

CEPHEUS JOURNAL

Issue #001

In this issue:

Cepheus Rules &
Variants

The Rhabdomane

CE Skill lists

Abhainn Free Trader

Helzr's
Recovery/Salvage

and more...



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Contributing Authors

Steve Attwood / Alegis Downport	
Paul Drye	Paul Elliott
Timothy Collinson	Ewan Spence
Michael Johnson	Graham Bayley
Robert Foran	P-O Bergstedt

Art

Cover, Backpage, 24, 25 - Ian Stead
Page elements, 8, 14, 21 - Pixabay
7 - Steve Attwood / Alegis Downport
9, 41, 42 - Wikimedia Commons
26 - Michael Cross

Layout and Editing

Brett Kruger

<https://cepheusjournal.com/>





From The Editors

Welcome Citizens!

This is the debut issue of CEPHEUS JOURNAL, a free PDF based fanzine dedicated to all things Cepheus Engine related. Each issue will endeavour to add to the ever-expanding universe that Cepheus Engine has become!

We had an idea and the response has been great, almost overwhelming, and it has spurred us on. At the time of writing this our Facebook page had quickly reached over 100 members and our web site is well on its way.

In our first issue we have some great articles. There is an article about CE skills, part one of a sci-fi adventure on salvage and recovery, a Sword of Cepheus NPC, a description of a free trader - with deck plans, a small pseudo-lizard species to encounter, a piece on modern war and more. We want to thank all of you who have sent in submissions, and if your submission isn't in this issue, it will be in a later issue.

Our goal will be to release an issue of CEPHEUS JOURNAL as we get enough content, with thirty-two or more pages, although this really depends on any extra submissions we might get. With regards to submissions, we are looking for any genre that can be played with Cepheus Engine, not just Sci-Fi universes. Article submissions

can be any length, although we reserve the right for creative editing, in RTF, TXT or ODT formats and should be checked for grammar if possible. We will accept Word documents, but only if macros are disabled. Graphics would be great to help out our resident artists.

This fanzine is to be a non-profit endeavour, no ads, no cost, written totally for the love of the game. It is hoped that someone, somewhere will find the content within these pages useful in inspiring a great adventure with a group of friends, and if not then just have a good read. We also want to thank Jeff Zeitlin at Freelance Traveller for making such a great fanzine for so many years and want to acknowledge him as the inspiration for this fanzine. We also especially want to thank Jason "Flynn" Kemp for creating Cepheus Engine, without which this fanzine wouldn't exist.

Anyway, please enjoy this first issue.

Cepheus Journal Editorial Team

Brett Kruger

Ian Stead

Michael James Cross

P-O Bergstedt

Paul Drye





Cepheus Rules and Variants

By **Steve Attwood / Alegis Downport**

Cepheus Engine has been around for a few years now and is what could be considered a 'mature' product with plenty of supporting material. From its original release by Samardan Press Publications, it has evolved into a number of rule sets for your own science-fiction RPGs or variants with a pre-generated setting. I'm going to look at the different rules sets and some of the settings that use Cepheus Engine as its rules mechanic.

Core Rules Without a Setting or Background

Cepheus Engine System Reference Document

Publisher: Samardan Press Publications

Driverhru RPG link:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/186894/Cepheus-Engine-System-Reference-Document>

Cost: PDF - Pay what you want (suggested \$9.99), no print option available.

This is the original rules set authored and published by Jason 'Flynn' Kemp back in 2016. It is essentially what all the other CE based rules sets are based on and provides the licensing basis for using the rules in your own adaptations. The CE rules are based on the original Classic Traveller rules set utilising 2D6 and a score of 8+ to

achieve a basic result. In difference to the Classic Traveller rules, the book provides pretty everything that CT originally did across a number of rules supplements, but in one single book. It also takes some of the quirks of CT and 'modernises' the rules set to reflect changes in technology, since the original release of Classic Traveller in 1977. There are 208 pages and includes everything that you would need for running a science-fiction role-playing game.

The book is also published by Moon Toad Publishing, which includes a few minor fixes and some reference sheets but is otherwise essentially the same book as the Samardan Press edition. It is priced slightly differently at \$6.17 for the PDF or \$12.34 for the PDF and softcover print-on-demand book.

Moon Toad edition link:

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/237247/Cepheus-Engine-RPG?filters=0_0_45550_0_0

Cepheus Light

Publisher: Stellagama Publishing

Driverhru RPG link:

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/257644/Cepheus-Light?filters=0_0_45550_0_0

Cost: PDF \$5.00 / soft cover book \$13.75

Cepheus Light as the name suggests, is a rules-light version of the CE SRD; if I was to compare Cepheus Light to Classic Traveller it would be the three original





LBB's books 1-3 condensed into one book. CE Light's focus is to provide just enough rules so that play isn't bogged down without having to constantly reference a large set of rules. For example, there are twelve careers to choose from, the authors have provided plenty of examples of the character generation process and combat encounters. There are quite a few items of equipment to choose from and you can construct starships to travel to worlds, utilising the trade and encounter rules. There are also detailed rules for space combat and lists of common spacecraft to help you get started as quickly as possible; there are even a few examples of aliens and psionics to round off the book. If you want to adapt the rules set for your own games, an editable version is available to download for a suggested price of \$10.00.

Cepheus Light is ideal for long-term play with games spread over several weeks. Page count is 109 pages.

Cepheus Faster Than Light

Publisher: Stellagama Publishing

Driverhru RPG link:

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/263755/Cepheus-Faster-Than-Light?manufacturers_id=9571

Cost: PDF free to download / soft cover book \$6.99

Cepheus Faster Than Light takes the rules from Cepheus Light and strips out any mechanics that might be considered optional. When CE FTL was originally released, the page count was only 38 pages (I have this in a print book), following revisions and updates the page count has increased a bit to 60 pages, with alterations to the layout and text. CE FTL has reduced the rules set by halving

the number of careers to choose from, though the basic character generation process remains intact. In addition, the amount of equipment has been cut from 15 pages down to 9. Though you still get space combat, starship creation has been cut and you are provided with a variety of common starship designs for players to use. World creation has also been removed, but you have the basics of interplanetary travel described. If you want to adapt the rules for your own games, an editable version is available to download for free. This is a bare bones set of rules ideal for the quick set up of games that would last a weekend.

Cepheus Quantum

Publisher: Stellagama Publishing

Driverhru RPG link:

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/280143/Cepheus-Quantum?manufacturers_id=9571

Cost: Free to download PDF, print at home.

Stellagama has taken all the above rules and squashed them down into a two page easy to start set of rules, using only the bare mechanics. In order to make things fit onto a two-sided single piece of paper (that can be printed at home), the rules are altered in the following ways; character creation is now limited to choosing a career with which you are automatically assigned a number of skills. There is no UPP; you only have two attributes to roll dice for, endurance and lifeblood. Equipment only covers half a page and the rest of the rules describe the bare game mechanics sufficient for personal, vehicle and starship combat. Cepheus Quantum is perfect for the quick start of a single game or evenings play.





Cepheus Engine Based RPGs with a Setting

Since its release in 2016, Cepheus Engine has been adopted by a number of publishers as their rules set to develop their own role playing games. These are some of the most significant settings available, though there are more on Drivethru RPG.

Clement Sector / Earth Sector

Publisher website:

<https://independencerpgs.com>

DTRPG link for range:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/browse/pub/3565/Independence-Games>

Prices: From \$5.99 upwards

The largest supported setting out of all the backgrounds presented here, Independence Games (formerly Gypsy Knights Games) originally developed the Clement Sector background from its 'Quick Worlds' series of generic supplements which date from 2011-12. The Clement Sector is set in the 24th century where the human race has reached the stars and by travelling through a wormhole (known as the 'conduit') and have colonised several sectors of space on the other side of the galaxy. However, one day the conduit collapsed, stranding everyone that was left on the Clement Sector side of the conduit. Though the link with Earth was broken, the people of the Clement Sector have continued to explore and develop the place they now call home. However, back on the Earth side of the conduit, things are moving on; released back at the end of 2019, 'Earth Sector' is a whole new line of products set a few years after the conduit collapse. This introduces small, but in some cases

significant updates to technology.

The Clement / Earth Sectors have quite an extensive product range available, including core rules, rules supplements, subsector supplements, spacecraft and adventures.

These Stars Are Ours

Publisher website:

<https://www.stellagamapublishing.com>

DTRPG link for range:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/browse/pub/9571/Stellagama-Publishing>

Prices: Core rules \$14.99, supplements from 'free' upwards

Originally released back in 2017, 'These Stars Are Ours' (or TSAO) depicts a near-future where the grey aliens so commonly reported back in the 1950's and 60's have invaded Earth and enslaved the human race, becoming part of the Reticulan Empire. However after many decades the humans have fought back and after defeating the aliens on Earth, pushed them back to establish a fledgling Earth Empire, allied with other alien races. TSAO is smaller in scope than the Clement Sector, but there is a wide range of products to get stuck into. Ever wanted to fly one of those UFO's that used to crash-land in the southern United States? Well now you can... and punch a grey alien in the face in the name of the United Terran Republic!

The Sword of Cepheus

Publisher website:

<https://www.stellagamapublishing.com>

DTRPG link:

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/304840/The-Sword-of-Cepheus?src=hottest_filtered





Prices: \$9.99 for the rule book (PDF), \$1-2.99 for the first supplement.

Published at the beginning of this year, *The Sword of Cepheus* (SoC) takes the Cepheus Engine rules system and converts them for use in a low-tech, fantasy world. The rules follow the same character generation format with careers, rank and survival but instead of marines, belters or colonist, you have careers such as vagabond, sorcerer or barbarian. It is a complete fantasy rules system, including a system for magic and spells, monsters and adventuring. The first supplement introduces non-human creatures as player characters. It doesn't have a setting or 'world' developed for it yet, but with this being such a new product I would be interested to see what Stellagama can come up with. At the time of writing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the release of a print book version of the SoC has been delayed for a few months at least; hopefully we won't have to wait much longer as this should be a book worth picking up.

Orbital 2100

Publisher website:

<https://www.paulelliottbooks.com/zozergames.html>

DTRPG link:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/browse/pub/3743/Zozer-Games>

Prices: \$15.99 for the rule book (PDF), \$5.99 upwards for supplements.

As the name suggests, *Orbital 2100* is set at the start of the 22nd century where the human race has expanded into the solar system. There are no faster-than-light drives and spacecraft are basically tin cans with limited gravity and a chemical engine on

the end. This is a complete RPG with character generation and spacecraft design; the latter is very comprehensive interspersed with plenty of examples. The solar system is described with each inhabited world detailed as to what country or corporation is located there. There are only a few supplements available for *Orbital 2100*, which is a shame as I think there is plenty of scope for expansion. In some ways, *Orbital 2100* can be considered a forerunner to the following Zozer Games product...

Hostile

Publisher website:

<https://www.paulelliottbooks.com/zozergames.html>

DTRPG link:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/browse/pub/3743/Zozer-Games>

Prices: Core book \$19.99, supplements free or from \$1.99 upwards.

Hostile is based on those films that every sci-fi buff has watched; the *Alien* series, *Outland*, *Bladerunner* - those 'gritty' sci-fi films where the future isn't bright and shiny. Life is damned hard work and the main thing that motivates you is staying alive and the next pay cheque. Corporations are all-powerful and are the main drivers in expanding into the universe. Faster-than-light travel is commonplace and people (ie. the players) typically play characters that are workers in this harsh environment. There are no intelligent aliens, but there are alien lifeforms to trap and catch the unwary.

Hostile requires the use of the Cepheus Engine rules; it is a complete background and provides rules modifications specific to *Hostile*, but it is not a complete RPG.





Hostile has an increasing number of supplements including weapons, careers, creatures and adventures.

As Cepheus Engine utilises the Open Game License (OGL), it is relatively easy to

take one of the CE rules sets and write your own world environment. Many small publishers are using this now to write and develop products, publishing them on Drivethru RPG. Search for 'Cepheus Engine' for a complete list.





The Rhabdomane

By Paul Drye

Wilderness Encounter: The Rhabdomane

A small pseudo-lizard species, rhabdomanes lives in a colonial fashion like terrestrial termites. On their homeworld they inhabit the fringes of deserts where water is not generally available but not entirely absent either. Ever since humans first visited their planet, however, the rhabdomane has become a pest species, spreading along trade routes to worlds far afield. While barely noticeable at home, the absence of their natural predators, parthenogenetic reproduction, and poisonous skin means they can spread very quickly on a new planet, overwhelming any plains or steppe biome in just a few decades.



An individual rhabdomane is an unimpressive thing, a yellow-brown tetrapod with smooth, slightly damp skin, and a body and tail each about the length of a human finger. In the wild they are

almost never encountered alone. Instead they form colonies of up to 25,000 specimens, living in hard mounds they build out of dirt and saliva, and which soar as much as three meters above ground. Each colony may have dozens of mounds tightly packed over an area of several hundred square meters.

Rhabdomanes will ruin farmland and, in the long run, entire ecologies by cutting out the base of the ecosystem: any small animal in an insect-like niche is their preferred prey, and they will also eat the tender parts of newly growing plants. In time they will transform a rich area into a parched wasteland where erosion has driven off much of the soil—which happens to be the kind of climate they evolved to exploit on their homeworld, further entrenching their place. Given free reign, colonies may appear every few hundred meters over a very wide area, an artificial badland that grows out from its edges every year.

Adventurers may encounter the species in a variety of ways:

- Many governments are paranoid about rhabdomanes being introduced to their world's ecology, particularly those a short trip away from another world where the species has already taken hold. As rhabdomanes are parthenogenetic, it takes only one hiding in the cargo hold to start trouble, and a ship may be checked far more carefully than usual if one is



suspected (or, worse, been found).

- Rhabdomanes are aggressive to those who approach a colony too closely and will often swarm. Though too small to do any physical damage, their moist skins carry a nerve poison that (given enough hits) will eventually cause respiratory failure in a human.

- Adventurers may want to approach a colony anyway. In their self-generated arid environments, pushing over a rhabdomane mound is often the only way to get any drinkable water should supplies run low. Each mound cluster will reveal a muddy reservoir of 1D×10 liters at the root of its largest mound.

- Ecologists from many worlds are interested in curtailing the damage the species is inflicting and may hire others to take them where the rhabdomanes live, sometimes just to study them and other times to try out a new strategy for killing them off.

Rhabdomane (*Migalis aurantiacus*)

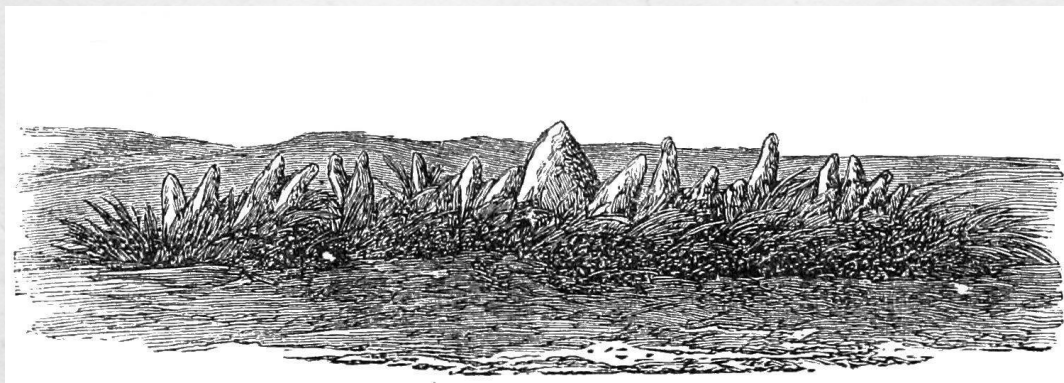
50g Eater (Omnivore), Plains Walker, 15116F, #App: 5D
Athletics-0, Melee(Natural Weapons)-1
Special Damage (see below); None;
Speed: 3m

On a hit a rhabdomane does no physical damage but will do 1 point of damage from the application of poison to the skin. This damage is removed from END, STR or DEX in the usual manner. Armor does not affect the poison attack unless all skin is covered, but damage can be prevented by wearing a simple body suit with helmet, mask, and gloves; this includes a vacc suit pressed into service. An attacked person will be swarmed—the first successful hit on a character will mark them chemically and cause all the other individual animals to focus on the same target if possible.

Rhabdomane poison damage heals at the normal rate but can be cured entirely in one round with the injection of a specific anti-venom. This is readily available in areas infested by the species, and can be purchased for Cr20 per dose with a successful Routine skill check against Streetwise or Medical.



Rhabdomane mounds on Obrosav





Looking at the Skill List

By Paul Elliott

When you consider that Cepheus Engine (CE) has rules that cover thousands of worlds at all levels of technological development, its modest list of only 34 skills seems quite impressive. The alternative to this concise skill list would have been a vast number of skills to cover almost every imaginable action and career. I remember giving up on GURPS with its needlessly specific skills, like Falconry, Politics, Underwater Demolition, Poetry and Sculpting. Cepheus Engine, like Classic Traveller which inspired it, treats skills much more broadly, almost as skill categories. This works well with CE's 2D6 mechanic and with each character's small pool of skill levels during a game. When your space-travelling player character only has four skills, and they are all at level 1 or 2, then you really can't afford to be investing in skills like Juggling, Meteorology, or Xenoarchaology, can you? Those particular skills are much too specific. As a note, Classic Traveller was published with a list of 26 skills, and Mongoose's Traveller included 44 separate skills. Compare this to CE's total of 34.

Of course the skill list that CE has settled on might not suit everyone, you may feel that some skill has been inadvertently left out, or that some skills actually seem quite redundant. And you might be right! Later, I will express my own thoughts about six skills in CE that I think need to be re-assessed. Reassessment is the message in this article. My advice is always to reinterpret a skill, or

use a related skill, or even switch to using Education or Intelligence to tackle that task ... use what the rules provide and resist the temptation to add in more skills. Ever more skills reduces the chance that any one player character has the skill needed at any one particular time during a roleplaying session. I would argue that this game, and its forebears, has always been about the player characters and their experience, not a detailed simulation of reality.

CASCADE SKILLS

Cascade skills were a feature of the original Traveller rules, specifically: Blade Combat, Gun Combat and Vehicle. Once a skill like Blade Combat was received, the player had to immediately select a subskill within that category (Bayonet, Sword, Dagger, etc.). Mongoose Traveller greatly expanded this procedure, introducing eleven more cascade skills (including Heavy Weapons, Science and Trade, amongst others). Each subskill within a cascade is essentially another skill to add to the overall list, and so Mongoose had greatly increased the number of skills available to player characters. Thankfully, Jason Kemp, when writing CE, drastically cut back on these cascade skills, limiting the mechanic to those skills for which it makes most sense.

Vehicle: The most obvious and sensible cascade skill in Cepheus Engine is vehicle;





choose from Aircraft, Ground Vehicle and Watercraft ... these cascade again to more specific vehicle types. And this all makes sense.

Gun Combat: With other cascade skills in Cepheus Engine, I would like to argue that it all depends on the type of game you are playing. Gun Combat is a good example. For many years when a player gained a level of Gun Combat skill, I have always had them write 'Gun Combat-1' on their character sheet. I'm happy that my marine or pirate with Gun Combat-1 is as comfortable firing a pistol as a submachine gun or rifle. And besides, with a mixed bag of characters that might include a pilot, a con-man, a prospector and a ship's engineer, they won't have many levels of Gun Combat between them.

But in a military campaign ... the subskills of Gun Combat become important. In my space-faring setting HOSTILE, the skill is simply 'Gun Combat', but in the CE-inspired game, Modern War, the skill cascades into Rifle, Pistol, Shotgun and Machinegun. Here, this approach makes more sense, since every character will possess Gun Combat at level-0 or higher. Characters need to be differentiated.

Gunnery: By not cascading this skill, I think that Classic Traveller had this right in the first instance. Unless you have a lot of ship's gunners in your campaign, then splitting the skill seems a bit superfluous and degrades the usefulness of Gunnery skill. I always assign this as 'Gunnery'.

Melee Combat: A bit like Gun Combat, I have always let players write Melee Combat on their character sheets and not forced anyone to choose a subskill.

Someone possessing skill and/or experience in hand-to-hand fighting will, in my opinion, be just as willing and able to use a sword, club, meat cleaver or golf club to take down an opponent... unless your game is more fantasy orientated, of course, where everyone possesses at least level-0 in the skill. In that case, my comments on military campaigns apply here, also.

Sciences: I'm happy that Sciences cascades into Life, Physical, Social and Space because 'Sciences' is far too broad a category to be of any use. That said, Classic Traveller neatly did away with this skill completely, and assumed that such abstract knowledge was safely within the realm of the player character's Education. Scientists in Traveller's Supplement 4 had high Education values ... but no mention of a Science skill. I'd have been happy with that approach.

Animals: This cascade skill is much like Vehicle, and serves as a broad label for a number of very loosely related skills (Farming, Riding, Survival and Veterinary Medicine). I like this skill category!

If you are tempted to make a skill 'cascade' in order to introduce new specialities or new subskills, then do be aware that the mechanical consequence will be that you are simply adding new skills to dilute the list.

REMEMBER THE CHARACTERISTICS!

The comment I made about Classic Traveller folding science-type academic skills into Education is worth repeating here, because it emphasises the role that the characteristic can play. In essence,





each characteristic provides a pool of general talents and abilities. Dexterity, for example, encompasses climbing, running, juggling, throwing, abseiling, dodging and countless other tasks. Intelligence would seem to cover perception as well as quick thinking: spotting a trapdoor, hearing a faint noise, making a rapid calculation, understanding an alien access code, and so on.

Education is an amalgam of general knowledge and academic qualification. I use Education to provide information about the setting to characters. "Is it normal for those alien traders to come so far into the sector?" Roll Education. "How do you make an impromptu bridge over a fast-flowing river?" Roll Education. If the character really shouldn't know, but would have to research the fact, then I use Education skill as a research roll, and save the more valuable Computer skill for tasks revolving around repair, reprogramming or running specific applications or algorithms.

The question of what exactly a high education characteristic actually represents has been discussed many times. In general, I take any Education of 10-15 to represent a 'university-level' qualification – an expertise in some academic subject. A bureaucrat with high Edu might be an expert in economics, whilst an engineer with high Edu might have degrees in quantum theory or material science, that pilot with Edu 12 could have studied astrophysics or gravity theory. All this just adds flavour for me though, I still use Education as a catch-all skill category.

It may be worth turning to characteristics more often for some task rolls, since there is

no penalty in an Edu roll for 'not having the skill', it allows every character to have a chance of success. I recently read about a Traveller con where Marc Miller, the game's designer, ran a Classic Traveller scenario. Everyone rolled their characteristics and came up with a backstory and character concept, and the game began, with the game flowing from improvisation and roleplaying to a series of characteristic rolls. No-one had any skills, and the game ran perfectly well without them. I believe Marc finished the game with the phrase 'that's how I play Traveller!' which beautifully captures the spirit of Cepheus Engine, in my opinion. Skills are designed as areas of expertise ... even at level-1. A character lacking a relevant skill for a particular situation should certainly not be seen as incompetent or useless.

A standard characteristic roll might be a Routine (+2) or Average (0) task check, but over the years various different methods of making characteristic rolls have been suggested by Traveller aficionados. I will not list them here.

PROBLEM SKILLS?

I like the brevity and usefulness of the Cepheus Engine skill list, but I do have problems with six individual skills. These are: Advocate, Gravitics, Prospecting, Carousing, Athletics and Jack-of-All-Trades.

Advocate: This seems to be another one of those 'academic' style skills, that really has no use in a star-spanning adventure roleplaying game (unless you are playing a lawyer). Its value could easily be replaced with a few well chosen





Education or Admin rolls. However, if we look at Mongoose Traveller's write-up for this skill, we see that it also includes 'oratory, debate and public speaking' which would increase the skill's utility immensely.

Gravitics: Representing the repair and installation of anti-gravity motors, this skill could be easily replaced with the more useful Electronics or Mechanics or Engineering. I have always found it a difficult skill to manage and consider it a little superfluous. It typically gets swapped for Engineering.

Prospecting: I love this skill, but I would have renamed it 'Mining' and made it also cover mining operations, setting up drills and other complex machinery. Still, I am happy with it, despite the skill title.

Carousing: The description of this skill explains that it covers 'small talk' and making 'others feel at ease' at parties or other gatherings. I expand its use greatly, and rely on the skill for digging up gossip or hidden rumours, lying to or fast-talking a victim, and assessing someone's body language. I try to keep it distinct from Liaison, by having that latter skill all about negotiating and deal-making (not involving trade and commerce).

Athletics: This skill seems to simply duplicate aspects of Strength, Dexterity and Endurance. As such, its use does confuse me. Mongoose Traveller suggests adding Athletics skill to any physical task roll that relies on one of those three characteristics. That seems excessive, and ... how does that work with Athletics-0? One way to get some use out of this skill is

to make it cascade to a number of 'extreme' activities, perhaps Mountain Climbing, Parachute, Subaqua and Skiing. Since these skills will get little everyday use, it might be worth taking the approach of Cepheus Engine's Linguistics skill: a new 'extreme' activity is gained for each point of Athletics possessed. Carlo, for example, with Athletics-2 might have Skiing and Subaqua, both at level-2.

Jack-of-All-Trades (JoT): Quite rightly, this contentious skill is discussed last. In Classic Traveller, the skill seems to have been able to confer level-0 in all skills, quite an advantage. But there was no hint about what to do with JoT-2 or 3, for example. In Mongoose Traveller and Cepheus Engine, the skill levels do come into use because the JoT skill was instead added to the standard 'untrained penalty' of -3. JoT-3 effectively gave the character level-0 in all skills. But what did JoT-4 or 5 mean? And what does JoT-0 do? This has always been a bone of contention for referees and players over the years.

If the standard CE interpretation of Jack-of-All-Trades does not satisfy you, there are alternatives:

- New Skills - JoT might represent all the skills that don't exist in CE, such as safe-cracking, forgery, sculpting or falconry ... but that in itself could be quite a powerful tool to have.

- Unorthodox Strategies – With the referee's permission, JoT may be used to allow the use of a another skill in some unorthodox or unusual manner. If he has Demolitions, perhaps he can attempt underwater demolitions laying (adding on

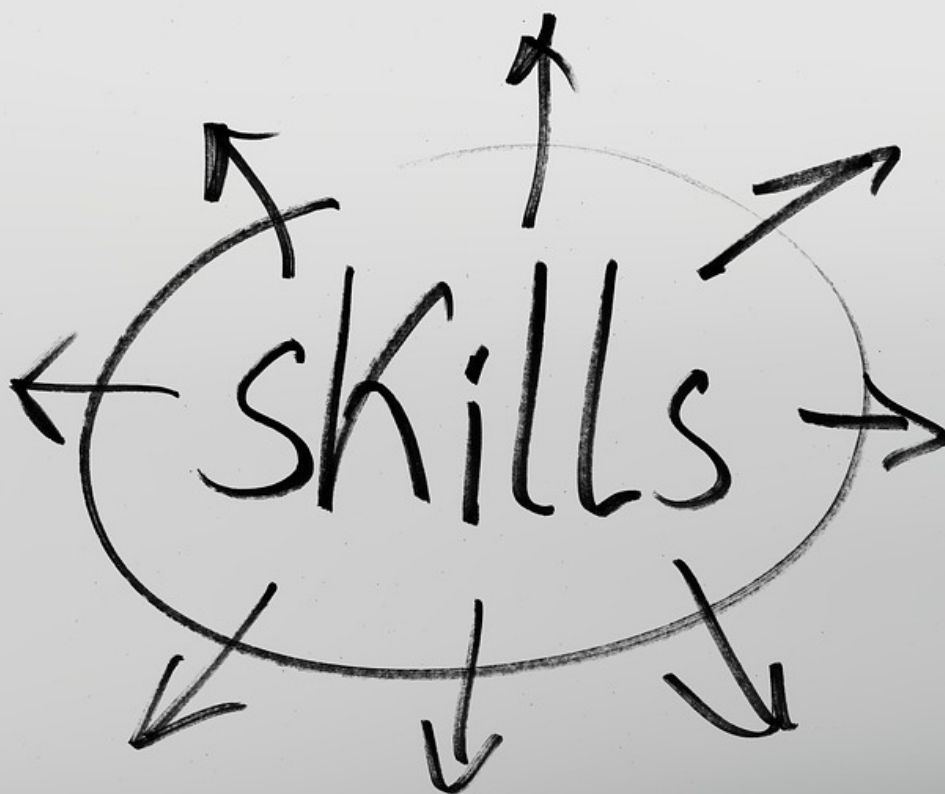




his JoT skill level as a bonus, if it is greater than JoT-0). The problem comes when the character only has a couple of other skills, or perhaps even none at all. To counter that, the referee might allow the character to advise another character who does have the required skill, how to use their skill in some unorthodox manner ...

- "Pass Me A Wrench" – My preferred use for JoT is to assist another (skilled) character using the Aiding Another rules found in the Introduction to Cepheus

Engine. The character can help any skilled character with a task, making his JoT roll to provide a flat +1 bonus to the skilled character's attempt. By looking and learning, the Jack-of-All-Trades understands instantly how to assist, even though he has no formal training in Medicine, Mechanics, Engineering, Computer, or whatever other skill is normally required. Whilst aiding another in this way, the character with JoT does not incur the standard -3 penalty for attempting a task while unskilled.





Which Cepheus Careers Give Which Skills?

by Timothy Collinson

Part of the fun of character generation is in creating characters using random die rolls and then explaining or interpreting the results. However, on occasion you might want a PC or a detailed NPC who has specific skills. In this event it can be useful to know how best to direct their careers to obtain those particular skills. The following offers a look-up table for each skill (and characteristic improvement). Of course, they also reveal snippets of insight such as that in **Cepheus Light** for example you can only obtain Aircraft or Watercraft, say, in the Colonist career (but in **Faster Than Light!** it's the Army you have to go to for those). Or that in **Cepheus: Faster Than Light!** only Army characters can drive or Merchants develop Liaison skills.

Lists are given for **Cepheus Engine**, **Cepheus Light**, **Cepheus: Faster Than Light!** and **Cepheus Quantum**.

An example of how to read this can be seen in the Liaison skill for **Cepheus Engine**. This skill appears on the Skills & Training tables once for Athlete, Agent, Bureaucrat, Drifter, Entertainer and Hunter; twice in the Noble career; and three times in the Diplomat career as well as at Rank 0 in that career.

Cepheus Engine

Skills are obtained in the Skills & Training tables unless otherwise noted. An '&' means in addition to this.

Home – skill may be gained from Homeworld

PE – skill may be gained from Primary Education

Rkn – skill gained by virtue of achieving rank *n*

MO – characteristic increase can be gained in Mustering-Out

Note that Weapon skills can be gained in Mustering Out by more than one receipt of Weapon but that has not been listed here.

+1 STR – Aero Defense, Barbarian, Belter, Colonist, Drifter, Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Physician, Pirate, Rogue, Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense, Technician

+1 DEX – Athlete, Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian, Belter, Bureaucrat, Colonist, Diplomat, Drifter, Entertainer, Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Noble, Physician, Pirate, Rogue, Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense, Technician

+1 END – Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian (& MO), Belter, Bureaucrat, Colonist, Diplomat, Drifter, Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Physician, Pirate, Rogue, Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense, Technician

+1 INT – Athlete (& MO), Agent (& MO), Barbarian (& MO), Belter (MO), Bureaucrat (& MO), Colonist (& MO), Diplomat, Drifter (MO), Entertainer, Hunter (& MO), Marine, Mercenary (& MO), Noble (& MO), Physician (& MO), Pirate (MO), Rogue



(MO), Scientist (& MO), Surf Defense (MO), Technician (& MO)

+1 EDU – Athlete, Aero Defense (MO), Agent, Bureaucrat (& MO), Diplomat (& MO), Entertainer (& MO), Marine (& MO), Maritime Def (MO), Merchant (MO), Navy (& MO), Noble (& MO), Physician (& MO), Scientist (& MO), Scout (& MO), Technician (& MO)

+1 SOC – Athlete, Aero Defense (MO), Agent (MO), Colonist (MO), Diplomat (MO), Entertainer (& MO), Marine (MO), Maritime Def (MO), Mercenary (MO), Navy (MO), Noble, Pirate (MO), Rogue (MO), Scientist (MO), Surf Defense (MO), Technician (MO)

Admin – PE, Athlete, Agent (& Rk4), Bureaucrat (x3 & Rk0), Colonist, Diplomat (& Rk3), Entertainer, Hunter, Noble, Physician, Scientist (x2), Technician (& Rk4)

Advocate – PE, Athlete, Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian, Belter, Bureaucrat (& Rk4), Colonist, Diplomat, Entertainer, Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Noble (& Rk4), Physician (& Rk4), Pirate, Rogue, Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense, Technician

Aircraft – Aero Defense (& Rk0)

Animals – Home: Agric/Garden/Poor, PE, Barbarian (x2), Colonist (x3), Hunter (x2), Noble, Scientist, Technician

Athletics – Athlete (x3 & Rk0), Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian, Bureaucrat, Colonist (x2), Diplomat, Entertainer, Hunter, Maritime Def, Noble, Surf Defense

Battle Dress – Marine, Mercenary, Surf Defense

Bribery – Agent, Agent, Bureaucrat, Diplomat (x2), Drifter (x2), Entertainer (x2), Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scientist

Broker – Home: Ind, Barbarian, Merchant, Rogue

Carousing – Home: Rich, PE, Athlete (x2),

Agent, Bureaucrat (x2), Colonist, Diplomat (x2), Diplomat, Entertainer (x4 & Rk0), Merchant, Noble (x3 & Rk0), Physician

Comms – PE, Aero Defense, Belter (x2), Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Pirate, Scout, Surf Defense

Computer – Home: High Tech, PE, Athlete (x3), Aero Defense, Agent (x2), Belter, Bureaucrat (x3), Diplomat (x2), Drifter, Entertainer (x2), Marine, Maritime Def, Navy, Noble (x2), Physician (x3), Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scientist (x2 & Rk3), Scout, Surf Defense, Technician, Technician (x2 & Rk0)

Demolitions – Belter, Marine, Maritime Def, Scout, Surf Defense

Electronics – PE, Aero Defense, Belter, Colonist, Drifter, Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Physician, Pirate, Rogue, Scientist, Scout, Technician (x2)

Engineering – PE, Belter, Colonist, Drifter, Mercenary, Merchant (x2), Navy (x2), Pirate, Scout, Technician

Gambling – Athlete (x2), Belter, Drifter (x2), Entertainer (x2), Mercenary (x2), Noble, Pirate, Rogue

Gravitics – Aero Defense, Marine, Mercenary, Navy, Pirate, Rogue, Technician

Gun Combat – Home: No/Low/Med Law, Aero Defense (x2), Agent, Barbarian (x2), Barbarian, Belter, Colonist (x2), Drifter, Hunter (x2), Marine (x2), Maritime Def (x2), Mercenary (x2 & Rk0), Merchant, Navy, Noble, Physician, Pirate, Rogue (& Rk2), Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense (x2 & Rk0), Technician

Gunnery – Aero Defense (x2), Belter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Pirate (& Rk0), Scout (x2), Surf Defense

Jack o'Trades – Aero Defense, Barbarian,



Colonist, Drifter, Maritime Def, Merchant, Navy, Physician, Pirate, Rogue, Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense, Technician

Leadership – Athlete, Aero Defense (& Rk3), Agent (x3), Barbarian, Bureaucrat (x2), Diplomat, Maritime Def (& Rk3), Navy, Noble, Physician, Surf Defense (& Rk3)

Liaison – Athlete, Agent, Bureaucrat, Colonist (& Rk3), Diplomat (x3 & Rk0), Drifter, Entertainer, Hunter, Noble (x2)

Life Sciences – PE

Linguistics – PE, Athlete, Agent, Barbarian, Bureaucrat, Colonist, Diplomat (x2), Entertainer, Hunter, Noble, Physician, Scientist, Scout, Technician (x2)

Mechanics – PE, Barbarian, Colonist, Drifter, Hunter, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Physician, Rogue, Surf Defense, Technician

Medicine – PE, Athlete, Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian, Belter, Bureaucrat, Colonist, Diplomat, Drifter, Entertainer, Hunter, Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant (x2), Navy, Noble, Physician (x4 & Rk0), Pirate, Rogue, Scientist (x2), Scout (x2), Surf Defense, Technician (x2)

Melee Combat – Home: High Law, Athlete, Aero Defense (x2), Agent, Barbarian (x2 & Rk0), Belter, Drifter (x3), Entertainer, Hunter, Marine (x3), Maritime Def (x2), Mercenary (x3), Merchant (x2), Navy (x3), Noble (x2), Pirate (x2), Rogue, Scout, Surf Defense (x3)

Navigation – Belter, Marine, Mercenary, Merchant (x2), Navy (x2), Pirate, Scientist, Scout (x2)

Perception – Bureaucrat

Physical Sciences – PE

Piloting – Aero Defense, Belter, Merchant (& Rk3), Navy, Pirate (& Rk2), Scout (& Rk0)

Prospecting – Belter (x2)

Recon – Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian (x2), Drifter (x2), Entertainer, Hunter (x2), Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scout, Surf Defense

Sciences – Athlete, Belter, Entertainer, Mercenary, Merchant, Noble, Physician (x3), Scientist (x3 & Rk0), Technician (x2)

Social Sciences – PE

Space Sciences – PE

Steward – Bureaucrat, Diplomat, Merchant (& Rk0)

Streetwise – Home: High Pop, Agent (& Rk0), Drifter (x2), Pirate, Rogue (& Rk0)

Survival – Home: Desert/Low Tech, Aero Defense, Agent, Barbarian, Colonist (& Rk0), Hunter (& Rk0), Marine, Maritime Def, Surf Defense

Tactics – Aero Defense, Barbarian (x2), Belter, Drifter, Hunter, Marine (& Rk3), Maritime Def, Mercenary (& Rk3), Merchant, Navy (& Rk3), Pirate, Rogue, Scout, Surf Defense

Vehicle – Athlete, Aero Defense, Agent, Belter, Bureaucrat (x2), Colonist (x2), Diplomat (x2), Drifter, Entertainer, Hunter (x2), Marine, Maritime Def, Mercenary, Merchant, Navy, Noble, Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scientist, Scout, Surf Defense (x2)

Watercraft – Home: Fluid/Water, Maritime Def (x2 & Rk0)

Zero-G – Home: Asteroid/Ice/Vacc, Athlete, Belter (x2 & Rk0), Marine (Rk0), Mercenary, Merchant, Navy (Rk0), Pirate

Explorers' Society – Athlete, Agent, Diplomat, Entertainer, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Noble, Physician, Scout

Cepheus Light

Skills are obtained in the Skills & Training tables unless otherwise noted. There is some inconsistency of Skill names e.g. Computer/Computers, Science/Sciences, Piloting/Pilot. The form given in the skill list has been used in each case even if that form never appears in the tables.

+1 STR – Army, Belter, Colonist, Marine,



Merchant, Navy, Pirate, Rogue, Scholar, Scout

+1 DEX – Agent, Army, Belter, Colonist, Elite, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Pirate, Rogue, Scholar, Scout

+1 END – Agent, Army, Colonist, Elite, Marine, Pirate, Scholar

+1 INT – Agent (& MO), Army (MO), Belter (MO), Colonist (& MO), Elite (MO), Marine, Navy, Pirate (MO x2), Rogue (& MO), Scholar (& MO), Scout (MO)

+1 EDU – Agent, Belter (MO), Elite (MO), Marine (& MO x2), Merchant (MO), Navy (& MO), Scholar (& MO)

+1 SOC – Agent (& MO), Army (MO), Colonist (MO), Elite (& MO), Marine (MO), Navy (Rk6 & MO), Pirate (MO), Rogue (MO), Scholar (MO), Scout

Admin – Agent (x2 & Rk4), Army, Belter (& Rk4), Colonist, Elite (x3 & Rk0), Marine, Merchant (x2), Navy, Pirate, Rogue, Scholar (x2 & Rk0), Scout

Aircraft – Colonist

Animals – Colonist (x2)

Athletics – Agent, Army, Belter, Colonist, Elite (x2), Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue, Scout

Carousing – Agent, Army, Belter, Colonist, Elite (x4), Marine, Merchant, Navy, Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scholar (x2)

Computer – Agent (x2), Army (x2), Belter (x2), Colonist, Elite (x2), Marine, Merchant, Navy, Pirate (x2), Rogue, Scholar (x2), Scout (x2)

Deception – Elite, Pirate, Rogue (x2)

Demolitions – Army, Belter, Marine

Driving – Agent, Army, Colonist,

Engineering – Belter (x2), Merchant (x2), Navy (x3), Pirate, Rogue, Scholar, Scout

Grav Vehicles – Army, Belter, Colonist, Elite, Marine, Scout

Gun Combat – Agent, Army (x2 & Rk0), Colonist, Marine (& Rk0), Merchant, Navy,

Pirate, Rogue (& Rk2), Scout

Gunnery – Army, Belter, Merchant, Navy, Pirate, Scout (x2)

Heavy Weapons – Marine

Investigation – Agent (x2 & Rk0), Pirate, Rogue, Scholar, Scout

Jack o'Trades – Army, Belter, Colonist, Elite, Merchant, Navy (x2), Pirate, Rogue, Scholar, Scout

Leadership – Agent (x3), Army (& Rk0), Colonist, Elite, Marine (& Rk1), Navy (& Rk1)

Liaison – Agent, Belter, Colonist (& Rk3), Elite (x3 & Rk3), Merchant (x2), Scholar (& Rk3)

Medicine – Agent, Army, Belter, Colonist, Elite, Marine, Merchant (x2), Navy, Pirate, Rogue, Scholar (x3), Scout

Melee Combat – Agent, Army (x3), Belter, Colonist, Elite, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Pirate (x2 & Rk0), Rogue, Scout

Piloting – Belter, Marine, Merchant (& Rk3), Navy, Pirate (& Rk2), Scholar, Scout (x2 & Rk0)

Recon – Agent, Army, Colonist, Marine, Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scout

Repair – Army, Belter (x3), Colonist, Marine, Merchant, Navy (x2), Pirate, Rogue (x2), Scholar, Scout

Science – Agent, Belter (x2), Colonist, Elite, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Pirate, Scholar (x3), Scout (x2 & Rk3)

Stealth – Agent, Pirate, Rogue, Scout

Steward – Merchant (& Rk0)

Streetwise – Agent, Merchant, Pirate, Rogue (& Rk0)

Survival – Army, Colonist (& Rk0), Marine, Rogue, Scholar

Tactics – Army, Marine (& Rk3), Merchant, Navy (& Rk3), Pirate, Rogue, Scout

Watercraft – Colonist

Zero-G – Belter (x2 & Rk0), Marine, Merchant, Navy (& Rk0), Pirate



Cepheus: Faster Than Light!

Skills are obtained in the Skills & Training tables unless otherwise noted. For inconsistent of Skill names e.g. Computer/Computers or Piloting/Pilot, the skill list version has been used.

+1 STR – Army, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue, Scout

+1 DEX – Army, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue, Scout

+1 END – Army, Marine

+1 INT – Army (MO), Marine, Navy, Rogue (& MO), Scout (MO)

+1 EDU – Marine (& MO x2), Merchant (MO), Navy (& MO), Scout

+1 SOC – Army (Rk6 & MO), Marine (MO), Navy (Rk6 & MO), Rogue (MO), Scout (MO)

Admin – Army, Marine, Merchant (x2), Navy, Rogue, Scout

Aircraft – Army

Animals – Scout

Athletics – Army, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue, Scout

Carousing – Army, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue (x2)

Computer – Army (x2), Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue, Scout (x2)

Deception – Rogue (x2)

Demolitions – Army, Marine

Driving – Army

Engineering – Merchant (x2), Navy (x3), Rogue, Scout

Grav Vehicle – Marine

Gun Combat – Army (x2 & Rk0), Marine (& Rk0), Merchant, Navy, Rogue (& Rk2), Scout

Gunnery – Army, Marine, Merchant, Navy, Scout

Heavy Weapons – Marine

Investigation – Rogue, Scout

Jack o'Trades – Army, Merchant, Navy (x2), Rogue, Scout (x2)

Leadership – Army (& Rk0), Marine (& Rk1), Navy (& Rk1)

Liaison – Merchant (x2)

Medicine – Army, Marine, Merchant (x2), Navy, Rogue, Scout

Melee Combat – Army (x2), Marine, Merchant, Navy, Rogue, Scout

Piloting – Marine, Merchant (& Rk3), Navy, Scout (x2 & Rk0))

Recon – Army, Marine, Rogue (x2), Scout

Repair – Army, Marine, Merchant, Navy (x2), Rogue (x2), Scout

Science – Marine, Merchant, Navy, Scout (x2 & Rk3)

Stealth – Rogue, Scout

Steward – Merchant (& Rk0)

Streetwise – Merchant, Rogue (& Rk0)

Survival – Army, Marine, Rogue

Tactics – Army, Marine (& Rk3), Merchant, Navy (& Rk3), Rogue, Scout

Watercraft – Army

Zero-G – Marine, Merchant, Navy (& Rk0)

Cepheus Quantum

Skills are automatic for a career but at different levels, noted in each entry.

Combat – 2 Army, Marine; 1 Agent, Navy; 0 Belter, Merchant, Noble, Rogue, Scholar, Scout

Knowledge – 3 Scholar; 1 Noble, Scout

Physical – 2 Rogue; 1 Army, Marine, Scout; 0 Agent, Belter, Merchant, Navy, Noble, Scholar

Social – 3 Noble; 2 Agent, Merchant, Rogue

Space – 2 Belter, Merchant, Navy, Scout; 1 Marine

Technical – 2 Belter; 1 Agent, Army, Navy, Scholar



1980s British Infantry Section for Zozer Games Modern War

By Ewan Spence

While Zozer Games Modern War is designed for the period 1989 to 2019 it can be easily adapted to earlier periods. In this series I intend to give the squad details and equipment lists for various NATO and Warsaw Pact countries for the early 1980s and the first one I intend to do is the British Light Infantry section.

The section is divided into two distinct groups, the rifle group led by a corporal

and the gun group led by a lance corporal. Three of these sections along with platoon HQ comprise the standard platoon

This section would reinforce the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) or Norway in the event of a Warsaw Pact invasion. It could however also be encountered in the Falkland Islands, Hong Kong or Cyprus.

Section Role	Rank	Role Weaponry	Role
Rifle Group			
Section Commander	Corporal	L1A1 SLR	Squad Leader
MAW No1	Private	L14A1 MAW and L2A3 SMG	Anti Tank Specialist
MAW No2	Private	L1A1 SLR	Rifleman *
Riflemen	Private	L1A1 SLR	Rifleman
Riflemen	Private	L1A1 SLR	Rifleman
Gun Group			
Section 2IC	Lance Corporal	L1A1 SLR	Assistant Squad Leader
GPMG No1	Private	L7A2 GPMG	Gunner
GPMG No2	Private	L1A1 SLR	Assistant Gunner **

* should have at least Level-0 in Heavy Weapons

** should have at least Level-0 in Machinegun

The section has no organic transport however it can be deployed by a Puma helicopter if required.



L1A1 SLR (7.62 NATO)

Dmg	Range Band	Base Range	Auto	UR	Length (cm)	Req Str	Wgt (kg)	Mag Wgt	Rds
3D6+3	Long	130	2	8+	105	8	4.3	0.8	20

This is British version of the FN FAL however unlike the FN FAL which is capable of automatic fire the L1A1 is only capable of single shots.

L2A3 Sterling SMG (9mm)

Dmg	Range Band	Base Range	Auto	UR	Length (cm)	Req Str	Wgt (kg)	Mag Wgt	Rds
2D6	Medium	50	4	6+	69/48	2/3/4	2.7	0.7	34

The Sterling was the replacement for the WW2 Sten and was in service with British military forces for over forty years. Over 400,000 have been made and it's seen service round the world with a number of nations.

L7A2 GPMG (7.62 NATO)

Dmg	Range Band	Base Range	Auto	UR	Length (cm)	Req Str	Wgt (kg)	Mag Wgt	Rds
3D6+3	Long	200	4	7+	125	7/8/9	10	3.0	100

The license built version of the FN MAG has been in British service since the late 1950s.

L14A1 MAW Carl Gustav

Wgt (kg)	Round Weight (kg)	Time	Max Range	Launch	Dmg	Homing	Reuse?
14.2	3.0	2	500	Shoulder	8D6AP2	Unguided	Yes

While primarily an anti tank weapon it was used rather successfully during the 1982 Falklands War by Royal Marines to damage the Argentinian corvette ARA Guerrico.





Abhainn Class Free Trader

Ship design & description by Michael Johnson
Deck plans and art by Ian Stead

The two hundred tonne Abhainn class free trader is a tried and tested design commonly found plying trade between settled systems throughout colonised space. Designed with a streamlined hull to allow safe and economical movement to and from a planetary surface, the Free trader has crystaliron hull armour and can mount two turrets. Normally if purchased new there will only be one double turret fitted to one of the ship's two hard points, generally a beam laser and a sandcaster. Space for any ammunition and fire control for the unfitted turret is included in the design.

There is enough fuel tankage for the free trader to make a single one parsec jump and provide for an operational duration of two weeks. Fuel scoops and on-board fuel processors are included, allowing for quick

refueling of empty tanks to full tanks of refined fuel should the need arise, though most free trader captains simply prefer to buy refined fuel in each system they stop to trade in. The free trader operates with six crew when operating at full complement, can carry eight passengers in middle class comfort and provide for eight low berths for those passengers who are cash poor, less fussy or disinterested in the time spent between each stop. Both crew and passenger staterooms are designed for double occupancy. Cargo capacity for the free trader is a respectable eighty tonnes.

Purchase price for a new Abhainn class free trader is 52.5MCr. A typical standard mortgage for the free trader is 0.22MCr/month for 40 years (480 months).

Specifications

Tonnage	200 tonnes standard.
Configuration	Streamlined (Hull 4, Structure 4)
Armour	Crystaliron factor 4
Dimensions	37.5m Long, 23.25m Wide (max), 7.5m High
Crew	6 (4x double occupancy staterooms).
Passengers	8 (4x double occupancy staterooms) middle class, 8x low berths.
Internal Components	Galleys, Recreation Space, Medical Bay (one bed) and Ship's Locker
Jump	1
Thrust	2G
Powerplant	2





Engineering	One Halburton Type F2 fusion powerplant, powering 2x Marshall Class MG2 gravitic maneuvre drives and one Bell-Faulling J12-1 Jump drive.
Gravitics	Corfeld CF-IC2C Inertial Compensators and 1G internal gravity.
Electronics	Computer model 2bis (rating 10+5 Jump), Basic Civilian Sensors (DM-2), Standard bridge.
Software	Library, Maneuvre, Jump Control/1, Fire control/1
Range	One parsec jump and two weeks operation, 25 tonnes fuel capacity, fuel scoops and one fuel processor (20 tonnes per day).
Armament	Hardpoint 1- Double Turret (Beam Laser and Sandcaster) Hardpoint 2 – Empty (with Fire control) 1 tonne magazine per turret.
Cargo	80 tonnes
Ship's Vehicles	Air/Raft

Deck Plans

Internally, the free trader has two compartmented decks, to ensure full security and to allow for damage control if the ship's hull is compromised.

Deck A

Has the ship's bridge at the bow with access to the ship's computer, critical systems and a small office. The office is generally used by the captain for administrative work, including cargo-handling tasks when the ship is unloading or taking on cargo. Crew staterooms, galley and crew common room are amidships with middle class passenger staterooms, passenger galley and common room further aft.

The free trader's small medical bay and the low berth compartment can be found aft on the starboard side opposite turret one magazine.

Each crew stateroom contains a double bunk, fresher ensuite, a desk with a workstation and a secured locker. There are extra storage compartments under the

lower bunk and along the wall. Normally the Captain and the First Officer will have a single stateroom each whilst the remainder of the crew share a stateroom.

All four middle passage passenger staterooms are rated double occupancy and contain a double bunk, fresher ensuite, a desk with a limited access workstation and a secured locker. There are extra storage compartments for luggage and personal belongings under the lower bunk and along the wall.

Deck B

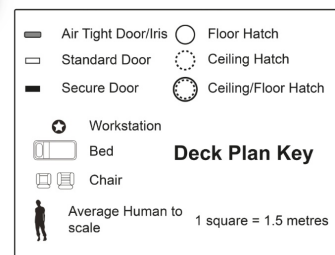
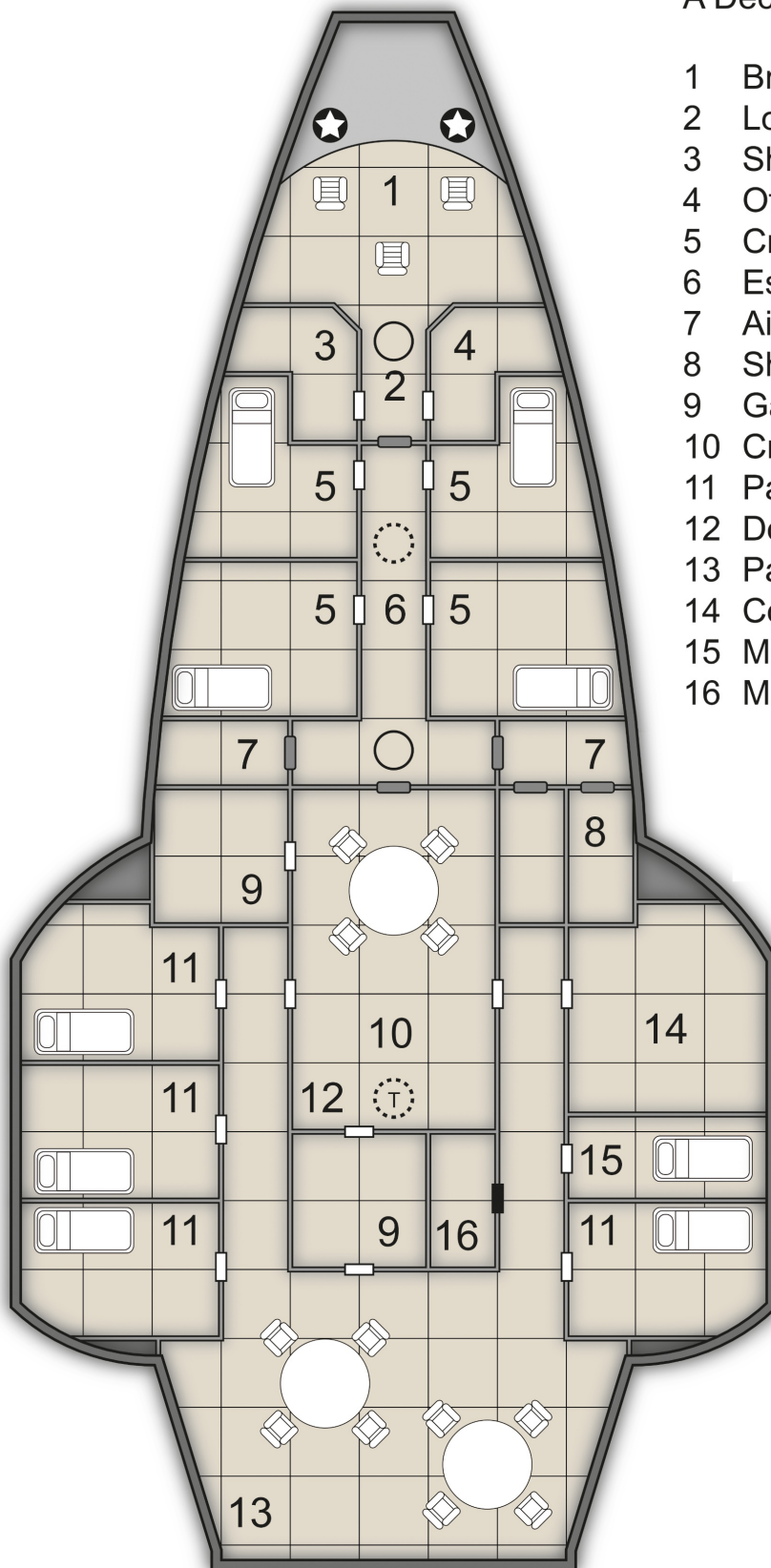
This deck contains the port and starboard cargo holds, forward fuel tanks and the drive room aft. All deck compartments are accessed via a central corridor running fore and aft, terminating at the ship's air/raft garage which opens to the stern of the ship.

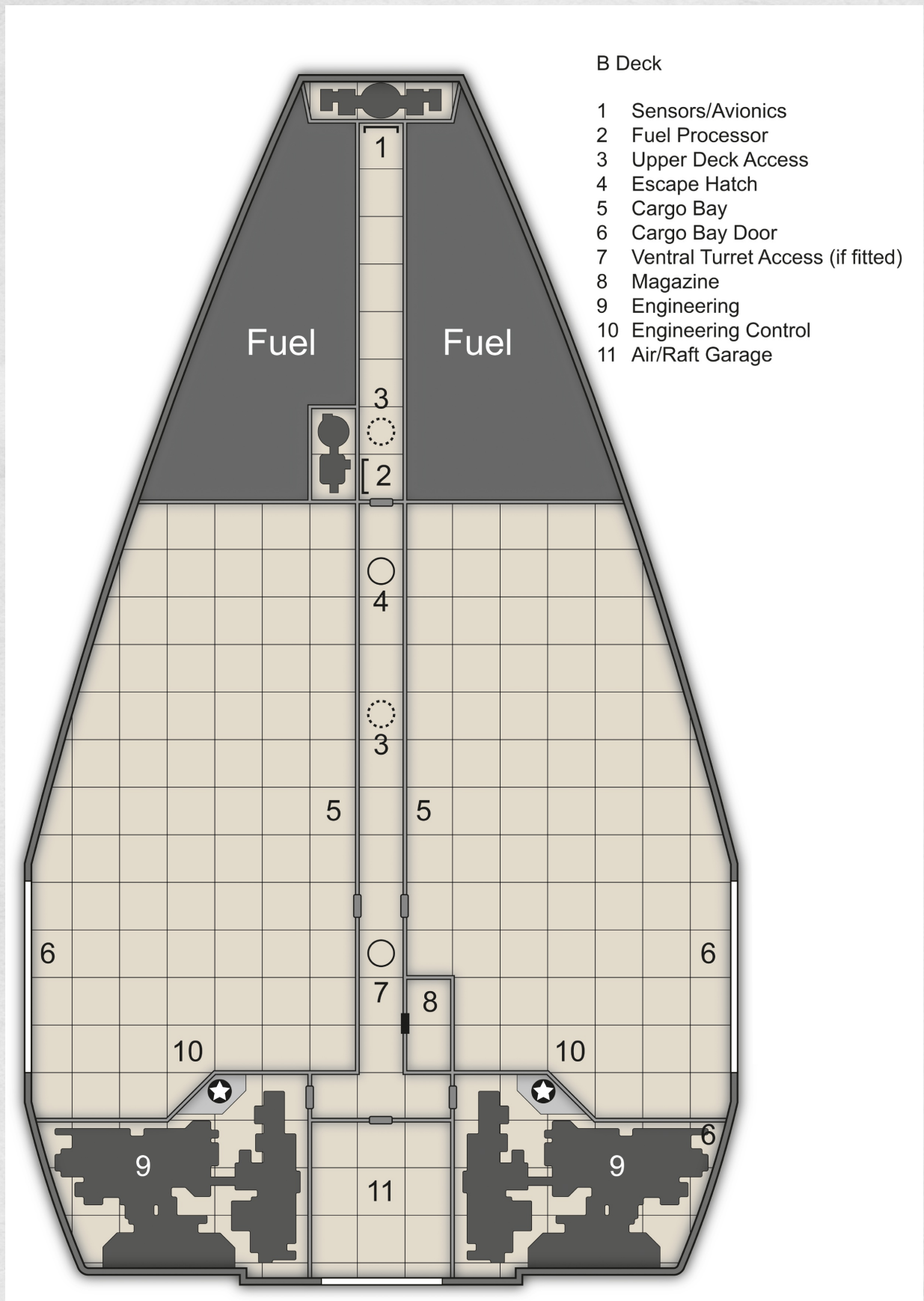
Both port and starboard cargo holds can be accessed via large cargo hatches. These are large enough so to provide easy access to the holds whilst loading and unloading cargo.



A Deck

- 1 Bridge
- 2 Lower Deck Access
- 3 Ship's Computer
- 4 Office/Ship's Systems
- 5 Crew Stateroom
- 6 Escape Hatch
- 7 Air Lock
- 8 Ship's Locker
- 9 Galley
- 10 Crew Common Room
- 11 Passenger Stateroom
- 12 Dorsal Turret Access
- 13 Passenger Common Room
- 14 Cold Berths
- 15 Med Bay
- 16 Magazine







Helzr's Recovery/Salvage and Repossession Services

An Adventure in Making Money from Junk – Part 1
By Graham Bayley

Introduction

The following is for new players with new characters

Fed up with the drudgery and boredom of your Home world, you sought employment at the local Star port. This quickly gave rise to an opportunity to work up in the High Port, and the promise of a chance to travel to the stars. After a couple of months though you start to think that at this is a promise that will never be fulfilled.

Now, after a year of backbreaking, soul destroying work, and having been moved from one High Port to another, often at short notice, and with increasing deductions to your already low salary, you and a group of friends have decided to try and create your own luck by signing on as a contract crew for a starship. Hauling ore in a beat-up ship has to be better than this, doesn't it?

The following is for Players with existing characters

It's been a good while since your last contract and your finances have been slowly depleted.



The following is for All Players

This is how you all end up sitting in the lounge of a cheap hotel on the main world's high port, a 'B' class star port. Glancing around the lounge you see plenty of spacers like you. Some are grouped together and could be crews. Some are sitting alone, with all the 'hallmarks' of contractors or mercenaries.

An Opportunity?

When your comm sounds an alert you hear message tones from around the room. Everyone's attention is suddenly focussed on their comm devices. Checking yours you see that it's a message from one of the crew agencies you have registered with. Someone requires a ship's crew, with the message showing a press for more details icon. Pressing the icon brings up the following ad:





Helzr's Recovery/Salvage and Repossession Services: Crew required to recover and return a vessel.

Trip duration: 11-12 weeks

Contract Reward: KCr10 for 'incidental expenses' plus standard Salvage of 1% of ships value -10% commission, for the safe delivery of the vessel to Realgar High port".

Interested crews are to report, in person, to the offices of Helzr's Recovery/Salvage and Repossession Services.

There is a flurry of activity as the lounge empties.

Research

If the Players want to do some research into the company, they can find the following information:

- Helzr's was formed at the end of The Third Frontier War (979-986) to salvage hulks and derelicts
- Helzr's well known for employing veterans of The Fifth Frontier War and their relatives
 - They pay a good rate
 - They reward hard work
 - They are known to help crews go freelance, often with cheap loans to get them started.
- There are rumours that Helzr is very old.

The Offices

The offices of Helzr's Recovery/Salvage and Repossession Services are easily found in the commercial district of Realgar High port. The offices occupy 5 floors of one of the older, but far more impressive constructs.

The Reception Area

The Offices Reception Area consists of a large open area with comfortable seating for about 30 people, some of which is occupied by waiting crews, some of whom are wearing ships uniforms and coveralls, and a large reception desk. Some of those waiting you recognise from the hotel lobby.

The Reception Desk

Standing behind the Reception Desk are two Caniforms. The largest one has light brown fur and a black stripe running down his back, including his tail, while the slightly smaller one has distinctive Fox Red fur. Both are dressed in pale grey business suits with prominent name badges. When approached they will politely request the spacer's names, but not their ship.

The larger of the two is called 'Geoff Black Tail' according to his name badge, whilst the smaller one's badge has the name 'Jeff Fox' on it. The crew are shown to previously concealed double doors, with Geoff Black Tail leading and Jeff Fox following the group.

Observant players will notice that there is a rise in the level of conversation in the lobby and they receive sidelong glances from some of the other crews, whilst others stand up and leave.

The doors are opened wide to reveal a 30m Long corridor. The corridor walls are lined with art from across the Empire and beyond. There are also display cabinets on both sides containing artefacts' and curiosities from a wide range of cultures. The corridor ends in an imposing set of doors about 2m wide each.





Geoff and Jeff walk slowly down the corridor, allowing the players plenty of time to examine the contents, and to ask any questions, which are answered knowledgeably in only slightly accented common.

GM's should feel free to just make things up that match their universe, with any hints or rumours you want to throw in.

Upon reaching the doors at the end Geoff Black Tail does not pause, but effortlessly pushes them wide to reveal a large room. He then steps aside to allow the players to enter.

Helzr's Office

The players are now confronted by a large room, dominated by a 3m long stone topped desk, inset with screens. In front of the desk are enough chairs for the players to have one each. At each end of the room is a stairway leading up to a mezzanine. If the players look up they will see more display cabinets and numerous bookshelves filled with what look like real books.

Behind the desk is a comfortable office type chair, covered with exotic leather. To one side of the chair stands a smartly dressed, olive skinned, woman in her mid-30s. She indicates to the players to sit on the chairs in front of the desk. As they sit down she will introduce herself.

" I'm Kara Tlasche, Helzr's Personal Assistant. Please hand all your weapons, communicators and any other recording or broadcasting devices over to one of the Jeff's".

Kara indicates the two Caniforms behind them with a nod of her head and it's apparent from her tone that this is an instruction and not a request. The two aliens move to stand in front of the players, ready to collect any weapons and devices from them. Kara continues,

"Your property will be returned to you at the end of our meeting."

If any of the players refuse they will be treated to a low, menacing, growl from Jeff Fox. If they continue to refuse then they will be subjected to a full war bark from Geoff Black tail, at which point they will fall unconscious for 1D minutes. [Psionic attack]. When they wake their weapons and requested devices will be gone, to be replaced by a humdinger of a headache.

As each player rouses Kara will offer them a tumbler containing a pale blue liquid, saying " drink this, it will help with the headache." The players will suspect that they have been subject to a Psionic attack, and a powerful one at that. As Caniforms have no known psionic talent, it must have come from the Kara. Any player who refuses and is knocked out will be subject to a DM-2 to all actions for the remainder of the encounter.

Any player glancing around the room will notice on the wall behind the chair seven holographic images showing the same human male with a number of dignitaries (empire leaders, kings or whatever regents are in your universe), spanning over 300 hundred years unto the present day.





Helzr's Arrival

Kara will turn slightly to her right, saying, *"Helzr, these are the crew interested in the latest contract."*

At the top of the right-hand staircase stands a human male, looking to be aged about 50, dressed casually but smartly. He descends the steps and sits in the chair behind the desk, which Kara turns and holds for him. With a softly spoken "Thank you Kara" he turns and faces the players, fixing them with his steel-grey eyes. Astute players will notice that he bears a striking resemblance to the man in the holographs, but that would make him over 300 years old.

He asks some or all of the following questions, the softness gone from his voice. If nobody answers promptly, he repeats the questions more sternly.

Which of you is the captain of this crew? And who are your pilots, your engineers and your navigators? Do you have a medic? What about a Gunner? Or, two?

Helzr ends with *"You are honest and Enthusiastic...."* He pauses and looks at Kara *"if not a little under skilled, but that can be addressed with some training. So, would you like to become a Salvage crew...?"*

After the players answer he continues *"I can offer you paid work, at a good rate and, should you become injured, I will ensure that you are treated properly. All I ask in return is that you do your best, work hard and, most importantly, you are honest. As you are a little under skilled, to say the least, go with Kara and she will oversee your training. In future, she will be*

your point of contact. I am often away on business and such things and she deals with all my affairs during my absences."

Training

The players now have 8 weeks of free Intensive Training available (Refer to your game rules for training). All training will be closely supervised by Kara and she will ask the players if they have any further questions before proceeding to training. If the players ask for any advice she will tell them the following.

"If you are going to recover or repossess a vessel you are likely to need a couple of pilots, two Astrogators, two engineers and possibly some firepower, or at least crew trained in these disciplines. You need to be able to get your own ship back, as well as the repossessed or recovered one. Successful crews are the ones who can multi-task and are always watching each other's backs. So, use this time wisely."

Upon completion, if the players have attained suitable skills, they will be offered Contract One.

Contract One: One of Our Scout Ships Is Missing

Background - players Information:

A request has been received from the local scout service to recover a general-purpose scout ship named *The Far Reach* that is stuck on a nearby world and return it to Helzr's yard for collection by its new crew at a later date. The ship has suffered a major problem with its electronics systems and needs a crew to deliver some replacement parts. They will also need to download a replacement operating





system into the ship's computers to ensure that any corruption caused by the failure does not endanger the vessel. Once the ship's systems are up and running, it must be brought back to the high port where a proper systems overhaul can be made. There may be unexpected complications of course, so ideally the crew sent to pick up the ship will be multiskilled and flexible enough to deal with whatever crops up.

The scout service will provide appropriate documentation to allow the players to pick it up and bring it home. The scout service will also provide all necessary spares and software along with override codes that will allow the players to delete the ship's operating system and install the new one. The old system may be badly corrupted, and in any case, it is still keyed to the old crew. Operating the ship with that system still in place would be hazardous if it were possible at all. The new system is temporary, for obvious security reasons.

The scout service also believes that the ship and crew had been engaged to perform a planetary survey. It is not known if this has been completed. If this is the case, they would like the survey performed to avoid tarnishing the service's reputation.

The Contract Objectives are as follows:

1. Locate the Scout Ship.
2. Carry out any repairs and upgrades.
3. Complete the survey of that world.
4. Return the scout ship to Helzr's yard.

The payout for the job, should the players accept it and complete all four objectives, is 367KCr minus Helzr's commission of 10%. Kara explains the contract objectives and that transport to the world *The Far Reach* is on will be aboard the *Sindal Queen*, a Jump 2 capable trading starship that is a part of Helzr's local fleet. The *Sindal Queen* will be arriving in two days' time and will depart, after a short lay-over to load cargo, a day after that. Kara advises the players to settle their affairs in port and to purchase any personal equipment.

The Trip

The *Sindal Queen* is crewed by the Caniforms who are fiercely loyal to Helzr and have served him for 20 years or so. They are currently running small secure cargoes around local systems but can drop the players off at their target world. They will be able to wait in orbit for one day, to allow the players to disembark with their equipment and supplies.

The target planet was virtually annihilated in the civil war that brought the world empire crashing down. Today, the planet is a wilderness, home to only a few hundred settlers, mostly trappers, prospectors, and hunters.

It is immediately apparent that the crew of the *Sindal Queen* work as a team, as everyone can step in and do someone else's job. Every crew member can fulfil two or even three roles. It is not unusual to find a gunner in the pilot's seat, or the navigator checking something behind an engineering panel. During each jump the





crew prepare the cargo for offload at the jump destination world.

Before exiting jump the ship is a hive of activity, sensors are brought online, drives warmed up, turrets manned, all unnecessary hatches closed and locked. The crew get into their acceleration couches and passengers are confined to their state rooms. During the trip into orbit the crew are fully closed up in their combat positions and the ship and crew are at a state of heightened readiness as this is when a ship is most likely to get attacked by Pirates, etc.

Once in orbit the crew await the arrival of the shuttle, or whatever is going to receive the cargo. When this arrives, and docks, the crew deliver the cargo, whilst maintaining a heavy guard on the airlock. At one stop, only an air raft appears, and the crew deliver the cargo by Vacc suit and a tether.

Arrival at the Destination World

After an uneventful trip, the *Sindal Queen* arrives in low Orbit around the world. From orbit it is apparent that the planet's ecosphere has either recovered or avoided the worst of the devastation of the local conflicts. It appears quite verdant, with large lakes, water courses' savannah and mountain ranges; both polar ice caps have also survived.

The players are told to don their Vacc suits ready for transfer to the surface. A very basic 10-ton Utility Shuttle floats outside the cargo bay, into which the players and their luggage are loaded by the two gunners.

As the players step off the loading ramp and into the void, they hear over the ships comms channel "mind the gap" and only what can be described as a canine giggle.

Planet Fall

As the Shuttle touches down on a landing pad adjacent to the Terminal building an official looking gentleman in clean and pressed coveralls, and a peaked cap, walks briskly but smartly out to the players shuttle. He introduces himself as Mr Dovran, the Duty Customs and Immigration Officer for local Down port. This is confirmed by the badge neatly pinned to his chest. He requests the Travellers identities, the purpose of their visit, where they will be staying, how long they will be staying, and if they have anything they need to declare? While tapping away on his computer pad. What is immediately obvious is that The Far Reach is not on one of the landing pads.

Referee Note: If asked about the The Far Reach he suggests they speak to the Office of Interplanetary Traffic in the Port Authority office which maintains records of passing ships. These are freely available to anyone who wants to look, but the Port Authority has a policy of not placing such data on the general datanet.

The Down port is only big enough to be a village on most worlds. Beyond the Terminal building can be seen a couple of buildings bearing the names of well-known hotel chains, the sort the players have stayed at. One is a decent enough mid-priced Hotel, the other a more





modest hostel offering barracks-like accommodation and basic meals at a very cheap price. In addition, there are a couple of restaurants and a handful of shops selling local and off world goods.

The shuttle crew finish off-loading the players equipment and then head off back to Orbit to the *Sindal Queen*.

The Search

The players will probably want to find out what has happened to 'their' ship.

Asking In Town: Pretty much anyone in town will suggest asking at the Port Authority office, which maintains records of passing ships. After asking in town at the Hostel or Hotel the players will hear one or more of the following rumours:

1. The crew were real jerks, loud-mouthed and offensive. They apparently did not like anything about this world. They were displeased by the food and the beds in the hotel, hated the décor, and made a mess everywhere they went. Simple concepts like putting trash in a bin eluded these people, who seemed to think that they were better than everyone else put together and set about putting everyone they met in his place whatever they perceived that to be.

2. A couple of weeks later the crew turned up at the star port in an air/raft and hung around making a nuisance of themselves until a ship bound for a world three parsecs away came through.

3. They boarded the far trader *Maverick*

Spacer, according to records.

4. Apparently, the crew of *The Far Reach* took passage aboard a vessel for world A via World B.

5. Their subsequent destination is unknown.

6. They took their air/raft with them but left behind a few thoroughly trashed hotel rooms.

Nobody was sorry to see them go. In short, the ship seems to have gone somewhere on the local world and met with difficulties. The crew seem to have dumped it and left the planet, though it is possible that they went in search of some critical spares they needed. What seems apparent is that the world government chartered *The Far Reach* to do whatever she was doing when the final systems failure occurred. Her location, or at least her destination, is almost certainly known to the Office of Geophysical Science in the Department of Planetary Affairs. Although the planet has a perfectly good communications net, the government will not release information unless the players go to the Office in person and meet with a government official.

Thus, it is necessary to go to the office (which is next to the port and thus within five minutes' walk from any point in town) and look at the records in person. There is no fee for this. Going through the front door the players are confronted by a counter with a console on it, and standing behind the counter is Mr Dovran, now dressed in casual office wear.





On the front of the counter is a sign saying, 'Office of Interplanetary Traffic Enquiries desk, please wait to be served'. If they approach the desk the players will notice that Mr Dovran's badge now says, 'Chief Enquiry Officer, Office of Interplanetary Traffic'.

After a couple of seconds pause, he will look up from his console and ask, 'How can I be of assistance?' If asked about *The Far Reach* he will tap furiously on his console and eventually he will give the players the information in Port Authority rumour No 3 below. He will also inform them that The Department of Planetary Affairs is located on the second floor of the adjacent building, but The Office of Geophysical Science is closed until tomorrow morning.

Checking the Port Authority office: After checking the Port Authority office the players may be able to ascertain some or all of the following information:

1. *The Far Reach* came through the port a couple of times in the past year. The last time was about 3-4 months ago.

2. The scout was in a fairly dilapidated condition when it came through but seemed flyable enough. In any case it came and went a couple of times over the months running up to its final visit. On that occasion *The Far Reach* spent a couple of days in port here before moving on.

3. *The Far Reach's* destination is recorded as 'In-System' but there are no details other than a note that the ship was on charter to the Office of Geophysical

Science in the Department of Planetary Affairs, which is now closed.

4. After checking the Office of Geophysical Science in the Department of Planetary Affairs, the position given by Mrs Dovran, places *The Far Reach* next to a large Lake on the far side of the planet, in the foothills of a significant mountain range.

Office of Geophysical Science in the Department of Planetary Affairs: On entering the Office of Geophysical Science, the players will be greeted by a lady, with the name badge 'Mrs Dovran Chief Surveyor, Office of Geophysical Science.' Mrs Dovran is very chatty and excited about the opportunity to get the survey completed. She will happily provide the players with all the details they need to start searching for *The Far Reach*. She also mentions that there is still 2KCr available in her budget, for off world Services, which she will pay the players if they agree to complete the survey.

She will tell the players the origin of the last Data burst sent by *The Far Reach*, thereby giving them its last known location. The position given by Mrs Dovran, places *The Far Reach* next to a large Lake on the far side of the planet, in the foothills of a significant mountain range. All they need now is some transport.

Referee Note: This can be made as hard or as easy as the Referee wants. Mrs Dovran could have an 'official' vehicle she could be willing to 'loan' the Players. Travelling on foot should be heavily discouraged.





There's the ship

As the players crest the final ridge, and over the lip of the depression, they get their first sight of *The Far Reach*. They will see that the depression is roughly 600 to 800 metres wide and has soil of a rather thin sort, covered in scrubby grass and in places a forest of waist-high bushes. The lake lies more or less at the centre of the depression and is about 500 metres in diameter, being roughly circular.

There is an island about 100 metres in diameter in the centre of the lake, with vegetation of the same sort as around the lake. *The Far Reach* is resting on its belly at the water's edge, its landing gear having sunk into the soft ground. The players can see that *The Far Reach's* hatches are all closed but just about everything inside it has been dumped outside in a huge mess made worse by some kind of animal raking through it looking for food.

It would appear (correctly) that the crew attempted a repair, then stripped everything of value that they could carry from the ship, dumped the rest, and took off in the ship's small grav vehicle. Among the wreckage is a forlorn metal food bowl licked clean long ago. The name Kimbley has been hand-stamped into the metal of the bowl. Someone once cared for the poor starving beast now haunting the island, but not enough to take it with them when they left. Among the stuff that has been turfed out of *The Far Reach* are ration packets, all of which have been ripped open and the contents (plus a fair amount of the packaging) devoured. Most of the rest of the stuff has been destroyed by

animals.

Getting In

Gaining entry to *The Far Reach* is not very difficult. Its reactor is powered down and the batteries are all but drained but there is sufficient power left to accept an entry code for the airlocks, although the doors will have to be manually opened. Inside, the ship is a terrible mess. The crew never took proper care of the ship when it was their home, and in the process of leaving they were not gentle. Virtually every access panel is open, the covers are off everything that has a cover and there are components strewn all over the deck. Putting it all back together will be a big job. Fortunately, some of the components can be bypassed or replaced with the gear the players brought with them. The resulting lash-up will not be pretty or safe for people walking past but it should suffice to get the ship to a dockyard where a proper repair and inspection can be conducted.

Repairs - Where are all the bits?

A number of quite important components such as air filters are missing and must be located – the crew dismantled everything they might be able to take with them, selected the most portable and valuable, and left the rest scattered throughout the ship and on the ground outside. Locating and replacing important parts will take 2 man-days to complete. Cleaning up properly will take even longer than that.

The first stage will be fixing up the power, life support and flight systems and running





some simulations with the ship's software. This is a job that really should not be rushed; a problem with the ship's control electronics at the wrong time would be disastrous.

Repairing *The Far Reach* is a relatively straightforward task for players who have the right equipment, i.e. the spares they have been given. The repair mostly takes the form of removing a large number of demountable circuit blocks and either bypassing or replacing them depending on how essential they are. The portable download/diagnostic unit can then ascertain whether a given system is useable or needs further work. There are several tasks which need to be undertaken before *The Far Reach* is fit to fly:

Flight controls and navigational systems - bridge takes 1D+2 man-hours

General shipboard electronics (dispersed throughout the ship) takes 1D+2 man-hours

Referee Note: The general electronics systems dispersed throughout the vessel deal with things like life support, recycling and lighting, but there is also a fair amount of filth and mess that must be cleared out before the ship is really fit to live in.

Power systems electronics (engineering) takes 1D+2 man-hours

Drive systems electronics (engineering) takes 1D+2 man-hours

Referee Note: Whilst checking the Drives, the players will discover that ship has jump 4 Drives fitted. Most of the work can be

done by an unskilled person who has been shown how as it simply requires identifying a circuit block by its code number and a simple remove-and-replace procedure. However, the referee should ask for an Electronics check at the end of each job. The players should not be told the difficulty level, creating a degree of uncertainty about whether the job has been done properly. In fact, between the diagnostic unit and a suitably skilled person offering guidance to those doing the actual work, there is no real chance of a disaster.

Computer takes 1D+2 man-hours

In addition, the ship's computers need to be accessed and purged, and then the temporary control software uploaded.

Referee Note: This can be accomplished by anyone with the Electronics or computer skill, and again a check should be made. In the event of a really terrible check, the players may want to redo the task, which takes another check. However, provided due care was taken there will be no serious problems with the ship's systems when the time comes to fire them up. Nothing ever works properly first time however; it is all but inevitable that some sort of problem will appear and have to be fixed.

Testing

Referee Note: If the players are a prudent crew, they will undertake a series of ground tests and a low altitude shakedown flight before blasting off into the unknown.





At last *The Far Reach* is ready for a test flight. The players may be suspicious that the ship's systems are not in perfect working order. This is a reasonable conclusion as no-one ever gets a complete overhaul of this kind right first time, especially 'in the field'.

Referee Note: The players should use the training-mode simulators on the ship's controls to make a dry run before take-off and run low then full-power tests on the ground. A sensible approach of this sort will take a few hours but will iron out the worst of the faults before take-off. However, a nervous crew may want to get off the mountain right away, in which case The Far Reach can be prepped for flight in a few minutes. However, it will function somewhat erratically. Un-calibrated controls, sudden faults in various electronic systems and the occasional burst of sparks from something will conspire to make the crew's task very difficult. If proper tests are not carried out before flight, DM-2 applies to all Pilot and Engineer checks until the crew can find a couple of hours to fix the worst of the faults. Once the faults are fixed, The Far Reach can be operated without penalty, though it does not quite 'fly right'. It is sometimes slow on the helm, sometimes erratic. Auto stabilisation is wayward at best, and power systems are not 100% reliable. All of this makes operating The Far Reach a nerve-wracking and tiring business.

Stuck in the Mud!

This is the final puzzle for the players. Their options are:



1. Dig the landing gear free. This will take D6+5 Man-days to complete.

2. Raise the landing gear and risk damaging it.

3. Lift off and risk damaging the gear.

Referee Note: Any damage to the landing gear can be repaired at any class A or B starport and will not impact the flight characteristics of the ship. If the players inspect the landing gear, they will find that there is only superficial damage which can be easily repaired. Cost will be 1000 Cr.

Completing the Survey - This is optional

Mapping the terrain will require a couple of overflights and a successful Electronics or sensors skill check.

Back to The Down Port

If *The Far Reach* returns to the Down Port and the survey has been completed, it will be greeted by an excited Mrs Dovran, who can hardly get her words out. Once she has finished thanking, and hugging, the players she will explain that all of the survey data has been received and currently being analysed. She will then lift her comm pad up and press a key with a flourish and a grin, saying "and that is your fee transferred".

Homeward Bound

With a Jump 4 capable ship the return journey is significantly faster and takes half the time to complete. The players may





want to consider completing the cleaning and tidying of the ship. If they do they will discover the following, hidden away in various nooks and crannies in the crew staterooms.

- Gauss Pistol, with 2 ammo clips
- Magrail Pistol no ammo clips
- Some alien Porn
- Some human Porn
- Tucked away in engineering is a box containing an Excavation Tool Set
- A Starship Engineer Tool Set

Back at Helzr's Homeworld

On approach to the world you are hailed by Traffic Control

"*The Far Reach...The Far Reach*, this is Traffic Control, please acknowledge, over."

If the players acknowledge:

"*The Far Reach...The Far Reach*, this is Traffic Control, please make your way to maintenance bay 3Kilo and prepare to dock, we have a maintenance cradle standing by. Over."

The Payout

As the craft enters the docking bay and lines up with the cradle, the unmistakable figure of Kara can be seen at one of the large bay viewing windows. As *The Far*

Reach is gently guided onto the cradle, and is connected to the High port's services, the crew shut down the drives and on-board power. The bay doors are closed, and the bay begins to pressurise, she can then be seen to leave the viewing area, and head for the main deck of the bay. Descending the boarding steps of *The Far Reach* the players are met by Kara.

She approaches the player that was nominated as the captain during the first meeting with Helzr and says "Helzr sends his congratulations to you and your crew, captain."

Referee Note: This grants the 'captain' player +1 to their Social Standing.

"He and the Scout Service are very pleased with your performance, and as such, not only have your contract fees been paid into your personal accounts, but also a bonus of 4kCr each, and don't forget the salvage fee. "Take some time off, and, when you're ready for some more work contact me. Of course, should the need arise, we will contact you".

/* End of Contract */

Referees Information

Feel free to change Caniforms to human if they don't fit your universe.

The ship is downed at a world up to 21 parsecs away, where the previous crew abandoned it. The ship was a detached duty Scout/Courier assigned to them and has apparently been mistreated. There





are penalties for abusing detached duty ships since they still belong to the scout service, so presumably the crew decided it was in their best interests to disappear. In any case the ship legally belongs to the scout service. The new system is temporary, and it will work for three months without an update and then ground the ship at the first planet fall after expiration, for obvious security reasons.

What Actually Happened to the Old Crew:

The crew of *The Far Reach* really were a bunch of obnoxious jerks, who managed to land themselves in jail on the world the ship was abandoned on. This is how the scout service eventually learned that their vessel was downed. The ship was on loan, and the scout service decided it would be more usefully assigned elsewhere. The crew

explained the ship had problems but failed to volunteer information about its whereabouts. The scout service genuinely believes the vessel is parked at the down port.

The former crew are out of the picture now and their loan of the vessel has been legally revoked since they have allowed it to fall into disrepair. However, they see it rather differently and may someday show up wanting 'their' ship back...

Skills Required: Pilot, Engineer, Astrogation

Useful: Survival, Recon

Outbound Travel Schedule - 21 parsecs, or 11 jumps in 11 weeks. It is up to the GM to fit this into their universe however they see fit.

Helzr ?????B-F

Species: Human Gender: Male Age: 300+ [appears 50]

Karatlasche 'Kara' ?????E-?

Species: Human Gender: Female Age: 35
TL12 cloth armour [+4], Always smartly dressed in human style clothes.

Geoff 'Black tail' ?????7-0

Species: Caniform Gender: Male Age: 50
Gun combat 3, Tactics 3, Concealed Gauss Pistol [40rnds], TL12 cloth armour [+4], 2xTranq Gas Grenade, 2xStun Grenade, Light brown fur with black stripe running down his back including his tail.

Jeff Fox' ?????7-0

Species: Caniform Gender: Male Age: 26
Gun combat 3, Tactics 2, Concealed Gauss Pistol [40rnds], TL12 cloth armour [+4], 2xTranq Gas Grenade, 2xStun Grenade, Fox red fur.



A Sword of Cepheus Character

By Robert Foran

Note: I roll two different colour dice for attributes, one represents the genetic component of a character's stats (the number in brackets) the other is the part developed during childhood and adolescence (this rule is taken from T5). When/if the character has children they will inherit the number in brackets from their parents (which parent they inherit from is determined randomly for each stat). Your offspring will then roll 1d6 and add the result to the base stat, inherited from their parents, to find their own stat.

Example: Harles (below) fathers a child with Gytha the tavern wench. Harles' STR is (5) 10, Gytha's STR is (4) 8. It's a girl and a random roll has determined that she inherits her STR from her mother which means she starts life with a 4+1d6 for STR. (EDU and SOC are not usually inherited, but one could argue that educated parents generally see to their children's education, and noble titles do pass down to the younger generations sometimes. Therefore I've included them in the inheritance rule I'm using).

Harles of Sheaford (ex-Soldier, Signifier)
Age: 22 years 50GP

Attr.	Gen.	Score	Bonus
STR	(5)	10	+1
DEX	(1)	3	-1
END	(3)	8	+0
INT	(5)	6	+0
EDU	(1)	2	-2
SOC	(5)	8	+0

Max Skill Levels: 8

Skills: Craft-1, Melee Combat-1, Recon-1, Leadership-1, Liaison-1, Tactics-1, Stealth-1, Watercraft-1, Archery-0, Artillery-0, Riding-0

Traits: Combat Readiness (DM +1 on Initiative)

Equipment: War Hound

Harles grew up in the riverside village of Sheaford. Sometimes a bit clumsy and never one for book learning, Harles was easily swayed by a visiting recruiter, with promises of adventure and loot, into enlisting in the Arodel Legion. After marching to nearby Arodel with a few other new recruits, Harles was somewhat disappointed to discover, that the Legion was little more than the Arodel Town Guard.

Arodel was engaged in an ongoing struggle with another town to the north, Bremoor. Bremoor styles itself The City of the Golden Dragon, and was intent on conquering the lands to the south, including Arodel, Sheaford and other villages. Arodel needed to expand the Legion into a proper army and therefore had despatched recruiters to all the local villages. Harles found himself being trained to fight in formation, with spear and shield, how to march and counter-march and construct fortifications, interspersed with patrols and guard duty.





After settling in to a rather monotonous routine, of guard duty, patrolling and training, his company was sent to hunt down some bandits along the north road. They were ambushed and the captain was killed. Without their leader the company panicked and tried to flee, Harles was actually the first to run, but in the confusion he ran the wrong way. He suddenly found himself amongst a group of the bandits, one of whom tried to run him through with a spear.

Harles reacted instinctively, tearing his helmet from his head and hurling it into the other's face before he could complete his thrust. Brandishing his would be killer's spear and screaming incoherently at the rest of the bandits, he both inspired the few fellow soldiers who'd fled with him and terrified the bandits. He and his companions threw themselves at the demoralised bandits, who surrendered, fled or were killed. It turned out that the bandits were actually Bremoorian raiders and the company spent the rest of that campaign season rooting out other such groups. Harles was promoted and given command of his little company of men, who treated him with respect and regarded him as a hero.

To this day he still secretly feels shame when anyone mentions The Battle of Helm Hill, as the company took to calling it.

Years later, Belmoor was finally forced to seek terms, with a treaty signed and peace restored, Harles was released from service. But during those years Harles had been promoted to Signifier, saved a little gold, and learned something of military

tactics and leadership. He had also met and fallen for a local tavern wench named Gytha.

Their first child, a girl whom they called Merey, was born five days after Harles was released from service.

With the war over, there's not much call for soldiering, some have left to find other wars, a few have returned to their old jobs, and some have turned to banditry and brigandage.

With a wife and child to support, Harles has been weighing up his options. No longer a soldier, not much of a farmer and loathe to resort to banditry, he has begun to consider joining or starting one of those adventuring companies. There are stories doing the rounds of the local taverns about the exploits of some of these bands of adventurers. Why, just the other day the brothers Wealde and Willion, men who had served under him in the Legion, regaled the patrons of Gytha's tavern with several outlandish tales regarding the exploits of one such company, called The Crimson Fellowship.

To prove their tales they eagerly showed off to those assembled some of the minor and almost completely healed wounds they had recieved while adventuring and of course the strange coins with which they were buying everyone drinks.

Harles resolved to have a quiet word with the brothers when they had sobered up a bit.....



What is Cepheus Störtebeker?

By P-O Bergstedt

Mercator is a fan made rule book for Traveller by Paul Elliot. The setting is about ships that are trading in the eastern Mediterranean in the first and second century. I always wanted to play that game. I planned for the setting to be transferred to the Baltic Sea. I considered using Vikings or the Hanseatic League. While researching the setting I came across Klaus Störtebeker, a pirate.

Störtebeker was the leader of the Victual Brothers, a group of privateers. They started out helping Sweden and attacking Denmark, but then became pirates. They were very successful and even conquered the island of Gotland and held it for a few years.



Not Störtebeker. Just an image that has been used to depict him.

When Cepheus Engine arrived and then the Sword of Cepheus, I decided to do this using the Cepheus Engine rules. The result is Cepheus Störtebeker. A game of Trading and Piracy in the Baltic and the North Sea. The game is set near the year 1400 AD.



In a typical game, the PCs will own a cog, and trade in the Baltic, while trying to avoid pirates and the Hansa. Maybe the PCs are pirates themselves. Maybe they even get to meet Störtebeker.

This is very similar to a game in space where the PCs own a small cargo ship. A lot of space adventures could probably be converted for this setting. It will be like a small ship universe, since there are no super huge cogs. The biggest war cogs are only a few times larger than a trader cog.

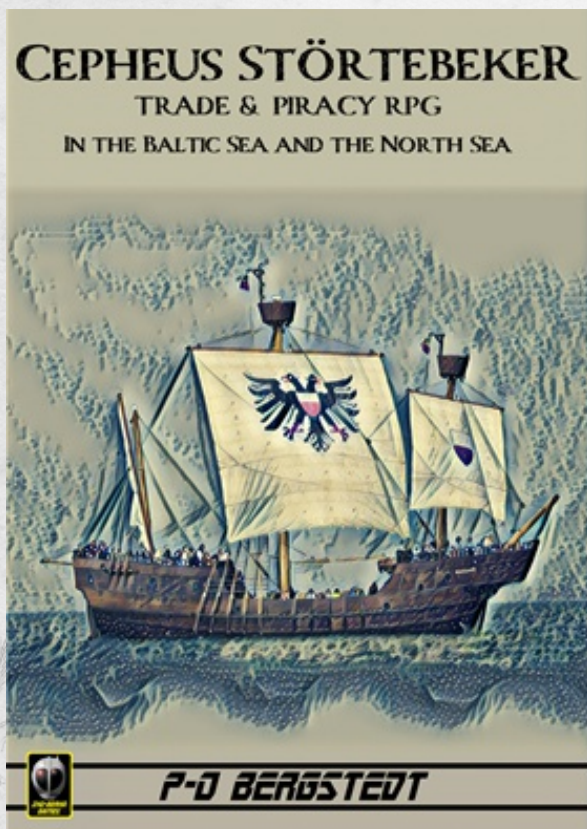
The base rules will be The Sword of Cepheus, and to that will be added special rules that are valid for the era. Rules for trade, sailing, sea encounters, and ship building will also be included.





Most fantasy elements from Sword of Cepheus will be removed.

There will be room and rules for alternative settings. Settings where there are monsters and fictional islands from Carta Marina.



I am happy that I decided to use Cepheus Engine for this project. There have been lots of interest in this. (Especially from Germany where Störtebeker is well known.) There is a Facebook group for those who want to know more, or even help.



Can I play Cepheus Störtebeker today?

Yes. Use The Sword of Cepheus and a map of the political situation in northern Europe around the year 1400. Some Cepheus Störtebeker rules will of course be missing, but it should be possible to run a game of trade and piracy on the Baltic Sea and North Sea.





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