires about this and suggestions for future products to Brad Porter, 329 NE Fairgrounds RD, #E103, Bremerton, WA 98310.
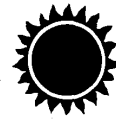
TRAVELLER NEWS SERVICE

DENTUS/REGINA (0601 C979500 A)   **Date 063 1112**

¶ Informed sources today leaked information indicating that the group of renegade Vargr which have eluded capture since the end of the recent war has probably fled the Spinward Marches for parts unknown. Several alleged members of the group were reputed to have been captured when they attempted to hijack a merchant ship near here late last year, and have been held incommunicado since that time.

¶ Admiralty Public Relations Officer Captain Gaviin Ammern refused to comment when asked why the capture of some of the renegades has been kept secret for so long.

QUAR/CHRONOR (0808 B532720 B)   **Date: 092 1112**

¶ In an official statement issued today, the Imperial government formally declared all worlds in the Regina, Jewell, and Lanth subsectors to have reverted to their pre-war travel classifications.

¶ With this proclamation, the last of the emergency proclamations promulgated during the recent war are withdrawn, and life in the Marches returns to normal.

Traveller News Service is another Imperium wide benefit of membership in the *Travellers' Aid Society*.

Ref's Notes:
On the Use of NPCs

© WHKeith 1982

Non-Player Characters are vital to a good campaign. When they're properly done, they give the players a feeling of interacting with real people instead of cardboard cutouts. A referee can construct the most elaborate and detailed setting imaginable, but without well-realized NPCs to populate it, all he has really done is create a movie set devoid of any relation to real life.

This does not mean that a referee has to create every NPC in exhaustive detail. Rather a few words of description can spell the difference between just another die roll on the encounter table and an opportunity for some good role-playing. The following example serves to illustrate my point by comparing the way two different referees handle a "refugee" encounter.

Referee A: "You're driving down a road through the woods when you see a group of twenty people. They're probably refugees. They get off the road as you pass."

For all the life this referee brought to them, those refugees might as well have been a flock of chickens. Let's try the same scene again, with a more imaginative referee.

Referee B: "You're driving down a dusty backwoods road. Ahead of you, you see a group of people in civilian clothes, many of them carrying bundles on their backs. There are about twenty of them, all on foot, men, women and children. When you drive past them, they look at you with expressions ranging from fear to resignation."

Referee B has painted quite a scene. Instead of lifeless props, the refugees take on dimension and substance. It is a much more interesting encounter than the first one. The players might be tempted to stop and interact with the refugees in some way. Any number of interesting situations could result. Even if the players don't stop, you will have established a feeling, a sense of realism.

Not all encounters need try for poignancy. In one of our early **Twilight: 2000** campaigns, the players met a band of gypsies. Gypsies are not on the encounter table, but I decided to spice things up a little bit (inspired by the presence of Romany, the language of the gypsies, on the language list). Through the use of good description and well-realized NPCs, the players spent a few days in the camp taking some needed R&R. When the two groups parted, the players felt as if they were leaving friends rather than a set of cardboard cutouts.

Major NPCs, the sort presented in the modules, present fewer problems, as their personalities are outlined in some detail. However, the referee should add details if he feels it necessary, as long as they are not inconsistent with the overall character as described in the short module write up. Such descriptions are guidelines, not forged in steel.

In conclusion, remember that NPCs are the referee's hands and voice in the world he has created. What is being simulated are human beings, not department store dummies. Keep this in mind and your campaign, whatever game it is, will be the richer for it.

Frank Frey

Fleet Escort

Lisiani

Workhorse of the Squadron

protect their arrival in and departure from a system. The Fleet Escort is a ship class designed for this mission.

Fleet Escorts come in a variety of classes, tonnages, and firepower types, and over the centuries, the Imperial Navy has procured them all. One type currently in service is the P. F. Sloan class Fleet Escort. Typical of ships in the class is *Arian Lisiani*, named for an Imperial naval hero of the Asian Border Wars.

Built in 1037 at Mora, the *Lisiani* is now beginning to show its age, but two subsequent refits have enabled it to keep up with the demands of the Imperial Navy's fleet admirals.

The *Lisiani* is built as a cluster of cylinders, each committed to a specific role in the structure of the ship. The main hull contains the drives, life support, and quarters. The forward section houses the controls, bridge, and administration areas. Assembled as a belt around the waist of the main hull, the secondary cylinders house fuel, weapons bays, and small craft hangars.

Consistent with its mission, the *Lisiani* must be able to move at speeds equal to the ships it escorts and fight for a brief interval until those ships are ready to engage in battle. For a ship to stand in battle, it needs to be both defensively and offensively equipped. As a result, the ship devotes a high percentage of its hull to drives and can achieve jump-4 and 6G acceleration. It has agility 6 for maximum protection, and a highly rated Model/9fib computer. Furthermore, the ship's hull is armored (factor-5) and active screens in the form of meson screens (factor-2) and nuclear dampers
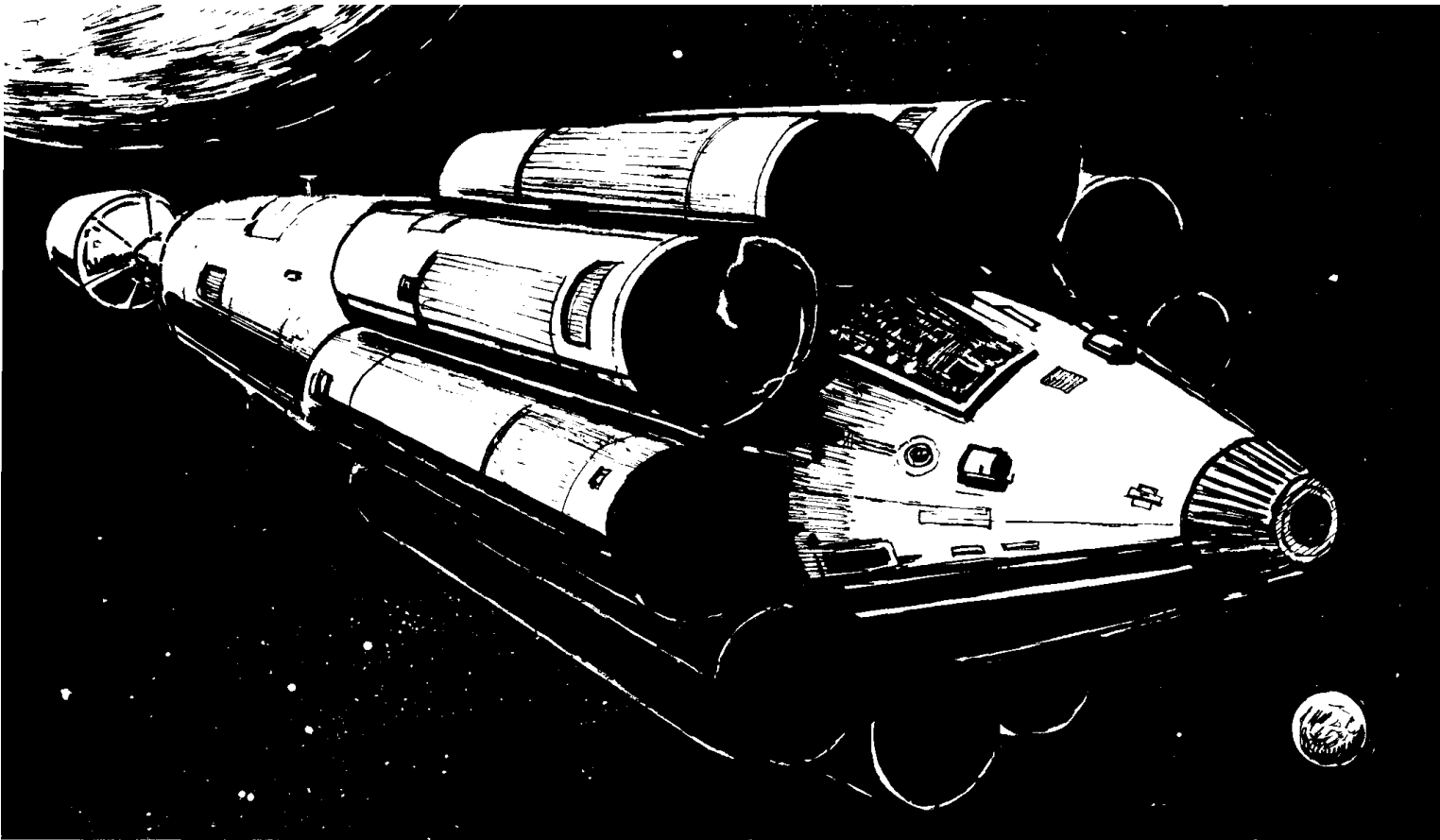
The Imperial Navy orders the design and construction of ships based on real or perceived tactical and strategic needs of the fleet. One very real need is routine fleet security and support; the big battleships and battle riders are powerfully armed, but they need smaller ships to run their errands and to

(factor-2) are also fitted. In the offense, the ship has two 50-ton missile bays (factor-9) and three laser batteries (also factor-9).

Overall, the Lisiani was designed to last in battle just long enough for the larger ships in its squadron to arrive and deploy (or conversely, just long enough for the larger ships to make a clean escape). For that job, the ship is well-suited.

But the *Lisiani* has other missions. Available ships are often sent off on independent operations- gunboat diplomacy, showing the flag, orbital support of ground operations, transport of diplomats, refugees, or VIPs, fleet courier operations, search and rescue operations, and even flagship duty for some squadrons. The *Lisiani* has proven itself capable of handling these routine missions as well.

CREW

Essential to the proper operation of any ship is its crew. The *Lisiani* carries a crew of forty: 32 ratings and eight officers. The ship's personnel are organized into several sections, and a chain of command connects each crewman through one or more officers to the ship's Captain.

The Command Section: The command section is composed of the ship's captain and the heads of the ship's departments. It includes the commanding officer (usually a Commander, rank 05, but always called the Captain; he is also the pilot), the Executive Officer (Lieutenant Commander), the Gunnery Officer (Lieutenant), and the Engineering Officer (Lieutenant Commander).

The Engineering Section: The engineering section is the largest on the ship, requiring fourteen persons to properly maintain and operate the ship's drives. In command is the Chief Engineer (Lieutenant Commander), assisted by the Second Engineer (Lieutenant). The remaining twelve in the section are ratings with a variety of skills and experiences.

The Gunnery Section: The gunnery section is tasked with maintaining and operating the ship's weapons. Commanded by the Gunnery Officer (who works on the bridge, the section is divided into three squads: Lasers, Missiles, and Screens. The Laser squad consists of three gunners who operate the three laser batteries. The Missile Squad has four gunners who man the missile bays. The Screens squad has two operators for the nuclear damper and two operators for the meson screen.

The Navigation Section: The navigation section is responsible for planning and plotting the ship's course, and carries a subordinate responsibility for the operation of the ship's cutters. Commanded by the Navigation Officer (a Lieutenant who himself reports to the Executive Officer), it consists of three cutter pilots (petty officers) and a navigation clerk.

The Communications Section: The communications section handles avionics, electronics, and computers aboard the fleet escort. Members are responsible for repair and maintenance as well as operation. Commanded by the Communications Officer (a Lieutenant who himself reports to the Executive Officer), the section has three petty officer members.

The Medical Section: The medical section is responsible for health and welfare of the crew, and this mission. Commanded by the Medical Officer (a Lieutenant who himself reports to the Executive Officer), it includes two petty officers trained in medical procedures.

The medical section is also responsible for operating the ship's automated meal system.

Support Activities: There are no support personnel directly assigned to the ship. Required tasks and chores are assigned on a rotating basis to all of the ship's crew.

Ship's Troops: There are no assigned ship's troops aboard.

EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGN

The appearance of the *Lisiani* is characteristic of some high technology ships; attention is paid to performance and interior outfitting, but the exterior is viewed by the naval architect as simply a container for the ship's volume.

Labor is a costly commodity on high-tech industrial worlds, and as a result, standard sizes, shapes, configurations, and components are easier to obtain than special ones. In the interests of easy construction, the naval architect settled on easily obtainable cylinders (of tech 15 armor material) and sacrificed some aesthetics in the process.

In addition, previous design prototypes of this kind of ship had played with L Hyd tank fittings in order to produce a high jump capable Fleet Courier. Those existing hull specifications were easily used when this ship was designed.

BOOK 2 DESCRIPTION

The following description details the *Lisiani* according to basic **Traveller** standards (even though it was designed and built using *High Guard*).

Fleet Escort (type FE): Using a custom 5,000 ton hull, the Fleet Escort is a naval fighting ship commonly assigned to squadron support activities. It mounts jump drives capable of jump 4 and maneuver drives capable of 6G acceleration. Fuel tankage of 2,450 tons supports the power plant and one jump 4. On the deck beneath the bridge is a computer Model/9fib. There are 24 staterooms and no low berths. The ship has thirty hardpoints and two 50 ton bays. Installed on the hardpoints are triple laser turrets (organized into batteries of ten turrets each); the two bays are equipped as missile bays. There are three ship's vehicles: three modular cutters. Cargo capacity is 40 tons. The hull is not streamlined.

The Fleet Escort requires a crew of 40: eight officers and thirty two ratings. Occasional passengers are possible if officers are required to double bunk. The ship costs MCr3,334.5 and requires 38 months to build.

REFERENCES

The *A. F. Sloan* class Fleet Escort (of which the *Lisiani* is a member) has been mentioned in the following **Traveller** books:

Fighting Ships, **Traveller** Supplement 9, page 18.

The Spinward Marches Campaign, pages 32-39. The 154th Battle Rider Squadron.

Arian Lisiani

Arian Lisiani began her career in the Imperial Navy in 220, joining Flight Branch as a graduate of the prestigious Imperial School on Sylea. Her early career achievements were mixed. After distinguishing herself in the discovery and assimilation of some border states of Ilelish, she was cashiered for insubordination during hostilities with the Aslan (she was reinstated after intervention by Admiral Voseyevski, a classmate at the Imperial School). *Lisiani* distinguished herself in exploits during the Aslan Border Wars. As a Captain temporarily commanding a pursuit squadron, she directed forces in the relief of Warinir (Daibei sector) after it was occupied by an Aslan expeditionary force. The relief was successful, and the Aslan were driven from the system. *Lisiani* personally commanded the cruiser which diverted the main Aslan fleet away from Warinir; with her ship severely damaged, she managed to close on the Aslan command ship and destroy it before she was herself destroyed. Arian Lisiani was awarded the Starburst for Extreme Heroism posthumously, and there has been a ship in the Imperial Fleet named for her continuously since 345.

Fleet Escort Arian Lisiani (Sloan Class)	FE-E3469J2 502200	90009-0		MCr3,334,5	5,000 tons
batteries bearing		3	2		TL= 15
batteries		3	2		Crew = 40

Passengers = 0. Low = 0. Cargo = 40. Fuel = 2,450. EP = 450. Agility = 6. Troops = 0. Fuel Scoops. Three cutters.

Cutter Chrysolite (Mineral Class	YY-0204401-000000	00002-0	MCr30.25	50 tons
batteries bearing		1		TL=9
batteries		1		Crew = 2

Passengers= 12. Cargo = 15. Fuel = 13.5. Agility = 4.

DESIGNING THE LISIANI

Producing deck plans from a set of High Guard statistics can be an intimidating experience. The following is a chronicle of the way I went about it for the Lisiani deck plans.

Early on, I decided to produce a set of deck plans for the P. F. Sloan class Fleet Escort. The Sloan class figured prominently in the recent Spinward Marches Campaign (as part of the 154th Battle Squadron), and frankly, I was curious to see how the ship was put together.

The primary reference for the Sloan class Fleet Escort is a Paul Jaquays illustration in **Traveller** *Supplement 9, Fighting Ships*. Accompanying the picture is a detailed *High Guard* description, including USP and some background details.

Ship Volume: Deck plans are produced using a grid with 1.5 meter squares; one cube (1.5 meters on a side) equals one quarter of a ton. Assuming an interdeck separation of 3 meters, then two deck squares are equivalent to one ton.

Analyzing the illustration of the Fleet Escort, I was able to break it down into four component structures: the main hull, the external tanks, the aft cone, and the forward hull. Using a photocopy of the picture, I marked approximate relationships of various dimensions. For example, I estimated that there were ten external tanks, each about half the diameter of the main hull, and approximately half the length of the main hull. The main hull itself is about 2.5 times as long as it is wide.

Using the formulae for the volume of various geometric solids, I computed approximate volumes and came up with the following estimates:

Main Hulk	2,000
External Tanks:	2,000
Aft Cone:	400
Forward Hull:	600
Total:	5,000

Using this information, I constructed an initial draft side view of the ship. I changed the outline several times, trying to make the profile conform with the available picture.

With a completed side view, it is possible to accurately compute tonnage. It came in slightly over, so I reduced the lengths of the external tanks to bring the tonnage within limits.

The ship description specified several components, and it was important to include them in the drawings. They included provisions for three cutters, two 50 ton missile bays, and three batteries of lasers (ten turrets each). The ship also required quarters for 8 officers and 32 crew members, and a hold for 40 tons of cargo.

The External Tanks. The tonnage of the other structures is fairly well fixed, but I saw some potential for manipulation of the external tank tonnage. By altering the length or diameter of the tanks slightly, I could allow unusual or unexpected fixtures. This was important because the cutters I wanted to install in the ship would not fit on a single deck, either by length or height. I left eight of the tanks as originally designed. The ninth was converted to hold the three cutters; by installing longitudinal holding tubes, they could launch and dock with a minimum of effort. The tenth tank was slightly lengthened, and the two 50 ton bays were installed: one at each end. The space between the two remained fuel tankage.

Facility Layout: I treat required tonnages as requirements for total ship tonnage. Within the ship, I did not feel compelled to make each stateroom four tons, nor the bridge precisely one hundred tons; instead, the sum of the tonnage is distributed around the ship as support facilities or corridors.

In analyzing the ship and its mission, I decided that there was a need for the following as well:

Armory: For maintenance and repair of on board weaponry, and for secure storage of small arms used by the crew.

Vehicle Deck: For garaging vehicles that the ship might carry. The illustration showed a small vehicle which I decided was a GCarrier (since it was not consistent with the cutters I felt the ship carried). A vehicle deck also allows the ship to receive GCarriers or air/rafts serving as couriers from other ships.

Mess Deck: To consolidate recreation and meal service for the crew and the officers. Putting the mess facilities all on one deck made a large recreation area possible.

Miscellaneous Equipment: Provision for such essentials as avionics, the ship's locker, assembly areas, and a dedicated captain's area.

The Drives: The drives took up 31 % of the ship, but when I installed them in the main hull and the aft cone, I found they took up all but a few tons (reserved for the aft laser battery) of the cone and nearly 65% of the main hull.

Rather than present many repetitious drive decks, I decided to show only a few representative ones and concentrate instead on the living and fighting decks.

The Bridge: Because the bridge is the nerve center of the ship, I like to put special attention into its design. Given the shape of the forward hull, I decided on a two-level bridge: a pit with the pilot/captain, navigator, and gunnery control officer, and a raised balcony around it where subordinate officers could perform their duties. Moreover, I envisioned several small chambers off the main bridge where the commanding officer could brief visitors, or where the officer of the day could stand watch.

Marc W. Miller

Cutters

Vehicle
Cargo
Passenger
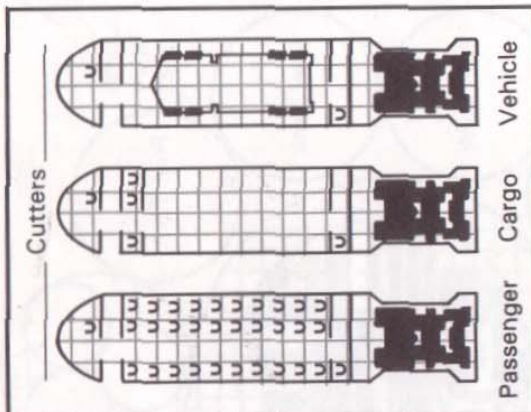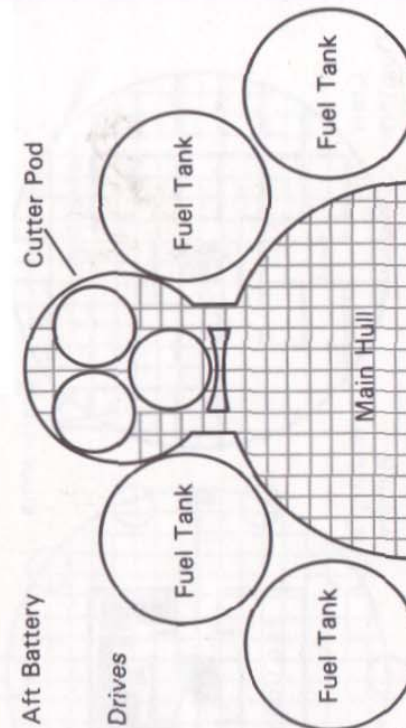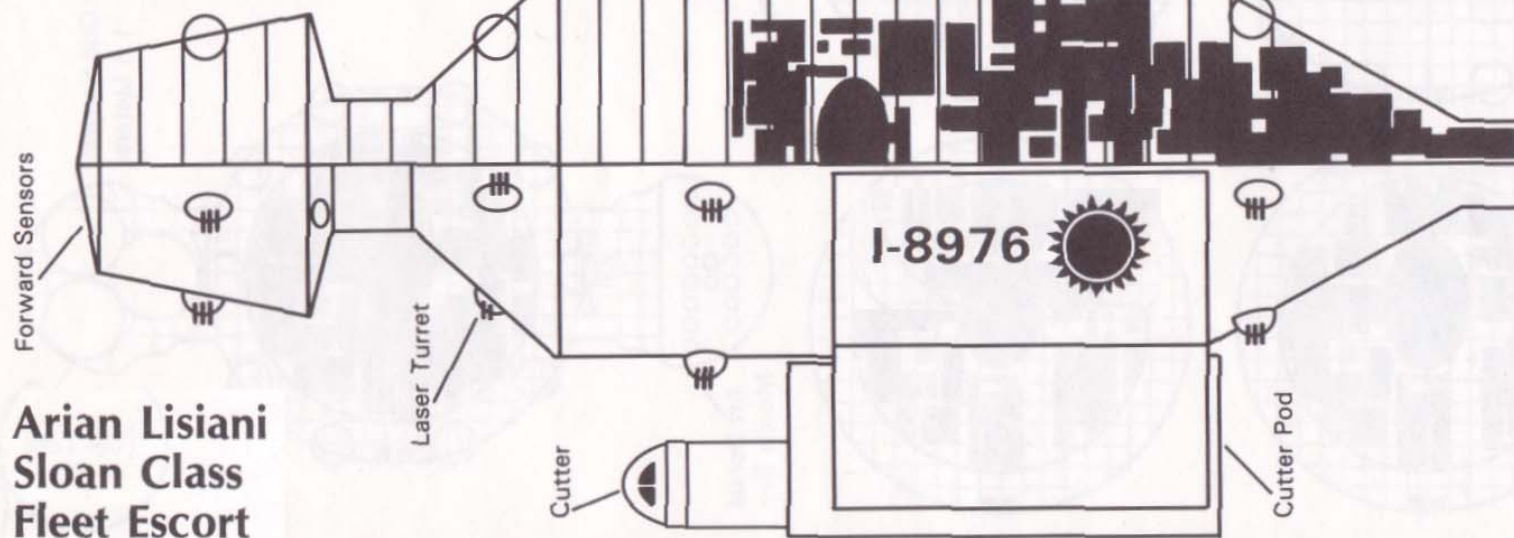
Imperial Fleet Escort Arian Lisiani
P.F. *Sloan Class*
Capable of jump-4 and 6G
  acceleration.
5000 tons displacement.
Crew: 8 officers, 32 ratings.
*Armed with three batteries of
triple laser turrets and two
  50-ton missile bays.*
Defends with nuclear dampers,
  meson screen, and hull armor.
Carries three 50-ton cutters.

Cutter Pod
Fuel Tank
Fuel Tank
Fuel Tank
Main Hull
Aft Battery
Fuel Tank
Drives
Fuel Tank
Fuel Tanks

Avionics Deck
Bridge
Ready Room
Main Computer
Captain's Deck
Connecting Passages
Ship's Locker
Sensor Processing
Armory
Officer's Quarters
Mess Deck
Crew Quarters
Vehicle Deck
Midship's Battery
Drive Decks

Forward Sensors

I-8976

Laser Turret

Cutter

Cutter Pod

Arian Lisiani
Sloan Class
Fleet Escort

Standard Grid Square: 1.5 Meters
Standard Distance Between Decks: 3.0 Meters

Cutter Pod

Aft Battery Deck

Aft Dorsal Missile Bay

Standard Grid Square: 1.5 Meters

Cutter Pod

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Fuel Tank

Jump Drive Deck

Forward Dorsal Missile Bay

Power Plant Deck

Fuel Pump Deck

Storage

Cargo Hold

Air Lock

Repair Shops

Vehicle Deck

Fire Control

Midship's Battery

Galley

Ward Room

Conference

Briefing Room

Crew Mess

General Usage

Mess Deck

Staterooms

Recreation

Crew Quarters

25 - 11

Fleet Escort Lisiani

Connecting Passages

Ship's Locker

Sensor Processing

Arms Room

Armory

Officer's Quarters

Offices

Offices

Up & Down Lift Shafts

The Lisiani is internally compartmented using its decks as bulkheads. Access through all decks is by iris valves automatically triggered to seal when confronted with a pressure drop.

The major personnel mover, however, is the central conduit shaft, which includes both up and down lifts (connected in an endless belt) and the central control cables, connections, and relays. This central conduit is armored and can withstand shock and damage even if the deck itself is breached.

Avionics Deck

Main Control Pit

Bridge

Ready Room

Fibre Optic Backup

Model/9 Computer

Main Computer

Offices

Captain's Cabin

Office

Captain's Deck
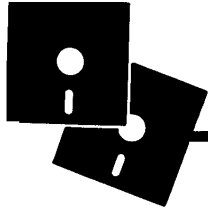
Standard Grid Square: 1.5 Meters

TRAVELLER SECTOR GENERATOR

This program is written in Applesoft Basic for the Apple II series of computers. Minor changes may be necessary (primarily in disk access) for the program to work on other machines.

```
1000 TEXT HOME :
PRINT "TRAVELLER SECTOR GENERATOR"
1010 PRINT THIS PROGRAM GENERATES WORLD
UPP DATA FOR TRAVELLER. COPYRIGHT @1986
GAME DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP, INC.
PO BOX 1646, BLOOMINGTON, IL 61702."
1100 REM SET VARIABLES
1110 HX$  01 23456789ABCDEFGHJKL"
1120 SP$  AAAABBCCDEEX"
1130 BA$ "ABCDEFGHJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ"
1140 DEF FN AW = INT(RND(4) * 6) + 1
1150 DEF FN B(X) = FN AIX) + FN A(X)
1160 AL$ = "IM"
1200 REM
2000 REM PRODUCE SECTOR
2010 PRINT CHR$(4);"OPEN SECTOR, 1 50
2020 FOR X = 1 TO 32
2030 FOR Y = 1 TO 40
2100 REM WORLD OCCURRENCE
2110 IF FN A(4) < 4 THEN 3260
2115 REM GENERATE UPP
2120 ST=FN BW
2130 ST$=MID$(SP$,ST,I)
2140 SI=FN B(4) 2
2150 AM=FN B(2)  7+SI: IF SI=O THEN AM=O
2160 IF AM < 0 THEN AM = 0
2170 HY=FN B(2) 7+SI: IF SI<2 THEN HY=O
2180 IF AM>2 OR AM<9 THEN HY=HY 4
2190 IF HY<O THEN HY=O
2200 IF HY>10 THEN HY= 10
2210 PO=FN B(3) 2
2220 GO=FN B(3) 7+PO: IF GO<O THEN GO=O
2230 LA=FN B(4) 7+GO: IF LA<O THEN LA=O
2240 TL=0
2250 IF ST$ = "A" THEN TL = TL + 6
2260 IF ST$ = "B" THEN TL = TL + 4
2270 IF ST$ = "C" THEN TL = TL + 2
2280 IF ST$ =  X" THEN TL = TL   4
2290 IF SI<5 THEN TL=TL  1: IF SI<2 THEN TL=TL  1
2300 IF AM<4 THEN TL=TL+ 1
2310 IF AM>9 THEN TL=TL+ 1
2320 IF HY>8 THEN TL=TL+ 1: IF HY>9 THEN TL=TL+ 1
2330 IF PO>O AND PO<6 THEN TL=TL+ 1
2340 IF PO>8 THEN TL=TL+2: IF PO>9 THEN TL=TL+2
2350 IF GO=O OR GO=5 THEN TL=TL+I
2360 IF GO=13 THEN TL=TL 2
2370 IF TL<O THEN TL=O
2380 GG=0
2400 REM GENERATE GAS GIANT
2410 IF FN B(4)<10 THEN GG=1
2500 REM GENERATE TRAVEL ZONES
2510 TZ = 0: IF ST$ =  X  THEN TZ = 2
2520 IF TZ = 0 AND FN B(4) < 10 THEN TZ1
2530 131 =0: IF ST$< B  THEN 2560
2640 IF FN B(4) > 7 THEN B1 = 1
2550 REM GENERATE BASES
2560 DM=0
2570 B2 = 0: IF ST$ = "A" THEN DM     3
2580 IF ST$ = "B" THEN DM =  2
2590 IF ST$ = "C" THEN DM =   3
2600 IF ST$ >  D  THEN 2620
2610 IF(FN B(4) + DM) < 6 THEN B2 = 1
2620 B$ = "
2630 IF 131 = 1 AND B2 = 0 THEN B$ = "N"
2640 IF B1 = 0 AND B2 = 1 THEN B$ = "S"
2650 IF B1 = 1 AND B2 = 1 THEN B$ ="A"
2660 TC $
2700 REM TRADE CLASSIFICATIONS
2720 IF(AM > 3 AND AM < 1 O)AND(HY > 3 AND HY < 9)AND(PO > 4
AND PO < 8)THEN TC$ = TC$ +  AG
2730 IF AM < 4 AND HY < 4 AND PO > 5 THEN TC$ = TC$ + "NA
2740 IF(AM < 3 OR AM = 4 OR AM = 7 OR A = 9)AND PO > 8 THEN
TC$=TC$+"IN
2750 IF PO < 7 THEN TC$ = TC$ +  NI
2760 IF(AM = 6 OR AM = 8)AND(PO > 5 AND PO < 9)AND(GO < 3 AND
GO > 1 O)THEN TC$ = TC$ +  RI
2770 IF(AM < 1 AND AM > 6)AND HY < 4 THEN TC$ = TC$ + "PO
2780 IF HY = 10 THEN TC$ = TC$ + "WA "
2790 IF HY = 0 AND AM > 1 THEN TC$ = TC$ + "DE "
2800 IF SI = 0 THEN TC$ = TC$ + "AS
2810 IF AM=O AND SI>O THEN TC$=TC$+"VA
2820 IF PO=O AND GO=O AND LA=O THEN
TC$=TC$+"BA
2830 TC$ =LEFT$ (TC$ . .. ... 15)
2900 REM
3000 REM CREATE WORLD DATA STRING
3010 A$="
3020 IF X< 10 THEN A$ = "0"
3030 A$ =A$ +STR$(X)
3040 IF Y < 10 THEN A$= A$+ "0"
3050A$=A$+STR$(Y)+" "
3060 A$=A$+ST$+M[D$(HX$,SI+1,1)
+MID$(HX$,AM+1,1) +MID$(HX$,HY+1,1)
+MID$(HX$,PO+1,1)+MID$(HX$,GO+1,1)
+M[D$(HX$,LA+1,1)+" "+M]D$(HX$,TL+1,1)
+" "+B$+
11 "+TC$+AL$+"
3120 IF TZ= 1 THEN A$=A$+"A "
3130 IF TZ=2 THEN A$=A$ +"R
3140 IF TZ=0 THEN A$=A$+"
3150 IF GG=O THEN A$=A$+"
3160 IF GG= 1 THEN A$=A$+"G
3200 REM SAVE TO DISK
3210 R=R+1
3220 PRINT CHR$(4);"WRITE SECTOR, R";R
3230 PRINT A$
3260 NEXT Y:NEXT X
3300 REM SAVE FILE LENGTH
3310 PRINT CHR$(4);"WRITE SECTOR, RO"
3320 PRINT R
3330 PRINT CHR$(4);"CLOSE"
4000 REM SAVE FILE PARAMETERS
4010 INPUT "NAME THIS FILE? >";FI$
4020 PRINT CHR$ (4); "RENAME SECTOR,";FI$
4030 PRINT CHR$(4); OPEN ";FI$;"@"
4040 PRINT CHR$(4);"WRITE ";FI$;"@"
4050 PRINT 9
4060 PRINT R
4070 PRINT 49
4080 PRINT "HEX   :PRINT 4
4100 PRINT "UPP   :PRINT 9
4120 PRINT "BASES        :PRINT 1
140 PRINT "TRADE CLA..":PRINT 14
4160 PRINT "ALLEG        :PRINT 2
4180 PRINT "TRAVEL ZO..":PRINT 1
4200 PRINT "GAS GIANT..":PRINT 1
4220 PRINT "TRADEWRLD.. ":PRINT 1
4240 PRINT "EXPLORED?.. ":PRINT 1
4260 PRINT CHR$(4);"CLOSE"
4270 END
5000 REM BY MARC W. MILLER
```
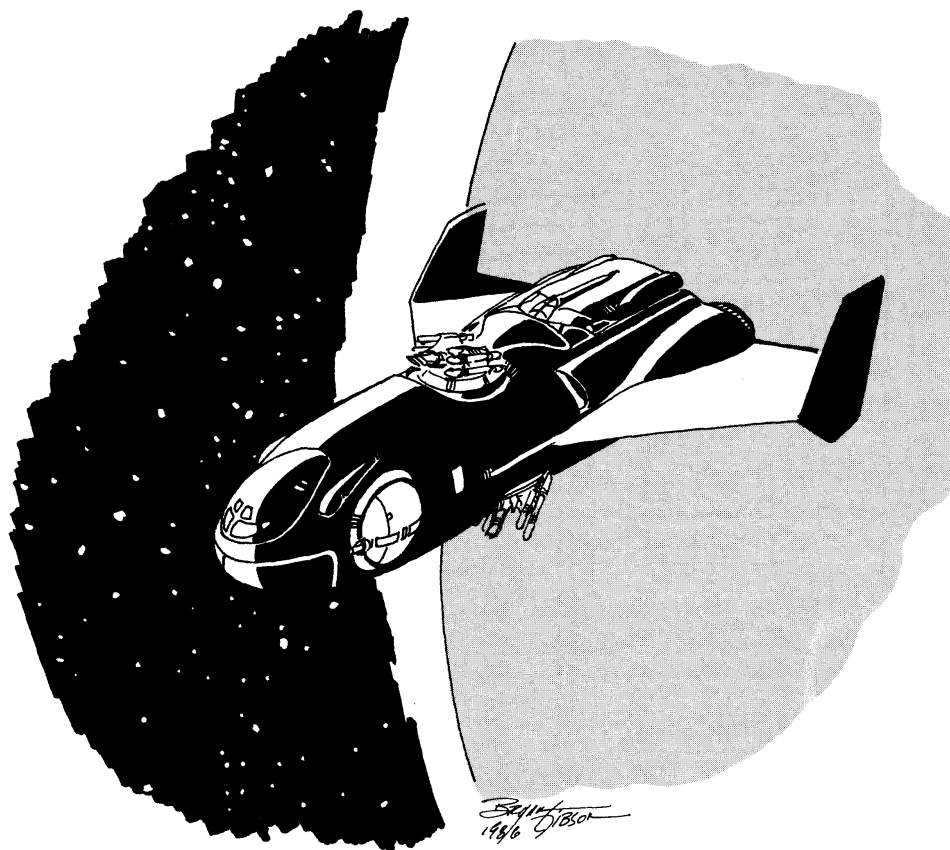
Piracy is an obstacle to commerce in underdeveloped and frontier regions which cannot support regular navies large enough to keep a good watch on every star system. Since such regions are excellent markets for medium to high tech goods and good sources of raw materials, interstellar commerce is attracted to them nonetheless. Lacking sufficient regular patrol ships to keep the trade routes under constant observation, governments and mega corporations find that one economical way to curtail piracy is to lure the malefactors into a trap which will stop their activities permanently. A common form of trap is the Q ship: a starship designed to lure corsairs by giving the appearance of a weak, poorly armed merchant ship, but having sufficient combat power to defeat them.

These ships can be a valuable element in anti-pirate forces of many planetary and subsector governments throughout known space. Companies may also purchase Q ships for use in areas where local governments either cannot or will not control piracy; they find the expense of Q ships a bargain when a raider which has preyed upon a profitable trade route is hunted down at last.

DEPLOYMENT AND USE

The basic mission of the Q ship is to attract targets by posing as a merchant and then surprise the enemy with its combat power. For this purpose, Q ships must not only look like merchant ships; they must also be encountered in the same areas carrying out the same activities. Therefore, the patrol route of a Q ship on piracy patrol will resemble the run of a subsidized merchant or the meanderings of a free trader. Besides supporting the deception, such a route naturally rotates each Q ship around the frontier regions it protects, and the advanced regions which provide it with maintenance and supplies.

The number of Q ships on these patrol routes depends on the balance between the costs of purchasing and operating the Q ships and the costs the Q ships save by curtailing pirate activity. If an area suffers little from piracy (because it is too well patrolled, or because there is too little trade to be worth preying upon), no government or corporation is likely to pay for specialized ships to curb it. However, they will consider the use of Q ships if a region is too rich to abandon due to piracy but not developed enough for extensive patrolling. It should be noted that individual Q ships are more expensive to operate than patrol ships because such decoys cannot be effective without entering combat (unlike the patrol vessels) but the Q ships can be cheaper collectively because fewer are required. In any case, sufficient patrols of whatever type will make piracy a losing proposition. For a discussion of this principle from a pirate point of view, see Steve Sowards' article "The Ecology of Piracy in the Spinward Main" in JTAS 19.

On patrol, a Q ship will maneuver like the trading ship it is simulating and keep its extra weapons hidden. Standard tactical doctrine calls for the Q ship to drop this subterfuge and open fire immediately once the enemy definitely reveals itself (either by hail or by hostile action). Since many victims try to intimidate their prey into surrendering their ships intact before shooting, the Q ship often gets the first

Bait:

Q Ships in Traveller

attack. Even if the pirates shoot first, the superior computer and maneuverability of the Q ship can cause these attacks to miss. In any case, the surprise revelation that the pirates have taken on a target that can outrun and outgun them can be as important a factor in defeating them as is the actual weaponry of the Q ship.

In wartime, these vessels are often pressed into service as convoy escorts. In this role, they are used to set a trap for enemy commerce raiders in much the same way as they normally trap pirates; it has been noted that many governments bordering on the more chaotic Vargr states see no great distinction between pirates, privateers, and commerce raiders to begin with. When commerce raids are particularly severe, entire Q ship convoys have been raised as task forces of the subsector navy to deal with the incursion.

Another mission related to anti-piracy patrol is the "sting" operation, in which a Q ship will carry police posing as a merchant crew turned to smuggling or other crimes in order to gather evidence against others suspected of such actions. The "criminals" will approach the vessel's captain with an appropriate sounding illegal proposition. If the suspect agrees, the police will play along until sufficient evidence has been accumulated, and make an arrest. This tactic is usually practiced only by worlds with particularly intrusive governments (law level B+) against individuals which have come under strong suspicion, since it is expensive and sometimes makes for poor public relations.

Perhaps the most dangerous employment of the Q ship is in espionage. In a few cases, Q ships have been infiltrated into the trade routes between major empires in order to approach and scan restricted enemy installations or visit interdicted areas.

Q ships are well-suited for this role since they can often defeat or escape from the type of force typically sent to detain a suspect merchant ship, provided that the enemy does not perceive the trick quickly enough (they may send another Q ship to do the job!). However, Q ships are not as good as standard merchants for conventional smuggling of agents and supplies since their modifications are difficult to conceal from starport authorities.

Along with most of their other missions, or when not needed for such missions, Q ships serve as armed transports. Even in the most peaceful areas, some private and government cargoes are so valuable that the sender requires high security transportation. In regions where Q ships are required for piracy patrols, this need is considerably greater; also, the charges for security shipping help defray the operating costs of a Q ship fleet.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Obviously, the construction of a Q ship must enable it to look like a vulnerable merchant ship in order to effectively decoy its victims. Therefore, they are built on the hulls of common merchant designs, despite their differences such as armor or hardpoints. Ideally, even observation at a starport will not distinguish a Q ship from a merchant; the ship will often need to load cargo and refuel in the sight of outsiders.

For extra combat power, Q ships typically carry a maximum number of turrets, with any turrets over and above the usual number of a merchant ship being in the form of pop turrets such as those found on x boats. The pop turrets installed on Q ships do not move except to retract and extend, and they include special stabilizing gear (tonnage equal to turret tonnage, MCr 0.1 per ton). Thus, these pop turrets do not suffer any penalties when fired.

In addition, Q ship hulls are often armored, and the ship design trades cargo space for improved drives and a good computer. These features usually give the ship a combat performance superior to a corsair of the same size. Using this combat power and the element of surprise provided by its deceptive appearance, a Q ship should usually be able to cripple a corsair.

The authorities prefer that pirates be captured, so that they can be brought to justice. A side benefit is the information gained from intensive questioning, which often leads the forces of justice to other malefactors. To this end, Q ships usually include a squad of marines or trained security personnel to board the crippled pirate ship. Armament of these troops varies, depending on the wealth of the agency equipping them. Most commonly, they are equipped with combat armor, gauss rifles, snub pistols and grenades. Since boarding actions are common, Q ships have ship's boats specially equipped for troop transport. Most Q ships have low berths for transport of prisoners (brigs are not the most efficient way of doing this).

A COMMON DESIGN

Q ships vary from 200 to 800 tons, matching the range of common merchant ships and freighters. One of the more common types is described below, built to appear as a type R subsidized merchant.

```
Type R (QQ)     QQ 4235552-04000-00002-0              MCr 231.2152
                          1         3                       TL= 11
                          1         3                       crew= 18
Low= 22 Fuel= 130 Cargo= 50 EP= 20 Ag=4 Troops=8

Q ship Launch   QL 0203321  03000-00001-0               MCr1 6
                          1         2                       TL = 11
                          1         2                       Crew = 1
EmerLow = 6 Fuel = 1. 1 Cargo = 3 EP =.6 Ag = 3. Passengers = 6 No Bridge
```

The crew consists of a pilot/captain, a navigator, a medic, three engineers, four gunners, and eight ship's troops. Usually, one of the troops doubles as a launch pilot. All personnel have single staterooms; this arrangement helps morale on long voyages, and enables the ship to serve in space rescue operations without straining its life support system.

The two turrets normally found on a fat trader contain a triple sandcaster and a triple missile launcher; two pop turrets containing triple missile launchers are hidden in the rear where the wings join the body of the ship.

Note that the listing EmerLow indicates that the ship's launch contains six emergency low berths; they can hold 6 conscious or 24 low passengers in addition to the passengers listed. The price of the Q ship includes the price of the launch. Both prices include a 20% mass production discount; architects fees on this design were amortized long ago.

Steven Brinich and James Schwar

The Darrian Way of Life

"I will start this lecture by stressing certain important points where the Darrian ecological and historical background differ significantly from the Solomani ones. These differences have had a great influence in the shaping of our culture.

First, Darrian is generally a much more hospitable world than is Terra. The gravity is only .5 G, there are no severe seasonal variations, and the climate is largely very stable.

Second, our natural fertility rate is about half that of other humans, with less population pressure resulting from this fact.

Third, in Darrian history, one of the two most significant events is *teTeranen,* (the coming of the Terrans) in 1511. Some 30,000 immigrants arrived and settled on our world. They did not achieve political domination, there were too many of us, but their impact on culture and technology was significant. The Terrans were soon absorbed into our culture, but their superior technology (ours was rated TL 3, theirs about TL 10) changed our world beyond the wildest imagination, creating something that was neither the old Darrian culture nor the Terran culture. The synergy of this amalgamation made it possible to achieve remarkable technological advances in the next four centuries. We surpassed even your own Imperium in our achievements.

Fourth, we come to *te Zuyes* (the Holocaust). The destruction wreaked upon our world in 924 totally devastated our world and our culture. We have yet to completely recover from this disaster.

The first two factors that I mentioned show that there is much less competition for survival on our world than on Terra. Violent struggle has been much less necessary. Peaceful traits within the human being have had more and better opportunities to develop. A proof of this is the scarcity of wars on Darrian. We have our violence, but it is largely restricted to the interpersonal level. This is easily discerned in the traditional folk tales of Darrian. There are no glorious warrior heroes, performing dangerous deeds. Our traditional heroes are instead the Scholar, who succeeds through his wisdom; or the Trickster, who overcomes his enemies by cleverness and cunning. The Warrior is most commonly presented in our tales as an over-muscled simpleton, usually an obstacle to be overcome by the hero on the way to his objective; failing that, he appears as "comic relief." Rarely is the hero's enemy a warrior. In Terran folk tales, similar characters can be found: Reynard the Fox and Br'er Rabbit are two of the best known examples. The significant fact is that the Darrian mythos has no Hercules, no Sampson.

The other two factors have taught us one thing: One cannot stop the heavy blows of fate, whether they are to your advantage or disadvantage. You can strive to make your life as good as possible, but there is no way to assure your fortunes. The universe pays little attention to the welfare of its miniscule inhabitants.

The most important consequence of these factors is that my world has no religion as such. No person can claim divine sanction for their moral or legal standpoints, and use this as a lever to force their will on others. Our ethics and laws have grown up slowly from the reasoning, discussions, and research of our philosophers over the centuries. I should add that most Darrians, myself included, accept the existence of a spiritual reality, but this standpoint carries only a personal significance. The interaction between the human being and his Creator has always been a private matter for us. In society, the interactions between citizens have been the most important thing.

Our common religion or philosophical view of life sees human existence as a struggle between beast and civilization, vice and virtue, urges and self-control. It holds that man has developed from the animals, but has also risen above them through intelligence (which we believe to be the soul of a human being ... his intelligence). A human has free will, but also has animal vestiges within, which threaten the control of his rational mind over his will. A virtuous human should always strive to acquire more self-control and to escape from the slavery of the animal instincts.

The ethical codes we have derived from this philosophy stress cooperation and respect for one's fellow beings' dignity and value. The reasoning is strictly utilitarian. Such attitudes promote greater well-being in the long run than other attitudes. Darrian society is very tolerant, provided that one does not cross over certain boundaries of behavior. Once these boundaries are crossed, however, the repercussions are quite severe. Intentional malicious slander, a tort on most Imperial worlds, and a minor crime most everywhere else, is severely punished among the Darrians. I should say, as a side note, that Imperial citizens should not fear visiting us, however. Our most severe punishment is to be forever banished from Darrian territory.

Many within the Third Imperium and the Sword Worlds look down upon us, because they regard us as small and meek ... primitive creatures not worthy of consideration as a Major Race. We have managed to survive, and to preserve our way of life despite the ordeals fate has visited upon our home world, and

despite our being surrounded by more violent states. We have never been conquered by force, nor have we ever desired to create an empire through military conquest, unlike some of our so called "betters." I would close with this thought: In our history, we once achieved a level of technological development which exceeded even the glory of the present Imperium. We feel that we are justified in being proud of that."

DARRIAN NAMING CUSTOMS

The following material was provided as a handout to the attache's lecture, and is reproduced here with his permission.

In the Darrian culture every adult has three names. The first is the family name (*zem te mizbek*). This is inherited from the father, and is kept for a persons lifetime (a married woman does not change her family name). Family names usually refer to something from nature, an animal, a plant, or some natural phenomenon: for example, Barek (lighting bolt) or Terin (an oak-like tree). The family name is never used alone.

The second name is the birth name (*zem te natel*). This is given to a baby by its parents, most often immediately after birth. It most commonly refers to a characteristic or to a flower, for example, Ros (rose), Galyin (fair-haired), Yundis (curious). During youth and adolescence, the child is known by this name, or a diminutive (Gali, short for Galyin, for example).

The third name is the taken name (zem te rutin). When a Darrian reaches legal age (17 Darrian standard years, corresponding to 19.7 Imperial standard years), he or she chooses a name. In adult life, the person is known by this name. The name chosen is of particular significance to the individual. It may refer to someone (such as a parent or a great philosopher) that the citizen holds in high regard. It may refer to a career, or an event of importance. Technically, almost any word can be used, and in many cases the literal meaning of the word may not apply (a Darrian named Kanyes may not actually be a sailor, just as a Terran named Tailor may not make garments). Often-times, Solomani names are used, but they have been converted into Darrian form. A few of the most common names are Geryen (explorer), Laris (pen master, i.e., a writer), Rengil (an equine animal), Debhidh (David), Peter (Peter), Yander (Andrew), Zben (Sven), Kim (Kim), Rebhek (Rebecca), Rhondigh (Rodrigo, Roderick), Miryem (Miriam).

The taken name alone is used when a Darrian is addressed by a relative or close friend. Formal address is by family name and taken name. The full, three piece name is used only in writing or for full identification. Titles are added before or after the name, as appropriate. Proper use of the name is essential to correct manners.

DARRIAN WORLD NAMES

The names of the Darrian worlds are most commonly known in the Imperium by their Galanglic spellings, originating from pre-Imperial times. The Darrian spellings and their Galanglic counterparts are printed below. The worlds of the Darrian Confederation not included on this list carry Solomani or Vilani names, and are inhabited largely by citizens of Solomani origin (who retain many of their cultural and linguistic ties).

Darrian	Daryen (home)
Zamine	Zamine (hopeful)
Mire	Mire (peaceful)
Ilium	Yelim (pioneer)
Roget	Roget (gift)
Rorre	Rore (fertile)
Spume	Zbume (gold colored)

THE DARRIAN LANGUAGE

A common language is used within the Darrian Confederation, called Darrian by the Imperial authorities and Daryene tezapet (the home language) by Darrians. The language traces its origins back to the dominant language of the Darrian homeworld in pre-spaceflight times, but it has been strongly influenced by Galanglic and other languages during the 2500 years since the arrival of the Solomani. Many Galanglic loan words are found in Darrian, but they are heavily modified by the Darrian pronunciation and are barely recognizable. For example, cloud is rendered as ladh. A more extreme example is the noun rim (a dream) and the verb ramem (to dream).

There are two ways of writing the Darrian languages, in pre-contact times, Darrian was written using a syllabary, much like the Japanese Katakana in construction (but not in actual form). This system is called yaser te yulep (the old script). With the arrival of the Solomani, a Latin alphabet was introduced, called rome te yulep (the Roman script). The Latin alphabet gradually replaced the old script, and today the yaser teyulep is used only for legal documents, poetry, and other items of special significance. Newspapers, books, and longhand are almost always written with the new alphabet.

WORD STRUCTURE

The intrinsic meaning of a Darrian word is carried by its root, which consists of 14 consonants. The vowels signify only grammatical meanings: for example, Doldin (a wind), Dalden (to blow), dilden (will blow), Doldine (windy). Because of this feature, the language needs only a few prefixes and suffixes. Of these, the most important are te (the definite article), en (plural noun ending), e (adjective and adverb suffix for nouns). The genitive is formed by placing the owning noun after the owned noun, for example te doldin te zebar, the wind of the ocean. In Darrian, the stress is always on the first syllable.

A Darrian root can have the following forms: CV, CVC, or CVCVC. The proportions of the three types are approximately 1:8:9 respectively. The initial and medial consonants may be clusters, though not both in the same word (if you generate words randomly, a medial cluster always takes precedence over an initial cluster). Nouns are always CVC or CVCVC. Verbs are always CVCVC. If a verb is formed from a CVC noun, the last consonant is duplicated. Adjectives and adverbs are usually CVC + e or CVCVC + e. The CV form is almost totally restricted to pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, numbers, and particles.

Darrian Language

PRONUNCIATION

The Darrian language uses the following Roman letters: *a b d e é g i k l m n o p r s t u y z*. Most of them carry the same phonetic value as in Galanglic (differences are noted below). In addition, there are several other sounds represented by two or more letters (also noted below). Pronunciation of Darrian vowels is similar to Spanish or Hebrew (with the exception of e). The explosive consonants carry very little aspiration.

Vowels

a = u in cut
e = i in bird
é = e in met
i = i in sit
o = o in cot
u = u in put

Consonants

bh = v in vine
dh = th in that
gh = a soft, gargling g
g = a harder g, as in good
ng = as in sing
ngg = a longer version of the above, like finger
y = y in yes (not used as a vowel)

Notes on Verbs: Darrian verbs always have fixed vowel patterns, since they determine the conjugations. Verbs are divided into two groups, A and B, with the proportions being 4:1 respectively ("-" indicates a consonant or consonant cluster).

	A	B
Infinitive	-a-e-	-a-
Future	-i-e-	-i-
Present	-u-i-	-u-
Past	-o-i-	-é-i-

Notes on Particles: The Darrian language contains a very important word class: particles. These are monosyllabic words that define the meaning of a clause. They are always placed first in the clause. The most common are listed below, with examples of their use.

Nos = question (*Nos ni rumim?* Do I dream?)
Ze = desire (*Ze ni rumim.* I wish to dream)
Kon = amplification (*Kon ni rumim.* I dream vividly)
Me't = iteration (*Me't ni rumim.* I dream often)
Kas = uncertainty (*Kas ni rumim.* I am not sure that I dream)
Tik = possibility (*Tik ni rumim.* I may be dreaming)

DATA FOR WORD GENERATION

Consonants

Initial (72)	Medial (90)	Final (55)
b 7	b 5	bh 3
d 9	d 9	dh 3
g 3	g 2	gh 2
p 5	p 5	p 2
t 6	t 6	t 2
k 2	k 2	k 3
m 4	bh 3	n 9
n 9	dh 4	ng 4
z 8	gh 1	l 7
l 5	m 4	r 9
r 5	n 7	s 6
y 3	ng 2	m 5
zb 2	l 5	
zd 2	r 5	
zg 1	s 4	
zl 1	z 6	
	y 1	
	mb 2	
	nd 2	
	ngg 1	
	zb 2	
	zd 1	
	zg 1	
	ry 2	
	ly 1	
	ny 1	
	lbh 1	
	lz 2	
	ld 3	

Vowels

Stressed (25)	Unstressed (12)
a 8	e 7
e 1	i 5
é 5	
i 4	
o 5	
u 2	

PIL RIM?

Te-Lintel nin, ze ni tigem nine te-yar
Te-doldin te-zbar,
Te-zdires te-yorin.
Nos rim pil runnin zlar?

This poem was written by Lieutenant Barek Yundis De'bhidh. The Lieutenant served in the Intelligence Branch of the External Relations Service of the Darrian Confederation. During the Fifth Frontier War he was detached to special liaison service with the IISS. Lieutenant Barek De'bhidh was listed as MIA together with the crew of the IISS Sunbird on 097-1109, when the ship failed to return from a recon mission within the Sword Worlds. The poem was found among his personal belongings at the Sunbird's base station, and was handed over to the Darrian military attache on Regina. *Pil Rim?* was published in the magazine *Star Falcon* on 121-1110, and is reprinted here with permission. Its translation is left as an exercise for those readers insterested in the Darrian language. The following word list may prove helpful.

doldin: wind
ladh: cloud
Lintel: God, creator
me'k: against
nen: and
ni: I
nin: me
nine: myself
norin: sky
nos: (question particle)
pil: merely, only
rim: dream
runin: is (ranen = to be)
tigem: will perceive, will sense (tagem = to sense)
yar: again (noun)
yorin: a falcon-like "bird" of the Darrian homeworld.
zbar: sea, ocean
zdires: flight
ze: (desire particle)
zlar: this

Translation of the poem **Pil Rim?**

ONLY A DREAM?

My God, I wish to sense by myself again
The wind of the ocean,
The flight of the falcon,
And a cloud against the sky.
Is this only a dream?

SIEGE

Players' Information

The players are in "protective custody" on Launfall (C-765759-9), detained by starport customs on a charge of smuggling. Launfall has a serious problem with smugglers and pirates, and Senior Customs Supervisor Anna Luise Fisko's people are already strained to the limit: Fisko is inclined to throw the book at our heroes heavy fines, a couple of years in the pokey, maybe the seizure of their ship (if any).

As the team sits in a customs house detention cell, alarms and sounds of confusion are heard outside. The lights go out, then come back on dimly, under emergency generator power. (This is not a chance to escape; if they try to force the door, the cell will get a shot of riot gas.)

After a few minutes, Fisko appears, angrier than ever. She has a proposition.

Several days ago, a notorious mercenary leader, Colonel Vadzic, gunned down a former patron in the starport's arrival concourse, apparently a matter of late payment. There is no question of his guilt; he admits it himself. Vadzic promised that his unit would come for him ... and now they have. The customs house is under attack, external power and all communications cut off. Supervisor Fisko needs all the help she can get.

If the players will help in the defense, the charges against them will be forgotten. They are welcome to stay in their cell instead but Fisko points out that if the mercs get in they will almost certainly kill everyone but their leader.

Referee's Information

This one is for all those teams of heavily armed players that have ever blasted their way into a stronghold, shooting whatever didn't look friendly; now *they're* on the wrong side.

Supervisor Fisko's force in the building consists of seven customs officers and herself. There are six two person teams on foot patrol, scattered around the starport, and a four person team at the arrival lounge. They will come to assist if they can.

Duty kit for customs officers includes a snub pistol with one clip of tranq rounds, a nightstick, a short range communicator, and a pair of handcuffs. The arrival area team also has four riot gas grenades and a riot gun (short barrelled shotgun). Fisko's personal sidearm is a revolver with two speedloaders (with these the pistol requires only one round to reload, counted as evading). All customs officers wear jack armor.

The customs house armory contains twelve cloth and six ablat jackets, six carbines, six snub pistols, two laser carbines, and four riot guns. There are thirty carbine magazines, twenty shotgun, thirty pistol (tranq) and six pistol (he). No spare power packs are available for the lasers, but they may be plugged into wall sockets at most places in the building for unlimited shots at least, as long as building power is on. There is also a case (20) each of riot gas, tranq gas and concussion (flash bang) grenades. There is no spare ammo for Fisko's handgun.

Any weapons or gear the players had on their persons when they were arrested is also stored here. If there is a shortage of weapons, customs officers get first pick of the armory stores.

The customs house is a three story concrete building with heavy double pane windows (20 points damage to break). The top floor has Fisko's quarters and private office, the communications center, and a small cafeteria/lounge with a large window overlooking the port. The second floor is mostly taken up with a windowless records area, but there is also a small quarters area (only Fisko lives here all the time). The ground floor has the main offices and four detention cells, each large enough for four persons. Vadzic is in a cell of his own. If there are more than twelve players (that must be quite a campaign you're running!), add more cells. The cells are not built against outside walls. The armory and generators are in the basement. An attached garage holds a groundcar, two motorcycles, and an air/raft with rain canopy.

There are twelve mercenaries in the assault force, divided into two types. Four are Vadzic's personal cadre, hard core veterans who will keep attacking until Vadzic is freed or they are all dead. The other eight are recruits, who have had weapons familiarization but almost no other training, and no combat experience. They are thoroughly gungho right now, but that can be expected to change rapidly when a firefight starts.

Vadzic's unit, fortunately for the players, is short of money and under equipped. The cadre members have ACRs firing solidslug rounds, combat knives and cloth armor; all are at least skill level 2 in rifle, dagger, and unarmed combat. All four have gas protection, and one has light intensifier goggles. The recruits have two rifles, four carbines, two SMGs, and two grenades each. Three have gas masks.

They also have six breaching charges, which can blow a hole in any wall in the building or knock out a generator. (They wouldn't do a person any good, either.) Anyone may carry a charge, but only a cadre trooper has the expertise to set one off.

The merc's communications gear is also jammed. The cadre can communicate with each other by voice, by hand signals, and by signal flares (fired like grenades from the ACRs). They can only communicate with their pinnace by flare.

The merc's transportation is a pinnace, mounting one laser and an electronic warfare package used right now to jam communications. The crew (pilot and navigator/EW officer) will stay aboard during the raid, keeping the ship ready to go (if the referee wishes, one or more of the assault team may be detailed to guard the ship).

If the pinnace becomes disabled, the mercs will try to steal another small craft (this is a starport, after all, and there ought to be one around somewhere). Both of the pinnace crew, Vadzic, and two of the cadre can fly a boat. If that fails, they will try to get hold of vacc suits (there are 10 aboard the pinnace) and make for the sky in air/rafts. The main mercenary vessel is an unstreamlined freighter, which cannot land.

Fisko's first act will be to knock out Colonel Vadzic with tranq gas. She will not kill him out of hand. She does not intend to bargain with the mercs though if she is disabled or killed, the other officers might agree to exchange.

If the attack seems doomed to failure, the cadre members have agreed to "the red option": they will lift jamming on one channel, and tell the defenders that if they fire a red flare, the pinnace will turn its weapons on the customs house and burn it to the ground. This is a bluff. The red flare tells the pinnace that all is lost, and tells the cadre that it's time to fall back to the pinnace and lift off. The recruits do not know that it is a bluff.

"This one is for all those teams of heavily armed players that have ever blasted their way into a stronghold ... now they're on the wrong side. "

Both sides in this scenario are on edge, and both believe the honor of their service is at stake. Everyone is just a little crazy with tension, but they are not completely psychopathic.

It may occur to the players to throw in with the mercs and help free Vadzic. Keep in mind that Vadzic is out cold and cannot see them "helping" him, and the attackers: especially the recruits are not going to ask questions. The customs men will not hesitate to shoot our heroes if they try anything peculiar.

The referee is, of course, free to juggle the balance of forces as he or she sees fit, and is especially encouraged to personalize the cadre members (say, make one a sniper, another a silent killing expert, etc.).

Finally, arranging the players' arrest is up to the ref's discretion. If they really are guilty of smuggling (maybe because they heard pirate ridden Launfall was a good market), so much the better.

Planetary Invasions in Traveller
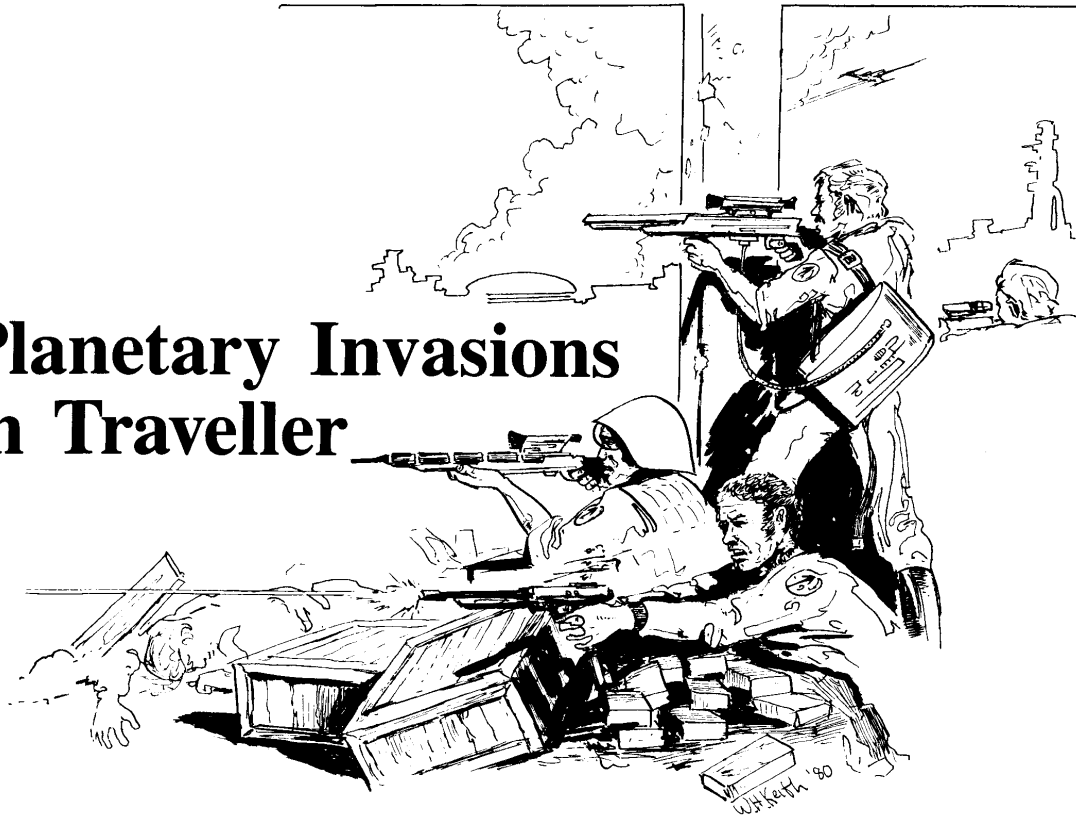
In an interstellar war, both sides must rely on their developed worlds as sources of support and maintenance as well as high technology war materiel. This is particularly true in regions like the Spinward Marches, where developed worlds are spread rather thin. Capture of a developed world will provide an enemy with the products of an advanced industry and a good base for further offensives.

For these reasons, the major battles of an interstellar war will probably be fought for control of developed systems. After months of preparation, an assault fleet will jump into the targeted system and engage the defending fleet elements. If successful, the invaders must make their victory effective by occupying the population and industrial centers of the target system in order to secure it as a base of operations.

A close look at a planetary assault and landing can provide a referee with a good background for a campaign. The referee may choose the normal **Traveller** RPG approach or may use a strategic board game (such as *Fifth Frontier War* or a variant of the *Invasion: Earth* game system) or miniatures (*Striker* comes immediately to mind) for resolution of the invasion. Of course,

you may find that a combination of one or more of these rule systems will provide the greatest enjoyment. This article will deal with some general criteria for planetary invasions.

THE SPACEBORNE ATTACK

In **Traveller**, the basic problem for the invasion planners is to bring in enough firepower to defeat an enemy in his own space. There are two major obstacles to this goal. First, an invasion fleet must carry the jump drives and fuel to reach its target world, which may be defended by the cheaper, deadlier system defense boats and monitors. Second, the attackers will arrive with most of their jump fuel expended. Refuelling introduces another logistical complication: the planners must decide whether to provide the fleet with enough surplus fuel to jump out of system if necessary (which reduces the tonnage available for combat functions and aggravates the attacker/defender firepower gap) or to gamble that the fleet can at least fight off the opposing fleet long enough to refuel. There are several solutions to this problem, and none of them is perfect.

A fleet without extra fuel will need to overcome the defenders of a fuel source quickly in order to refuel. Star systems with several gas giants (or other fuel sources) are ideal, since the attackers need only defeat the forces guarding one world before reinforcements from other worlds arrive. By fully exploiting the element of surprise, a skilled admiral can similarly defeat much of the defending space fleet in detail before it can be brought in to defend the main world of a system.

LANDING OPERATIONS

If the invasion fleet succeeds in defeating the defense in space, it still faces another major defensive line: the planetary defenses. These defenses include SDBs and stationary batteries. These batteries, like starship weapons, come in two types: large primary weapons and smaller secondary weapons. Both types are difficult to neutralize. Meson gun sites are typically buried deep within the planet itself, and the smaller sites are very numerous and present very small targets.

The crucial step in reducing a planetary defense is to silence the meson guns before they cripple the attack fleet. This can be done either by naval bombardment or by ground attack. The naval bombardment strategy is simply an extension of the space battles with the defense fleets; capital ships exchange fire with the ground batteries until one side or the other is neutralized. While meson guns themselves are well protected and concealed, their ground sensors and power plants can be located by waste energy emissions and bombarded by the ships weaponry. The outcome of this engagement depends upon whether the fleet can withstand the planetary fire until the major ground defenses are silenced (the same design features which

protect the fleet from warships protect it from planetary weapons as well). When the main planetary weapons are defeated, the fleet then turns its attention to the smaller sites until these are unable to prevent troopships from landing ground forces.

The ground attack strategy envisions the presence of troops on the world early in the battle, either before the invasion begins (by infiltration or the organization of a fifth column) or landing in the teeth of the planetary defenses. A small force in agile, well defended landing craft aided by intense orbital bombardment of planetary defenses in the landing area should be able to land, seize a beachhead, and attack the sensor sites, command centers and power plants (they will probably not be able to get to the meson sites themselves), disrupting the defense enough to permit the landing of a larger force.

Each of these strategies calls for a particular type of invasion fleet. The naval strategy requires a strong line of battle capable of defeating all defending ships plus the planetary defenses. Ships designed for such missions need strong defenses against meson guns as well as other weapons. The troopships of such a fleet can be relatively cheap; they will stay out of combat until enemy defenses are broken and need only enough defenses to survive scattered remnants of a planetary defense. On the other hand, the ground attack strategy requires troopships which can survive the fire of intact planetary defenses long enough to launch fast, armored landing craft. The landing craft themselves would contain commando units equipped with heavy infantry weapons (plasma/fusion guns, tac missiles, and so on, to the limits of the available technology), battle dress, APCs, and demolition gear. Once the commandos land and secure a beachhead, they will move against the planetary defense centers using orbital bombardment as "artillery" cover to pin down defending ground forces.

After one of these strategies (or a combination) has reduced the planetary defense system, the invasion can begin in force.

INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Even with the resources of an interstellar empire, transporting large armies across interstellar space is a titanic logistical problem. At a bare minimum, each soldier requires living space aboard ship, transport, life support, weapons, and equipment. Five tons per trooper is an optimistic estimate. If troopships devote half their tonnage to these functions, transporting four 25,000 man divisions would require one million tons of capacity!

Obviously, if anything other than the full might of the Third Imperium is being brought against a world, an invasion force can include only enough troops to occupy vital centers of a world. For control of outlying regions, it must rely on occasional patrols, local allies (or quislings, depending on your viewpoint) and intimidation from the orbiting fleet to hold the world. Even then, heavily populated worlds will prove a major problem.

When the troops land, their first priority will be to clear out the remnants of the planetary defenses and command structure (including starports and naval bases). This will insure the ability of the fleet to provide reinforcements and fire support at will. Fire support from orbit is vital to the invading ground units, since it allows them to dispense with bulky artillery, and forces the defenders to remain dispersed and under cover. On the other hand, ground forces may like to have the complete control of their fire support that integral artillery gives them.

Once the invaders gain uncontested control of orbital space, the fighting will break down into a large number of platoon to battalion level actions. The invaders will have to split into small units to cover key areas of a world; the defenders dare not concentrate in groups large enough to present good targets for orbital artillery. The attacking forces will then engage in numerous search and destroy missions, relying on their superior training and equipment (the limited number of personnel and equipment which can be transported to a world implies that only the best troops will be taken along for the assault ... picked troops in *Striker* terms) for victory. As the invasion proceeds, lower quality reinforcements from off world can be landed and local forces recruited (these will most likely be militia with a picked cadre for leadership).

If the defenders are defeated piecemeal according to plan, police and occupation details can be organized for the major centers of population, industry, and military power. Each of these areas will have garrisons ranging from platoon to regiment size, depending on the location, relative importance, and defensibility against rebellion or attack. Outlying regions may be patrolled in order to watch for possible resistance and to flush out guerrilla forces.

Once the star system and the major world is securely held (assuming there are no counterattacks or reinforcements from offworld), the invaders can begin rebuilding defensive and industrial facilities for their own use, and bring in larger armies to occupy the system more effectively. At this point, the invasion trails off into occupation and administration.

ADVENTURING AND GAMING

Strategic Games: The game **Invasion: Earth** deals with a planetary invasion on a large scale, and **Fifth Frontier War** (FFW) deals with invasions more abstractly. Understanding the methods of planetary defense and assault is helpful to the referee who wants to use these games as a military "backdrop" for his campaign. For example, the state of a game of FFW can be used as a basic situation, with the players involved in the assault on a single world in the game. The basic systems of both games can be modified to work with other wars and other invasions.

Striker Scenarios: While the full invasion of any but the smallest worlds is far beyond the scope of **Striker**, many parts of the invasion are well suited for **Striker** scenario use. For reasons discussed above, both sides will probably split into company sized units for many phases of the invasion, just the type of actions **Striker** is designed for.

In describing the forces on each side of a scenario, keep in mind that the limited quantity of troops and equipment available to the invaders will force them to use the best they have, whereas the defenders will have a more conventional force make up. In **Striker** terms, most invading units will be picked troops. Defenders will vary from militia, (recruited and armed when the war started) to long service troops, with a few elite or picked units. Militia forces may be involved on both sides, depending on the political situation on the world

before the war (a segment of the populace may welcome the invaders, for instance).

An invasion will naturally include a variety of missions for both sides. If the fleet lands commando forces against planetary defense installations early in the invasion, the assault on a key site can be played out. The main landing operation will feature jump troops and orbital fire support attacking the troops defending the landing area. After the beachhead is secured, there are possibly counterattacks by the defenders, and offensive strikes out of the beachhead by the invaders to break up the defending forces and secure major objectives. As the invasion progresses, the invaders will need to mount counter-insurgency operations if they win. Conversely, they will need to mount holding actions to cover their retreat if they lose. Each of these phases provides *Striker* players with hundreds of potential combats.

Traveller Adventures: Planetary invasions create some interesting situations for adventurers. Without any warning, a party could find itself engulfed in a war while visiting a world. If the adventurers choose to remain, they will almost certainly face the possibility of being drafted and their useful property (starships, weapons, and so on) commandeered. Failure to cooperate will bring swift and severe punishment. At best, being caught by an invasion will set back the party's plans.

The players may choose to try and hide in some deserted backwater of the world, and wait out the invasion. This involves many obvious risks, not the least of which is explaining to the new authorities who you are and what you are up to.

Leaving a world can also be dangerous, but it can be accomplished successfully if done quickly and quietly. In the immediate confusion caused by the arrival of the assault fleet, both sides may be too busy dealing with each other to bother with small fry. The problem is that if either side does notice, the tendency will be to assume that the players are involved in some sort of espionage or sabotage mission.

On the other hand, players may choose to take a more active role in the invasion. Mercenaries may be hired by either (or both) sides. A government planning an invasion may approach the players for some mission of sabotage, espionage or smuggling when its own agents are unavailable or wishes to avoid implication. Note that in either case, the hiring government will disavow any association with the players should they be caught. Possible missions may include locating defensive installations for subsequent attack, neutralizing the installations themselves, smuggling equipment or personnel onto the world for local fifth columnists, planting misleading information in the world's intelligence services, or a variety of "set ups" where the players are sacrificed for some purpose or other (obviously, the players will not be aware of the true nature of their mission until it is too late. Obviously, such missions will carry high rewards (and high risks).

A world recovering from an invasion or invasion attempt will often be a lucrative market for traders. Restrictions on weapons and other contraband will be more severe than usual, however. Such a world may offer many opportunities (and dangers) to smugglers as well. People will want to get off (and on) the world for various reasons, guerrillas and resistance groups will want weapons and equipment, the wealthy will want luxury goods which will be in short supply (or rationed) after the invasion. The players run the usual risks of smuggling, complicated by the fact that a war may still be going on.

Yet another possibility is for the players to hire out to the new planetary government as mercenaries to help in the pacification and occupation of the countryside. The new officials will need all the help they can get against the guerrillas, stay behind parties, smugglers, spies and others seeking to upset the new administration or to profit from a chaotic situation.

CONCLUSION

Whatever the case, involvement with a planetary invasion and the subsequent occupation can offer great excitement, large rewards, and considerable dangers. An adventure on such a base can present **Traveller** players with many interesting and challenging adventures.

Stephen Brinich & James Schwar

Ship's Locker
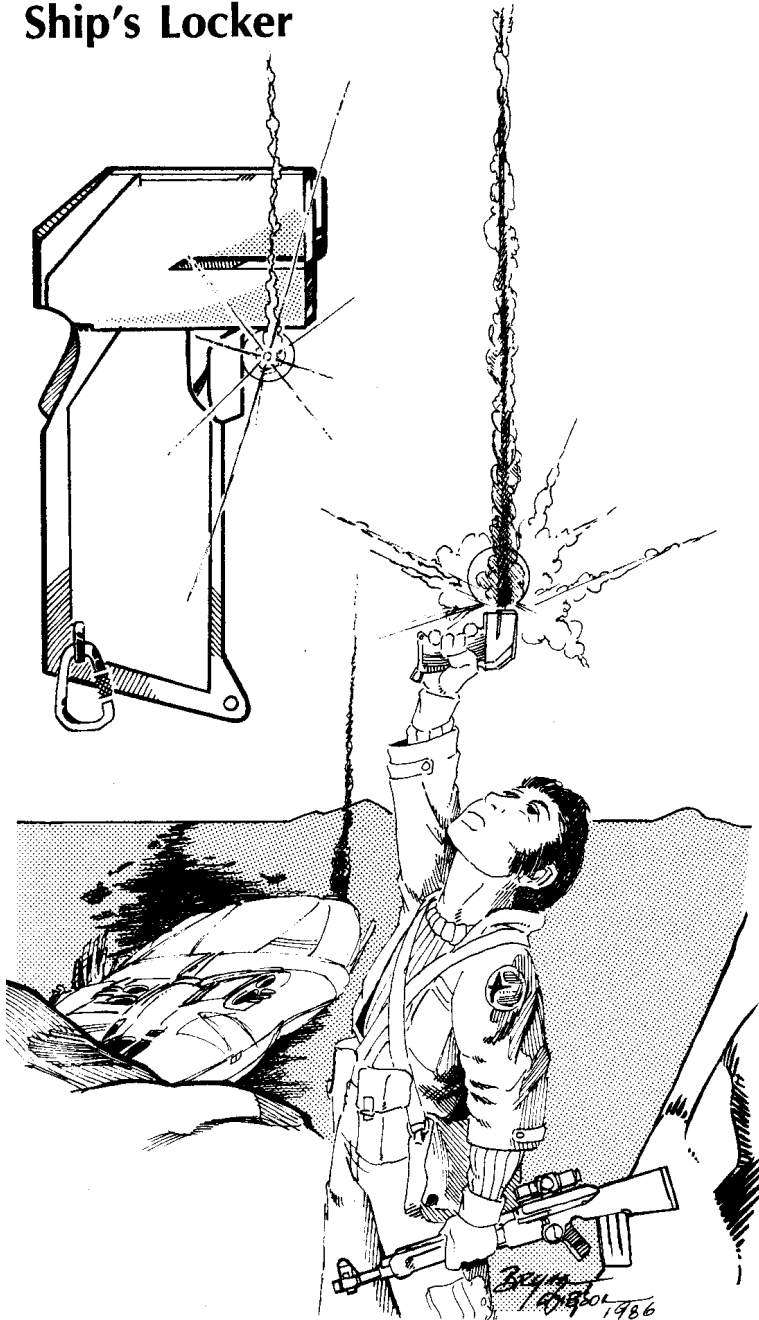
FLARES AND SIGNALLING DEVICES

A variety of emergency signalling devices are available on starships or aboard vehicles which might venture into uninhabited regions; they may also be carried by individuals. All have one thing in common: they are designed to signal others in the absence of ordinary communications. Though intended primarily for emergencies, such devices have a variety of other applications, scientific expeditions, and a number of other activities.

Imperial laws require the presence of at least two types of emergency signalling devices aboard all starships and small craft (generally as part of a standard survival kit). In addition, many planetary governments put some similar sort of regulations on water, air, and grav vehicles (and other land vehicles, as well). In general, roll law level or less for signalling devices are to be required. If characters in a vehicle intended for long range travel are stopped by a law enforcement encounter and are in violation of local safety laws, they can expect a fine of 1D x Cr 25.

The devices discussed below are only a few of the many types of signalling devices available.

SIGNAL MIRROR (2) Cr10. A simple hand held mirror which can be used to reflect sunlight and thus catch the attention of a distant observer. Signal mirrors can be improvised out of any reflective material; purchased mirrors will include a small sighting hole that enables the signaller to direct the flashes of light from the mirror at a particular target, such as a passing aircraft.

The actual chances of having a mirror's flashes spotted is 6 +, with several die modifiers applied: + 2 if the target is searching for the party, + 1 if using a mirror with sighting hole, 4 in moonlight, 8 in starlight, and 10 in an absence of light.

A signalling mirror weighs 250 grams; improvising a mirror requires reflective material and a roll of character intelligence or less to fashion a usable device.

WATER DYE (4) Cr 25. A tube of liquid dye which can be used to highlight a patch of water (around a raft at sea, or in a lake near a crash site) with a bright, easily spotted color visible from the air. The primary drawbacks to this form of signalling are the short duration of the colored patch (it lasts no more than 15 minutes in still water, much less if the water is rough or there is any form of precipitation to break it up) and the fact that it cannot be used at night.

The latter problem is offset in dyes available at tech level 9 for twice the basic cost. These contain a phosphorescent dye equally visible in day or night. Generally, water dyes are useful only when searchers are aware of the presence of the distressed travellers, and are more in need of an exact location than some signal to draw their attention in the first place. A tube provides a single dye patch of standard dimensions, for the price noted above; it weighs 200 grams.

FLARE GUN (5) Cr 75. A flare gun is used for long range signalling, and has a number of applications, both civil and military. It consists of a pistol like launcher which can fire any of several types of flare up to 50 meters. In addition to being used for signals, it can fire illuminating flares which can be used for spotting purposes at night.

The basic flare gun, unloaded, weighs 1250 grams; some typical flares are presented below.

Signal Flare: A standard flare provides an easily noticed trail of light (but no real illumination). Use the spotting roll given for the signalling mirror, but with the following additional DMs: in daylight, DM -3; at night, DM + 8. These are in addition to those already given. Weight is 250 grams; cost is Cr10 each.

Illuminating Flare: A flare which provides a brief (2 combat rounds) period of illumination sufficient to eliminate all darkness combat penalties in a radius of 50 meters around the firing character. Such flares are always noticed at night, but have little effect by day. Weight is 250 grams, while cost is Cr25 each.

Flare pistols can be used in combat, though they are woefully inaccurate and extremely inhumane. Treat the gun as a revolver minus 3 for all purposes; the signal flare inflicts 3D damage if it hits, while the illuminating flare inflicts 5D damage points. The use of illuminating flares will also blind characters not expecting it for one round on a roll of 10+. Characters wearing LI goggles should have a DM + 4 applied to this roll.

Both kinds of flares are highly flammable, and, if used in combat, can ignite fuel or explosives if fired into such supplies.

SMOKE FLARES (6) Cr 12. These hand held flares emit both a bright light and a pillar of colored smoke for 15 minutes after ignition. Once set off, they burn constantly, and cannot be shut off. Sighting in either day or night is nearly automatic in line of sight.

Smoke flares can be used as an improvised weapon in combat. Treat a smoke flare as a dagger, but inflict 3D damage for a hit. In a fight situation at night, the flare can overload Ll goggles, as noted above, but only in the first round of combat.

Smoke flares are specifically designed to be hand held (or implanted in the ground). They weigh 250 grams each.

COMMLINK BEACON (9) Cr 750. A combination long range communicator and signal transponder, the commlink beacon is a very sophisticated emergency signalling device. It is designed to save characters the necessity of constant communications watches. The internal transponder monitors common emergency search and rescue channels (one at a time). When traffic is picked up on this channel, the device simultaneously emits a shrill warning tone to alert characters to the possibility that help is at hand, and transmits a coded distress signal. Some more expensive models have provision for a taped, auto repeat distress call, instead of the automatic code signal. In either event, the commlink beacon serves as a means of establishing contact when there is any search being mounted within 500 kilometers, and then of continuing communications after that initial contact.

An internal battery weighing 200 grams operates the transponder for 30 days continuously; if the transmitter is used heavily, operating time is reduced. Spare batteries may be carried, or the original battery can be recharged from a vehicle or starship power plant.

Keith Douglas

BREACHING CHARGES

Breaching charges are shaped charges of plastic explosive designed to blow man sized holes in walls. The charge is the size of a thick notebook; it has a self-adhesive panel on one side and an adjustable chemical time fuse on the other.

To operate, the user peels the sheet of protective plastic film from the adhesive panel, then breaks the pre-scored fuse strip at the desired time delay (5 to 60 seconds in 5 second increments), pulls the primer, and dives for cover.

Anyone standing within one meter of a breaching charge explosion is hit for 2D + 2 damage on a roll of 5 +; at 2 meters, 1 D + 1 on a roll of 7 +. Armor modifiers apply as against grenades or flechettes, and dropping flat adds a -3 favorable DM. Note that this attack applies on both sides of the wall being breached.

A charge will blow a passable hole in most conventionally constructed walls. Multiple charges may be used to make larger openings; four, correctly spread out, will make a hole big enough to drive through. To blast through bank vaults or ship's bulkheads requires multiple attacks. Charges do not make very good antipersonnel weapons (come on, you know you were thinking of it) but they could be used as "limpet mines" against vehicles or soldiers in battle dress.

Breaching charges require only basic familiarization (not Demolitions skill) to use, though, of course, a skilled user will get better effects. Also, unskilled users roll 2I): on 11 exactly the primer has been incorrectly pulled, and the charge is a dud; on a 12 exactly, there is a random variation in the fuse time (referee's choice) due to incorrect setting.

An activated chemical fuse cannot be turned off, though a demolitions expert (Demolition 4 or higher) might be able to remove the fuse without detonation (2D for 9 +). Charges are insensitive to shock or bullets, and will only burn, not explode in fire.

Fire departments and rescue units often have a few breaching charges, used to free people trapped in burning or collapsed buildings. Charges made for such "civilian" use are striped dazzle yellow and black, and usually have a fixed 60 second delay.

Weight: 2 kg Price: Cr 100 TL: 8.

John M. Ford

Casual Encounter

Ringaal DeAstera

Ex Army Major 8B96B4 Age 38 4 Terms Cr5000
Combat Rifleman 4, Pistol 2, Tactics 2, RAM Grenade Launcher 2, Recon 2, LAG 1, Brawling 1, Demolition 1, Leader 1, Forward Observer 1
Morale: 22

Former battalion commander of "Ringaal's Rangers," an independent mercenary commando battalion, Ringaal DeAstera has spent all of his professional life in the mercenary service, from the day he enlisted in a mercenary unit on his homeworld. Young DeAstera made a good soldier: stolid, obedient, unimaginative, but fond of his new profession and reasonably competent in the field. Unfortunately, those same qualities that made him a capable private have tended to make him a narrow-minded and rigid officer (albeit competent enough).

This was nowhere better proven than in the Battle of Durgesswald on Hrunting in the Sword Worlds. The Rangers had been hired by the planetary government to hunt down and eliminate a band of local terrorists, but their contract was cancelled after the Fifth Frontier War flared up. The Rangers found themselves cut off on the world, with Sword World troops closing in on them. DeAstera and a handful of the battalion escaped the battle, the remainder of his command was killed or captured. Throughout, the Major showed all facets of his curious personality, a mixture of great technical competence, personal courage and leadership, and an appalling lack of good judgment.

The Major, though utterly fearless and very capable in the basics of military leadership, is not really qualified to command men in battle. He is prone to demonstrate his leadership in wholly inappropriate ways, such as in personally commanding the rearguard at the Durgesswald while the main body, thanks to confusion in their orders, marched directly into a trap. The Major has an embarrassing habit of neglecting such mundane matters as logistics and planning in favor of taking out patrols or leading assault parties in person. Even before Durgesswald, other mercenary leaders had nicknamed him "Major Disaster," in recognition of his outdated (and often fatal) style of leadership. Before Durgesswald, capable executive officers had often managed to pull Easter's chestnuts out of the fire. DeAstera lost his good officers with the Rangers, and, since then, has been unable to find one willing to serve under

him. He has been unable to raise funds to form another unit (he lost his cash reserve on Hrunting along with the battalion), and has been unable to find employment in normal mercenary circles because of his deteriorating reputation.

DeAstera has survived in the interim by taking a variety of jobs, from military advisor to the planetary militia on Suarus/Vilis early in the war to (at the low ebb of his recent career) personal bodyguard to a wealthy merchant. DeAstera's whole goal through this period has been to put together sufficient capital to start up a new battalion. He has learned very little from past mistakes, and does not yet recognize the contempt to which other officers in his profession hold him. He tends to ascribe his recent failure to gain employment or backing to "bad luck" or "professional jealousy." The Major is an egomaniac, with supreme confidence in himself and a total conviction that everyone around him is an incompetent. This ego is one of the main reasons for his failure to delegate or properly perform the duties of a commander. He doesn't trust his subordinates to perform any but the simplest of military duties, and insists on personally supervising every aspect of any operation with which he is involved.

Major DeAstera (like many, in his profession and out) has a remarkable fondness for weapons, especially firearms; he has acquired an impressive collection over the years, which was not on Hrunting, or he would have lost it as well. He is an expert on such matters as muzzle velocities, impact forces, and other technical details. His conversation is often studded with firearm related metaphors, and an anecdote about a battle can be interrupted by a half hour discourse on why a particular weapon he was carrying was inferior to what he would have preferred to have. He sometimes bases initial impressions of soldiers on their choice of weapons.

Major DeAstera can enter an adventure in a variety of ways. Characters looking for hirelings skilled in military matters may be approached by the Major, who is almost always in need of a job. Unless they are themselves mercenaries, however, the players are unlikely to have heard of DeAstera's reputation (although Army veterans will have heard of him on a roll of 11 +). His resume (at the end of the article) is impressive, and could easily result in a quick acceptance of the Major as an employee.

As an employee, the Major is reasonably useful, especially given the fact that he is a crack shot in addition to a number of other military talents. He can, however, also be a problem. In addition to being a bore and an egomaniac, he is also impulsive and given to going off on his own when he feels he has been given ill conceived orders (which is almost always). This can lead to trouble ... he has been known to start a firefight in the middle of delicate negotiations because he became impatient and suspicious of treachery.

The Major need not turn up as a hireling, however. Instead, he may be in a position of authority. For example, a group hired by a patron seeking security services or other paramilitary work could find that DeAstera has also been retained, and is in charge (or at least high up in the chain of command). DeAstera will run a tight military unit (regardless of the actual nature of the work). He will also be much given to verbal abuse over trivial failings, and will hardly ever allow the characters any independence of action ... all the while complaining that he shouldn't be forced to supervise a bunch of incompetents.

In situations involving fighting, the Major is unsubtle; he has an unhealthy fondness for rashly running into combat, for ordering attacks without proper scouting or preparation, and otherwise risking everything on a gambler's throw. DeAstera himself, however, seems to have a charmed life, and for all his overconfidence, the Major seems to come out of almost any calamity none the worse for wear (besides, sometimes his gambles come off).

As a patron, Major DeAstera exhibits many of the same traits described above. A patron encounter with DeAstera generally indicates that the major is in the process of rebuilding his mercenary unit. The referee may wish to have DeAstera in command of a full battalion for adventures or campaigns using **Mercenary** or **Striker**. Major DeAstera's peculiarities should be factored into any large scale treatment of actions involving such a unit. Players who have hired on could find themselves in serious jeopardy as a result of their new CO's failings.

Lastly, DeAstera could be encountered as an opponent. "Major Disaster" is not completely incompetent, and he is no pushover. He could even be quite dangerous.

Another possibility is for DeAstera to be used in more lighthearted adventure situations, as comic relief rather than a more serious encounter. This is not to say that he should be treated as a buffoon, but the adventures in which DeAstera is the "villain" (presumably in the employ of the real opposition) do present an opportunity for fun mixed with danger.

The Major is accompanied at all times by his batman and comrade at arms, Sergeant Chandra. A large, powerful, but somewhat slow-witted man, Chandra is completely devoted to his superior. He is very protective, and seems to have eyes in the back of his head where the Major's safety is concerned. Both a skill list and a resume are given below.

DEASTERA
Major: 81396134, Army, four terms.
Enlisted in Infantry, transferred to Command after third term.
Special Assignments: OCS, Military Attache, Commando School.
Awards and Decorations: Eight combat service ribbons, six combat commands, two MCUFs, two MCGs, four purple hearts.
Equipment Qualified On: ACR, Auto Pistol, RAM Grenade Launcher, LAG, Demolitions.

PIOTYR CHANDRA
Ex Army Sergeant B9C586 Age 34 Cr10,000 Combat Rifleman 2, Grav Vehicle 2, Admin 1, LAG 1, Forward Observer 1, Mechanical 1, Recon 1, Tactics 1.
Morale: 15
First Sergeant: B9C586, Army, four terms. Enlisted in Cavalry, transferred to Commandos after second term.
Special Assignments: Commando School, Recruiting.
Awards and Decorations: Five combat service ribbons, two MCUFs, one purple heart.
Equipment Qualified On: ACR, Grav Vehicle, LAG.

J. Andrew Keith