Cepheus Journal

Issue #008

In this issue:

Space Force

The Space Patrol

Travelling Alone

And More...

Orbital 2100

Cepheus Martians

Cepheus Lethal Hits



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From The Editors

Welcome to this, the eighth issue of Cepheus Journal, the free PDF based fanzine dedicated to all things Cepheus Engine related. We, the editorial team, are humbled to see issue #007 has been downloaded almost 500 times, with issue #001 almost to 2000 downloads! We hope you will enjoy this issue just as much.

It is with much sadness we noted the passing of Ron Stepp, a prolific poster on many sci-fi related forums. Ron gifted us a selection of his artwork before he passed and some of it is on display in this issue as tribute to his ability. I watched Ron's art improve over time and it would have been amazing to see where he could have got to, if he'd been able to.

The big announcement in the recent month is Stellagama Publishing's release of Cepheus Deluxe. With this release I truly believe the Cepheus Engine has outgrown its roots and can stand proudly on its own. It missed this issue but look for a review of Cepheus Deluxe next issue. Do check out the What's New section in this issue for all the Cepheus Engine goodness released in the last couple months.

In our eighth issue we have more great articles, most focused on retro sci-fi. There is a couple articles from our editors, a Space Force article by Paul Drye outlining some Area 51 style adventure seeds and an article from P-O Bergstedt outlining how to build characters and adventures for a Space Patrol style game.

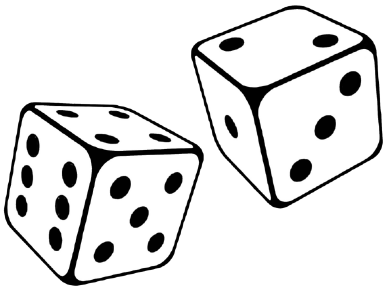
Steve Attwood of Alegis Downport's article on the Orbital 2100 setting explains how you can run games with the products available. We have Martians for the Cepheus Engine, detailed and ready for any retro game by Norton Glover. In Travelling Alone 2021 Brass Jester gives us an updated version of his solo playbook that originally appeared on the Freelance Traveller website. Want to know how lethal that sniper shot was? Then the lethal hits article by A R Kavil is a must read for you.

We have part 2 of Jo Jaquinta's The Raider Lament story, as well as his look at what a future galaxy might bring to gaming. Finally, I sat down and had a virtual chat with Independence Games John Watts, a great bloke with some great games.

We're aiming to keep Cepheus Journal coming out regularly but understand that you may feel like checking in between issue. To that end, CJ has a group on Facebook as well as FB alternative MeWe where you are all welcome to hang out.

Please enjoy issue five and keep those dice rolling!

Brett Kruger.



Cepheus Journal Editorial Team
Brett Kruger
Ian Stead
Michael James Cross
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Paul Drye





Space Force

By Paul Drye

The first incident took place on October 28, 1943. That evening the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard was visited by an alien presence—several balls of bright light which alternately hovered overhead and traversed the entire facility apparently examining it for purposes unknown. With the war on the reaction was aggressive and panicked, but the visitors seemed impervious to any fire. After twenty-five minutes they shot skywards and then disappeared, leaving an army of shaken naval personnel behind. In the aftermath it was discovered that one destroyer, the USS Eldridge, had vanished along with the lights. It has not been seen since.

The resulting investigation was intense but turned up nothing, not even a good explanation for what had happened let alone any perpetrators. Attention turned back to the immediate task of defeating the Axis and the event was—if not forgotten—at least hushed up and ignored.

Then it all came back on the twelve days from June 24 to July 6, 1947. A Washington state small-airplane pilot reported seeing several half-moon shaped craft flying at well over Mach 1 between Mount Rainier and Mount Baker in the Cascade Range. This sparked off a media frenzy, which made the events of July 6th impossible to clamp down on. A small town in New Mexico ominously close to the White Sands Missile Range was, for lack of a better word, assaulted in a mysterious and frightening way. At first the only sign was a phone call that was cut off in mid-word, but as investigators arrived on the scene to determine why no-one from Roswell had been seen or heard from in hours, they discovered a scene of devastation. Several houses were gone, replaced with perfectly round craters with glassy sides. Another was shattered, literally turned inside out. Most of the people were missing, but some remained in disturbing shape: stretched or distorted in impossible ways or fused to objects around them. Few survived and none were sane.

Even visiting the town was dangerous, as invisible anomalies in spacetime (so described by Albert Einstein after he was recruited to the case) would make anyone who walked into them vanish. Areas were infested with a cobweb-like substance dubbed "angel hair", which would be absorbed if it touched skin. There would be no apparent effect at first…then the victim would die suddenly and silently a few hours later. Autopsies showed no reason why. Even now, several years later, Roswell is a no-go zone, but the media got wind of it before it could be made secret. The subsequent public mood of shock and panic rivaled that of Pearl Harbor.

The Roswell investigation might have been as fruitless as the one into the Philadelphia Naval Yard Incident except for a serendipitous discovery. The Palomar Observatory had finally got off the ground with the end of the war and its astronomers were making their first observations using the newly completed 200-inch Hale Telescope—by far the largest in the world—to take test shots of the Moon. One photographic plate of the crater Clavius showed odd structures which, when examined under

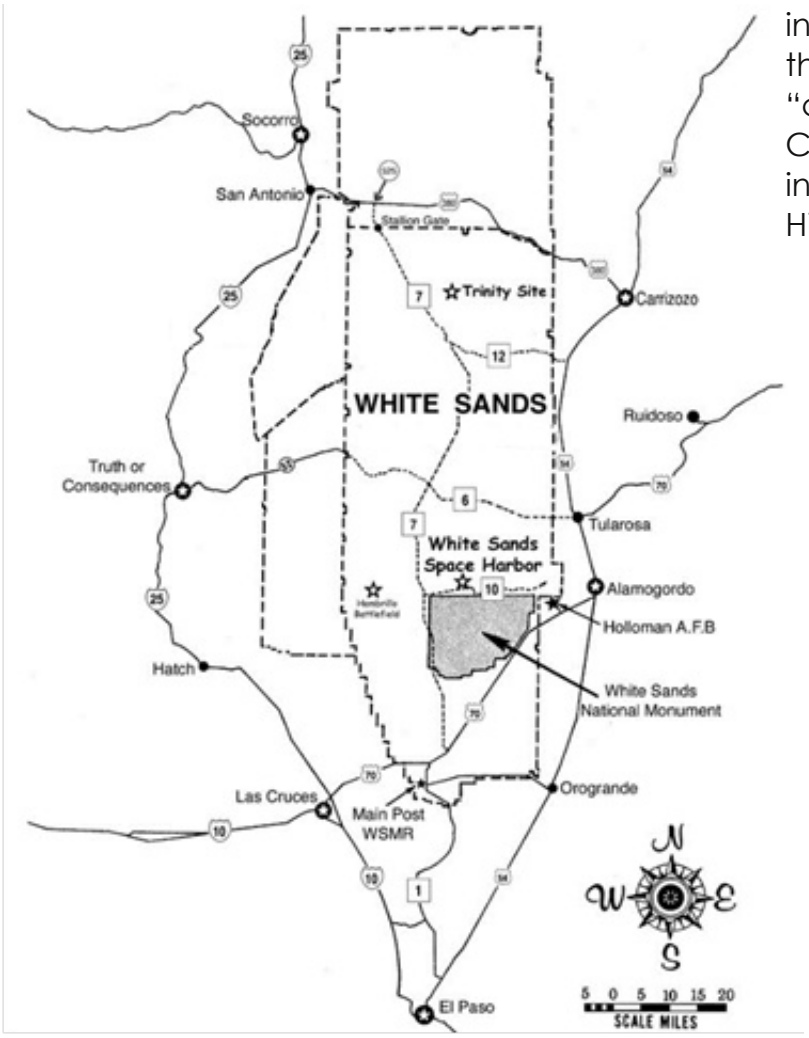




magnification, proved to be obviously artificial if enormous and enigmatic. The world thinks it has found its culprit.

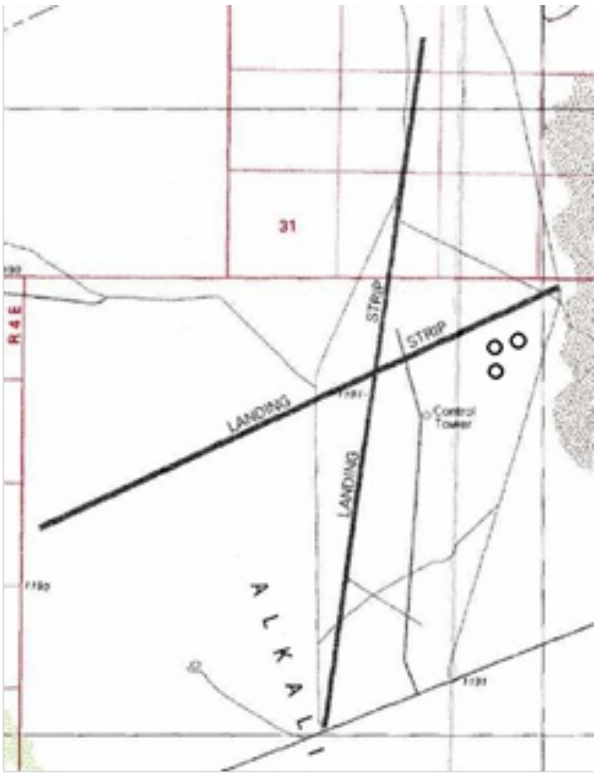
Within a month the nascent Hermes rocket program at, coincidentally, White Sands was revamped and given an enormous boost in funding. The United States had a new Space Force, and the slowly-becoming-moribund United Nations got a shot in the arm as the other world powers signed on to help. Now, ten years later, the world has a considerable presence in outer space and is on the verge of going to the Moon to find out what its visitors are up to.

White Sands and Las Cruces



Even before World War II was over, White Sands Proving Ground was being used to test missile technology, and Project Hermes was already testing confiscated V-2 rockets when the Space Force was established. Located in the southern reaches of New Mexico just north of El Paso, it and its closest town Las Cruces have become the hub of space activity on Earth, both research and practical aspects like launch pads and rocket testing. Only the still-experimental nuclear engines are located off-site, at the appropriately named jackass Flats in Nevada.

Launches from White Sands' three pads arc off to the southeast to take advantage of the Earth's rotation, which in practice means over West Texas and the San Antonio area before reaching the "clear zone" of the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Some accidents have landed in the (fortunately underpopulated) Texas Hill Country.



White Sands Space Harbor. Hermes Launchpads I-III to the NE of the Control Tower.

Las Cruces itself has more than quadrupled in population since 1948 and is home to 50,000 people now—almost all the newcomers, either personnel for White Sands and their families, or those catering to them. The local university, New Mexico College, has become a hub for rocket engineers and scientific research to rival MIT and Stanford on either coast. The city's major side business is tourism, as "Mom and Pop America and their 2.5 Children" come to watch rocket launches from outside the Range's perimeter.

Truax and von Braun

When the Space Force was being organized the logical choice for leader from the standpoint of rocketry and management experience was already attached to Project Hermes and based out of nearby Fort Bliss. Unfortunately, Werner von Braun was only a couple of years away from being an SS member associated with the slave labor camp at Mittelbau-Dora—as public as the Space Force was going to be, he was an unacceptable choice.

Instead, the powers-that-be turned to naval rocketeer Robert Truax. Though he had minimal experience with larger, jet-fuel-and-liquid-oxygen rockets he's been a success as the head of the White Sands group to the point that he's referred to in private as "Uncle Bob" for his populist style of leadership.



Robert Truax (878AA7), Age 41

Wernher von Braun (866BEA), Age 46



Von Braun and what he could hold on to of his Peenemunde group remained attached to Project Hermes, though, and represents something of a Fifth Column within the Space Force. He's constantly maneuvering to build his empire within it, angling to take over with his admittedly top-notch engineering and political skills. This infighting is one of White Sands' major stumbling blocks and Truax spends a considerable amount of time dealing with it.

Truax does his best to keep an even keel that befits his position as the top man not in Washington, DC, but is excitable and enthusiastic when confronted with new and interesting technology or technological challenges. Von Braun, by contrast, is urbane and slightly aristocratic with a confidence in social situations that is rarely matched.

Station and Ship

The Space Force's workhorse is the Hermes V, a third-generation derivative of the A4 (AKA the V-2). It consists of two conventional rocket stages burning gasoline and liquid oxygen and either a third, cylindrical stage carrying cargo or a newly introduced winged upper stage for crew that uses nitric acid and hydrazine for their ability to avoid evaporating in

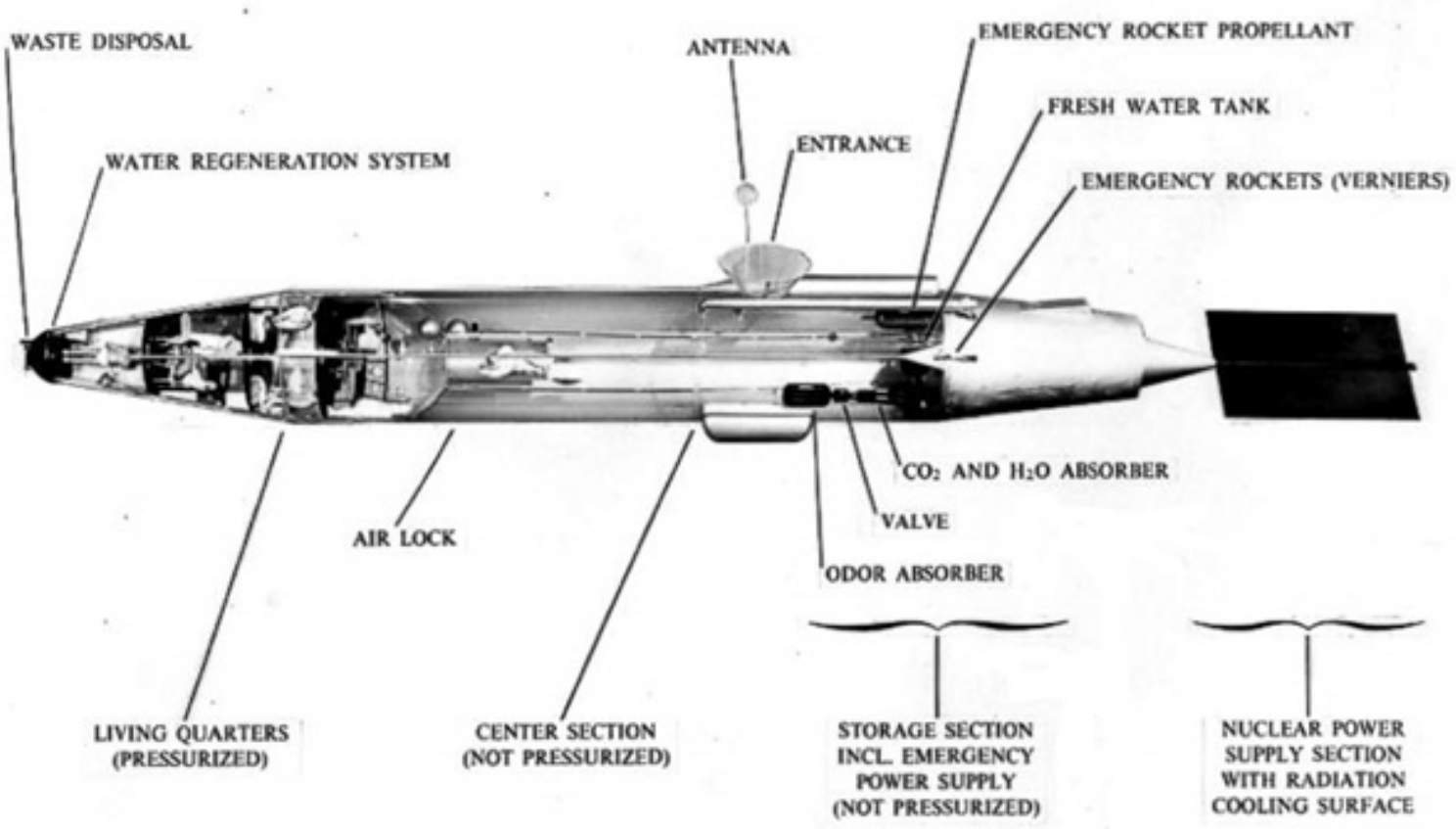


Station I above Earth. Stations II and II built to same plan. A re-entry vehicle (Hermes 3rd stage) is docked to the top front, while the round "cage" is for entry to the station after a short spacewalk.

space during long stays at a space station.

The stations themselves are three in number for now, simple cylinders with no artificial gravity, though work is underway on a fourth with a more sophisticated hexagonal, rotating pressure volume that will be Space Force's paramount base in orbit in a few more years. Inside there are three "levels" contained in what was once the nosecone of the rocket that launches the station into orbit. From nose downward they are a fresher unit (with the tip of the nose cone replaced with a lock that releases water and waste that cannot be reclaimed), a working/eating area that can support three crew, and a sleep area that can support another three, or two and a small rec area that can be stowed when not in use. Normally the stations house three people at a time but five is feasible with hot bunking over a short period of time. The main volume of the rocket, where the fuel for reaching orbit used to be, is largely empty though plans are being studied for how to reclaim and re-use it.

Station Plan



Haunts

Unknown to most people, there are more signs of alien incursion on Earth than the ruins of Roswell. A major clandestine activity for the Space Force on Earth is investigating these sites, which they formally call "Incursion Zones" but refer to among themselves as Haunts. Most are very remote from civilization, but a considerable part of the job is helping to obscure and discredit ones that are encountered by regular people before the Force can get at them.

Some of those already on file include:

A half-dozen crystalline spires growing fifty feet (16 meters) or more out of the southern end of Murtle Lake in British Columbia. It's been kept secret by a new national park surrounding it and the removal of old access trails, but it under intensive study by Force scientists.

La Rimande is an isolated village in the empty Massif Central region of south-central France which has apparently had a visitation. While no-one saw the incursion (no-one alive, anyway) the inhabitants were affected in an inexplicable way that suggests it. During the day the town appears abandoned, but as the sun sets faint, transparently glowing figures become visible. Apparently stationary they have been shown to be moving very slowly—all are facing away from the town center and have taken a few steps in the years since the villagers disappeared, with an estimated time dilation of 30 million to 1. It is unknown if they are truly the people in question or merely "echoes" of some

sort that resemble them. No way of returning them to normal has been found, at least.

The Atchafalaya is a large area of swamp and forest in southern Louisiana. Though barely inhabited, every now and then a group of two or three people drive out of it in a 1940s era black sedan car. The car has a license plate that matches no known registration and the people no history that can be found. They drive along isolated roads apparently seeking out isolated individuals at gas stations or country houses, and those who meet them always report negative feelings about the encounter ranging from unease to paralyzing fear. The travelers are "strange", asking absurd questions or just repeating back something that was said to them earlier in the conversation. If the authorities get wind of them and start to close in, they and their car simply disappear. Numerous efforts to comb the Atchafalaya and find their home base have found nothing.

Characters

Lt. (j.g.) Joseph "Joe" J. Watts

AAB997, Age 31

Athletics-2, Leadership-2, Natural Weapons (fists)-1, Piloting-3, Rotor Aircraft-2, Slug Pistol-1, Slug Rifle-1, Survival-2, Winged Aircraft-3, Zero G-2.

Watts is a naval aviator who transferred to Project Hermes in its early days and has trained as a test pilot and astronaut for the Space Force. He's highly competitive and any player character looking to be a pilot on an important or interesting mission will find that he is their main rival; he could also be encountered as part of another crew while the PCs are above the atmosphere.

Mallory Kocharski

587977, Age 26

Admin-3, Carousing-1, Liaison-2, Slug Pistol-1, Steward-1.

"Miss Kocharski" is Robert Truax's administrative assistant and all-around right hand, so if PCs are interacting with him, they're probably passing through her. She's even more popular than Uncle Bob is, at least partly because she's a pretty, eligible woman on a base overrun with military men and engineers. If this were actually a Fifties story she'd be the damsel in distress or admiring romantic conquest, but as it's the 21st century she can support a more active role. Her formal training may be secretarial and managerial, but she's smart and has more common sense that a lot of the steely-jawed types she works with. She keeps a small pistol in her purse and knows how to use it.

Clint Jarrett

667864, Age 28

Bribery-1, Carousing-2, Liaison-1, Recon-1.

Clint is a newspaper reporter for the Chicago Daily Times. He's in his late twenties and works with several older men who saw combat in WWII then won awards for their reporting in the years since—this has given him a carefully concealed inferiority complex that makes him incapable of letting go of a lead.

As far as Space Force goes, Clint's lead is unfortunately their more-secret activities with Haunts. He can't prove it yet, but once he has hard evidence that the Force is covering up incursions, he'll blow the top off the whole thing. He's not afraid to bend the rules to get there either.





Adventure Seeds

Fifth Column: The Russians in the Space Force are a political problem—welcome by policy from Washington and good spacemen but in practice not trusted as fully as they could be. Now word comes that the Kremlin has access to sensitive data that, well, they're entitled to have it, but the unofficial policy was to drag the Force's heels for as long as possible before handing it over. Space Force has a mole, and an official investigation is impossible because it would only prove to the Russians that they were being frozen out. While the official stance continues as if nothing untoward has happened, the PCs must work outside of regular channels to find out who is passing the info along.

The top suspects are the Russian personnel themselves, who could be breaking into file rooms while no-one is watching, or maybe Dr. von Braun is playing politics by buttering up one of the Force's many factions. Or it could be someone else entirely. "Uncle Bob" wants to know Who and wants to know Why as soon as possible, please.

Crisis on Station IV: One nasty surprise the nascent Force is only beginning to work around is the existence of Coronal Mass Ejections – the closest real-world equivalent to the "radiation storms" of science fiction. While kept away from lower Earth orbits by Earth's magnetosphere, when the sun blows off one of these vast geysers of charged particles the Van Allen Belts can become even more fiercely dangerous larger as the CME plays over them. After the return home of one very sick crew of astronauts, Stations I through III have had water-jacketed shelters set up in the stations' empty central area where crew can wait out any storms.

Station IV is a still-incomplete wheel station or, strictly speaking, a hexagon of the same cylindrical component used to build the Force's first three orbital outposts. Five are in place now with the sixth to come, but while the PCs are working on the final touches needed to get it in place a CME warning requires them to take to the shelters. And then, while in the shelters, a warning light comes on—one of the connections between two existing sections is coming apart and the station will disassemble through centrifugal force if that happens. It's up to the characters to save the day as quickly as possible before it does.

Lunar Circumnavigator: The Space Force intends to fly by the Moon first before putting its head in the lion's mouth and landing at Clavius Crater to explore the alien structures. To that end, Station III (pictured below) has been flown for the last year to check out all its systems and is now ready to be adapted to a lunar circumnavigation craft by removing its aft unpressurized section, the addition of a rocket engine, two propellant tanks for kerosene and oxygen, and various sensors so that the Force can get a good look without getting too close.

The momentous journey goes well enough on the way out, but as the crew approaches the Moon it becomes apparent that the aliens are not restricted by space and time—various eerie events on board suggest that they can reach out from the cold, dead surface and take their own look at the craft as it flies by. Is that what is actually happening, or is someone on Earth trying to sabotage the mission?



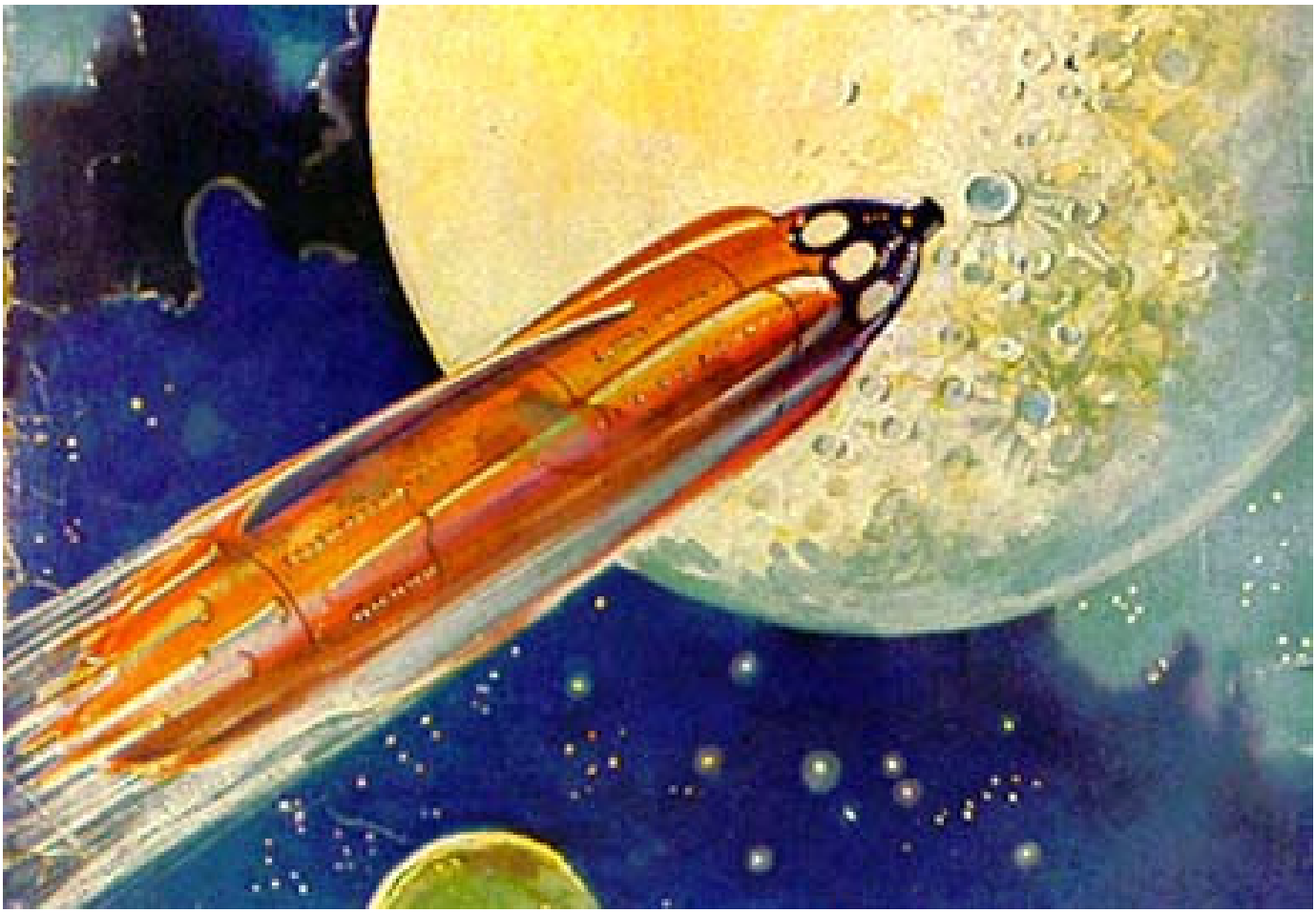


The Space Patrol

By P-O Bergstedt

The Space Patrol is an old trope in Science Fiction. The Space Patrol can be many things, an interstellar police force or an interstellar coast guard or the interstellar special forces. The closest thing in the CE rules are the Scouts. But the Scouts have many other duties that the Patrol doesn't usually do. But some jobs may be similar. The Patrol may also be doing jobs that an Agent (from the CE rules) would do.

The Patrol usually travels in small starships (that may be similar to the Courier from the CE rules) and have a small crew. The equipment the Patrol uses are often better than what their opponents usually have.



Missions:

There are several missions that the Patrol can perform. Patrolling Space is the most obvious. This could also include stopping pirates, smuggles, master criminals, hostile aliens, robot uprisings and other entities and events in space that threatens the status quo. The Patrol could also travel to different planets and solve conflicts (or other threats) with their superior equipment and skills that the locals cannot solve themselves. More uncommon are, but still possible for the Patrol are jobs that an Agent would perform, like espionage or sabotage and jobs that the Scouts would perform like exploration or courier services.



Adventures:

For the referee, it is not hard to run a Space Patrol adventure. The PCs should not have mustered out. They should still work for the Space Patrol. Then, no patron is needed. The PCs will have a ship and lots of cool gadgets available. The PCs will get an order (and are expected to follow that). There are lots of adventures ideas that can be borrowed from TV, movies, comics, and books. How the PCs then solve the problems presented is where the fun begins.

Examples:

- The Space Patrol appears in several of Heinlein's works.
- The Jedi Knights from Star Wars.
- The 1950s Space Patrol TV-series.
- The 1960s British Space Patrol Puppet Series.
- The 1960s German Raumpatrouille TV-Series.
- The French comic Valerian.

Tables for Character Generation

Career	**Space Patrol**
Qualifications	Int 7+
Survival	Edu 6+
Commission	Edu 8+
Advancement	Int 8+
Re-enlistment	5+

Material Benefits	
1	Low Passage
2	Mid Passage
3	Weapon
4	+1 Int
5	+1 Edu
6	Explorers' Society
7	+1 Soc

Personal Development	
1	+1 Str
2	+1 Dex
3	Jack o' Trades
4	+1 Int
5	Gun Combat
6	Gambling

Specialist	
1	Gunnery
2	Piloting
3	Zero-G
4	Computer
5	Electronics
6	Engineering

Ranks and Skills	
0	Recruit
1	Space Cadet [Zero-G]
2	Lieutenant
3	Captain [Piloting-1]
4	Major
5	Commissioner
6	Director

Cash Benefits	
1	1000
2	2000
3	5000
4	10000
5	20000
6	50000
7	100000

Service Skills	
1	Gun Combat
2	Piloting
3	Zero-G
4	Melee
5	Vehicle
6	Streetwise

Adv Education	
1	Electronics
2	Computer
3	Linguistics
4	Medicine
5	Sciences
6	Gravitics

Would you like to learn more?
If you want more than this short article, there is already a 93-page book (or pdf) from Stellagama Publishing called The Space Patrol.





Orbital 2100 Feature

By Steve Attwood / Alegis Downport

Since its release, the Cepheus Engine rule set has evolved into quite a number of settings beyond its original 2D6 SF-based mechanics. There are the fantasy worlds of the 'Sword of Cepheus' and 'Barbaric!', the Old West in 'Rider' and of course the plethora of SF settings such as the 'Clement / Earth Sector', 'These Stars Are Ours' and 'Hostile', to name but a few.

However though it has been available for some time, there is one setting which doesn't seem to receive the attention that it probably deserves - Orbital 2100 by Zozer Games. Originally released under the MG1e rules and game license, Orbital 2100 has since been updated to make it compatible with the Cepheus Engine. Therefore I want to address this by highlighting the Orbital 2100 product line and scenarios that are available. Hopefully, it will give referees and players another interesting and challenging setting to explore, that they may not necessarily be aware of.

The books and supplements are set at the end of the 21st / beginning of the 22nd century where the human race has established a number of outposts throughout most of the solar system. Countries and corporations vie for control of resources and exploration of the solar system is key to this control. Sound familiar? It will certainly will if you are a fan of 'The Expanse', though Orbital 2100 is set a few hundred years before series (the year 2520) and the technology is a lot less advanced. If you are looking for a tech level as a point of reference, the setting is the equivilent of TL9; there is no faster-than-light travel, getting around means using nuclear thermal rockets and gravity is created using spinning centrifuges. Spacecraft are a lot less sturdy and hence space is a "lot" more dangerous. Though there aren't any aliens, there are hints of evidence of aliens in the outer reaches of the solar system.

What Can You Do?

The players take the part of people performing real jobs (a similar approach to the 'Hostile' setting), where they may be spacers hauling cargo between systems, answering distress calls from asteroid miners in trouble, investigating mysterious objects found on distant moons, rescuing the crew of a research station which has suffered an outbreak for example. For a look and feel of Orbital, if you were to watch movies such as 'Outland', 'The Martian', 'Mission to Mars', 'Red Planet' or 'Total Recall' then you'll get a pretty good idea of what its like to explore the Orbital 2100 universe.

Published Orbital 2100 Products

Outpost Mars

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/295056/Outpost-Mars-for-Cepheus-Engine
$6.99 PDF
Originally reviewed:
https://alegisdownport.wordpress.com/2012/09/15/outpost-mars-review/

This was the original book which set up the 'Orbital' setting, released back in 2012. Set in 2040, the human race has established based on Mars and discovered evidence of previous alien habitation. The players take the part of scientists, explorers and engineers; the setting is aimed at the players having personal agendas allied to specific





organisations. These aims whilst working in the group, can come to the surface and create inter-personal conflicts. Survival on Mars is difficult and the book helps the referee to create these challenges for the players.

The book was updated in 2019 for the Cepheus Engine rule set which includes an increase in page count from 60 to 75.

Orbital 2100
https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/193706/Orbital-2100 $15.99 PDF
Originally reviewed *(MG1e version): https://alegisdownport.wordpress.com/2013/01/05/orbital-review/*

Originally released in 2012 as 'Orbital' and recently updated for the Cepheus Engine rule set as 'Orbital 2100', this is the core setting and rule book. The product is broken down into twelve sections, along with an appendix and index. The first three sections detail the background of the state of Earth, its planetary neighbours, organisations, events taking place from the 1960's to 2100, obviously with an altered timeline. The timeline to date doesn't change that much – only enough to change history so that we didn't stop going to the Moon after Apollo, humans went to Mars and started to explore the outer solar system. Beyond the present date, the writers develop an interesting background that sets up international rivalries and organisations (legal and illegal) that form the background for players to utilise in 2100AD.

The next section covers character creation and the differences with the original Cepheus Engine process, along with equivalent careers and skills that are available in 2100. Spacecraft design and types are handled in the following three sections; as there is no faster-than-light drive there are suitable modifications to the types of propulsion units, computers and accomodation available in 2100. Rockets are still the most efficient way to get into orbit, with DSV's (Deep Space Vessels) supplying the way to travel the solar system. If you want to get from A to B, you have to use some form of chemical or nuclear powered engine.

A number of standard spacecraft designs are provided; they have a 'practical' and 'realistic' feel and seen as reasonable developments of current technology, such as the Orion capsule and heavy-lift SLS rocket. Problems such as gravity, weightlessness, travel and fuel are all looked at in great detail, along with ways for players to make some money transporting passengers across the solar system and some encounter tables are included.

The hardware section concluded with some detailed work on space (Vacc) suits and rovers. Vacc suits are particularly important in Orbital, so this section expands on their configuration and customisation.

The final five sections are divided up among the following headings 'Orbital Society', 'Working in Space', 'Worlds', 'Running Orbital' and 'Resources'. The first looks at law enforcement and the problems of maintaining law with such great distances from regular help should there be… trouble! Habitats and outposts are covered – what it is like 'out there' and what are players likely to find after a long journey in space. The zero-g environment is looked at next, players should note that there are no grav-plates or anti-gravity; the only artificial gravity available is in the rotating sections of the larger types of spacecraft. The 'Worlds' section is extremely extensive, listing the





full UWP of all the major planets and moons in the solar system. Complementing this section is the graphic of each world, with its profile and history.

'Running Orbital' provides some scenario ideas and what can be achieved in a TL9 deep-space environment. There are some intriguing scenario suggestions and some great potential adventures. The final main section is an extensive list of resources including films, web links, books and PDFs available that can help inspire referees in creating their Orbital background.

A key feature of Orbital 2100 is that there is more detail involved in many of the operations that are just 'done' in other SF RPGs. For example, piloting a spacecraft, putting on a Vacc suit, fuel usage - space is difficult! The real risk in playing an Orbital 2100 game is that there is a lot more that can go wrong compared to actions that are considered normal in other far future SF RPGs. Spacecraft and the associated systems are a lot more fragile and hence there is more if a challenge on the players to solve these issues in order to stay alive. You get the sense in reading the background there is a 'frontier' feel to the occupied worlds of the solar system. This is on the edge exploration with what could be considered first generation vacc suits, spacecraft and habitats; if something goes wrong, rescue is very, very far away.

Far Horizon
https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/202309/Far-Horizon $7.99 PDF

This is a full-blown exploration scenario where the players are sent to investigate a wandering planet in the outer most reaches of the solar system. The players pilot a spacecraft called the Far Horizon, equipped with a variety of equipment and vehicles. The players make an important discovery but time is limited and if the players don't solve the problems presented, they will be left in a catastrophic situation.

Horizon Survey Craft
https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/109517/Horizon-Survey-Craft Free PDF
Originally reviewed:
https://alegisdownport.wordpress.com/2016/12/29/horizon-survey-craft-review/
Updated:
https://alegisdownport.wordpress.com/2018/08/09/horizon-survey-craft-update/

The Horizon DRV is a 100ton light research and reconnaissance spacecraft used for surveys and exploration. The book details the deck plans and a 5ton 'Spider' lander used for excursions and landings along with a tour of the ship. The Horizon DRV could be thought of as the equivilent of the original 100ton scout ship in the 'first' 2D6 game rules. Originally published back in 2016, Paul Elliott contacted me with a request to use the artwork that I was inspired to create of the ship, for an updated version of the book released in 2018.

Vacc Suit
https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/107458/Vacc-Suit?term=VACC+SUIT Free PDF

Published for the original version of Outpost Mars, much of the text in Vacc Suit was incorporated into the 'Spacesuits' section in the updated Orbital 2100 book. It details TL8 and TL9 spacesuits and the practicalities of working with the equipment in a zero-g environment.

Gift of the Makers (no longer available)
This was a scenario authored by Ben Lecrone and published by Zozer for the original Outpost Mars and Orbital release.





Set on Mars, it involves the players investigating mysterious structures in the inner solar system and links to alien artifacts.

Third-party Scenarios
Timothy Collinson has written some excellent scenarios for Orbital 2100 and are available for free on the Freelance Traveller website.

The Edge of Humanity
https://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/advents/edgeofhumanity.html

The first in a three-part series, this was originally written for the initial release of Orbital but can be easily adapted for the updated rules. The adventure involves the players, piloting the DCV Far Horizon to Nereid, one of Neptunes moons to deliver a couple of Marshals who are tasked with bringing some semblance of order to the colony, which has recently broken down. The players need a part for some broken equipment, so along with dropping some supplies off this should be a reasonably simple job. However, the crew also have their own agendas and the situation with law and order on the moon may not be as expected. If the players can't drop off the Marshals, this creates difficulties in getting home on the DCV which the players will have to resolve.

The Edge of Power
https://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/advents/edgeofpower.html

The second part of the series, this involves two rival groups from Earth and Luna vying to be the first to reach some anomalous hot spots found on another of Neptunes moons, Triton. The work involves drilling down to one of the hot spots and the tensions between the various protagonists and what they may find. Mining on Triton is about as far as humanity has reached so far and this is fraying the nerves of a number of key people operating on the base. Touchy personalities aren't the only hazards, breakdowns with equipment and ice geysers make for a challenging situation. What the players may find once they break through the tunnel may be significant and would be immensely prestigious not just for them, but for the faction they are allied with. The adventure will need some minor conversion work from the original Orbital statistics.

The Edge of Helium
https://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/advents/edgeofhelium.html

Published in the March/April 2021 edition of Freelance Traveller, this is compatible with Orbital 2100 / Cepheus Engine or the original Orbital rules. The players are tasked with recovering a very expensive Helium-3 mining drone that sits in the upper atmosphere of Saturn. A problem has occurred in that the drone doesn't seem to be extracting Helium any more and is using its fuel just to maintain its current position. However, on arrival the problem isn't necessarily something that the players may have expected and will need to use their ingenuity to recover the drone. Again, each of the player-characters has a personal agenda which may affect the outcome of the adventure.

Hopefully this feature will have given you an idea of what is available for Orbital 2100 and though the number of published scenarios is limited, there is a wealth of exploration to undertake and challenges to give players which will hopefully form a number of interesting adventures.





Cepheus Martians

Intellects Vast and Cool and Unsympathetic
- The War of the Worlds for Cepheus Engine
by Norton Glover

The War of the Worlds is H.G. Wells' 1897 classic tale of a Martian invasion of Earth. Here's how to use it as a setting for Cepheus Engine adventures.

The Invasion
In the 1890s, Mars is a dying planet, slowly growing colder and dryer. In desperation, the Martians decide to invade the Earth. They construct a gigantic artillery weapon to propel a series of manned cylinders across space to crash on Earth. Each cylinder creates a fiery crater.

The cylinders land everywhere on Earth. After a short time, the ends of the cylinders screw open and the Martians emerge. They immediately attack anyone nearby with their terrible heat-ray weapons.

In their pits, the Martians soon construct their tripod-like fighting machines, each equipped with a heat-ray. They use these to start moving out, destroying any military opposition or human infrastructure. They also use a chemical weapon called the Black Smoke to wipe out cities.

The militaries of the late 19th century are ill-equipped to deal with the Martian threat. Hand weapons are useless against the fighting-machines. Their cannons can damage a tripod, if they get a lucky shot, but are usually quickly destroyed by a heat-ray. Warships do a bit better (Martians have no ships), but still cannot stand against the heat-rays.

Humanity is gradually pushed back, as all human institutions start to fail. Most survivors are refugees from their homes. Governments are destroyed or in exile.

Unfortunately for the Martians, they were ignorant of the microbial life on Earth. Within a period of weeks, all the Martian invaders fell sick and quickly died.

Martian Goals
The Martians have two goals: First, to make Earth more habitable for Martian colonization. Second, to use the animals of Earth as a new food source. This includes humans.

Martian Technology

Cylinders
Large cylinders of an unknown substance, each 100m long, with a diameter of about 27m. They have no engines or method of locomotion. They are merely cargo containers, fired as projectiles. The cylinders are heavily armored to withstand the impact with the Earth. They have approximately 60 points of armor. Assume there are up to 6 Martians per cylinder.

The cylinder craters serve as bases and factories where the Martians begin their offensives from. The cylinders usually are equipped with a heat-ray which they use to attack anyone who approaches the cylinder or crater.





Martian Fighting-Machine

Skill: Drive (Walker)
Agility: +2
Speed: 100 kph top / 50 kph cruising
C&P: 2 Martians
Open/Closed: Closed
Armor: 20
Hull: 1
Structure: 1
Weapons: Heat Ray – 9D6, Black Smoke Cannon

TL 10 Martian-Fighting Machine
Using a closed 5-ton chassis (1 Hull, 1 Structure, Armor 20), the Martian Fighting Machine is the Martian invader's primary attack vehicle. It carries an Early Fusion power plant, Code L and a three-legged walker propulsion system, giving a top speed of 100 kph, a cruising speed of 50 kph and an Agility DM of +2. This vehicle is equipped for Off-Road Capability. 0.64 kiloliters of hydrogen support the power plant for 72 hours. This vehicle is equipped with Advanced controls, Class I communication (5 km), The vehicle has 2 weapon points. One is a fixed-mount Heat Ray, the second a fixed-mount Black Smoke Cannon (15 shells). Cargo capacity is 0.85 kiloliters. The chassis is additionally armored with Crystalliron (x5.) The vehicle requires a crew of two: one driver and one gunner. The vehicle costs KCr541.822 and takes 108 hours to build.

"How can I describe it? A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine trees, and smashing them aside in its career; a walking engine of glittering metal, striding now across the heather; articulated ropes of steel dangling from it, and the clattering tumult of its passage mingling with the riot of the thunder…Can you imagine a milking stool tilted and bowled violently along the ground?…But instead of a milking stool imagine it a great body of machinery on a tripod stand. " (Wells)

Heat Ray

RoF: 1/6
Range: ranged (v distant)
Damage: 9D6
Radius: 15m (10 sq)
Recoil: No
Intense heat ray will ignite anything it touches. Any ammunition in the affected area will immediately explode (assume the damage is doubled). The only known defense is for a target to completely submerge under deep water (at least 0.5m depth). Normally mounted on a Fighting-Machine or a Cylinder.

"Forthwith flashes of actual flame, a bright glare leaping from one to another, sprang from the scattered group of men. It was as if some invisible jet impinged upon them and flashed into white flame. It was as if each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire." (Wells)

Black Smoke Cannon

RoF: 1/2
Range: ranged (v distant)
Damage: Special
Radius: 15m (10 sq)
Recoil: Yes
Fires shells that emit a black, poisonous gas in a 15m radius.
Targets must make an Endurance roll at -6. Death if failed.
The cloud will dissipate after 1D x 3 rounds. If there is rain or heavy wind, halve the time.

The Martians

Martians appear as a large gray spherical body, approximately 1.2m in diameter, with a flat face directly in front. The face has two large dark eyes, no nose, and a small beak-like mouth. Around the mouth are sixteen whip-like tentacles that the





Martians use as both arms and legs. The tentacles were not designed for Earth's higher gravity, so Martians can only move 6m per round.
Martians have limited telepathic ability that they can use to communicate with each other. It is not known if they can communicate with humans.
The Martians do not eat food, they get nutrition by injecting the blood of other creatures directly into their bodies.
Martians are asexual, and reproduce by budding. Martians have no resistance to Earthly micro-organisms, and will die of various infections after a few weeks.

Generating Martian Characters

- At character generation, Martians roll 1D for STR and END, but 2D for DEX and 3D for INT.
- Martians do not need to acclimatize to low-gravity environments.

"They were, I now saw, the most unearthly creatures it is possible to conceive. They were huge round bodies—or, rather, heads—about four feet in diameter, each body having in front of it a face. This face had no nostrils—indeed, the Martians do not seem to have had any sense of smell, but it had a pair of very large dark-coloured eyes, and just beneath this a kind of fleshy beak. ...In a group round the mouth were sixteen slender, almost whiplike tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each.... Even as I saw these Martians for the first time they seemed to be endeavouring to raise themselves on these hands, but of course, with the increased weight of terrestrial conditions, this was impossible. There is reason to suppose that on Mars they may have progressed upon them with some facility. " (Wells)

Campaigns

There are three good options for a War of the Worlds campaign:

Survivors: The players are ordinary people caught up in the initial Martian invasion. The goal of the campaign is to escape the area where the Martians have landed, avoid Martians, fight their way through panicked mobs, criminals, and flaming cities, to try and reach a safer place. Most likely destination would be a coastal town where they can hopefully board an evacuation ship. Think of it as Twilight: 2000, but with heat-rays and Martians.

Fighters: What's left of Her Majesty's Government is based on the Shetland Islands, as yet untouched by Martian cylinders. Players are soldiers, scientists, or engineers that have been tasked to collect information on, and if possible, fight back against the Martians.

Martians: Running a game where the players are Martians can be a bit tricky. The players would be Martian soldiers who find themselves on weird alien planet, constantly fighting desperate battles against strange aliens. They've got the fighting-machines, but the humans are wily, and never stop attacking. Also, they're starting to feel a little sick. Think of it as playing Imperial storm troopers on Endor, where humans are the Ewoks.

Any War of the Worlds campaign will be of a limited duration. The Martians are going to die with in a few weeks of the initial landing. The original book was set in Britain, but as this is a global catastrophe, you could set it almost anywhere. Perhaps combine it with Rider to have Martians in the American West.





Note that if you're setting the game in the 1890s, the players will only have equipment with a tech level of 4 or less.

Adventure Seeds

- A fighting-machine has collapsed deep within enemy territory. You need to salvage what you can from it.
- You've been ordered to capture a living Martian.
- You have to escort a VIP (important scientist, high-ranking officer, the Queen) out of the flaming wreckage of London.
- A cylinder has landed nearby, you need to attack it before they can assemble their war-machines.
- The government has gotten some engineers to build prototype weapons to use against the Martians. You've been ordered to test them.

Recommended Reading

War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells: The essential source material. It still holds up as a story, and is available for free online.
War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches, edited by Kevin J. Anderson – a 1986 anthology of stories by various writers, portraying the invasion in various parts of the world. Several historical figures make appearances (Teddy Roosevelt, Jack London, Pablo Picasso).
Edison's Conquest of Mars, by Garrett P. Serviss: An 1898 unauthorized sequel to War of the Worlds in which Thomas Edison invents a variety of super weapons and spacecraft, and Earth takes the fight to Mars. It's not great, but has some interesting and gameable ideas. Also available for free online.



The Martian tripod illustration was painted by Henrique Alvim Corréa for the 1906 edition of the novel.

Travelling Alone 2021

By Brass Jester

Editor's note: This is a lightly revised (by the author) version of an article originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2004, and reprinted in this form in the June/July 2014 issue.

I started playing Traveller in 1978 with the original LBB set. Book 1 said Traveller could be played solo, but didn't say how. I followed the starting advice given in an early White Dwarf and rolled a few planets, crewed up a Free Trader and started to get the hang of the rules by travelling around and trading. It was out of this that the system developed, but it is still being refined and modified.

The system is designed for solo play, but can also be used by a referee in an episodic campaign, or to set up events etc. in advance.

The important thing to realize is that the system is not designed as a programmed paragraph adventure (although a later subsystem does use paragraphs.) It is designed to make you think, to create situations to spark your creativeness.

It is important to write things down as they occur; this is your personal history. It also provides continuity and it is scary sometimes how the game seems to take on a life of its own, with events 'just falling into place' (and past events providing justifications for present actions and incidents). In the example below, perhaps during the mini-scenario starting with the offer of an illegal cargo of drugs, Judson shoots and injures a police officer in getting away. Years later, that same police officer might turn up as a Chief Inspector when Judson is brought in on a minor charge. And he's got a long memory.

Have Fun!

Example

Let's take Judson Deathdancer, ex-Army, newly mustered out on Neu Regari. (Go to 1.)

At (1), having assembled all characters, go to (2).

At (2), Judson has to pay Upkeep equal to Cr10×soc2. Now throw 1D. A 6, so he goes now to (5) Healing.

At (5), he can heal if necessary, or pay for a prolonged stay in hospital, or buy medikits or drugs, etc. Judson wants some Slow Drug; depending on the law level of the world you may have to set up a mini-scenario using bribery, streetwise, etc. Perhaps the cops get involved? Do as much detail as you want and play it out. At the end, throw 1D. A 1, so now go to 7 (Event)

At 7, throw D66 on Event Table, throw is 66, (offered illegal cargo, drugs.) Aha! In his earlier dealings trying to by the Slow Drug, did Judson come to the attention of the local crime boss and chief pusher? Is he being offered a job as a courier, or being set up a a fall guy? Roll up some characters for who's involved and design a scenario, then play it out… (etc.)

(Incidentally, all of that was rolled as I typed it, so none of it was preplanned to 'make it fit.')





Note: Clarification of Areas 3 & 4: Buy/Sell one item or one group of related items. This is deliberate; you can only buy one 50m length of rope or 24 bullets (or whatever). It is designed to a) stop players saying "right, we'll buy everything we need plus replace everything we used" and b) abstracts the fact that the item may not be available, that the shop was closed, that you forgot to buy it; it was out of stock, there was only one available or you ran out of time…. The later Buy/Sell area (13) does not have so many restrictions.

The Tables

A. Off-Time Flowchart

1. **Start.** Assemble Characters. Once party is assembled, go to (2) Upkeep

2. **Upkeep.** Sell Cargo, pay Ship costs, pay Crew wages. All characters pay Cr10×Soc2 for upkeep, clothes, etc. After accounting is completed, roll 1D6:
   1-2 Go to (3) Buy Equipment
   3-4 Go to (4) Sell Equipment
   5-6 Go to (5) Healing

3. **Buy Equipment.** Each PC may buy one item or group of related items of equipment. After purchase, roll 1D6:
   1-2 Go to (4) Sell Equipment
   3-4 Go to (5) Healing
   5 Go to (7) Event
   6 Go to (3) Buy Equipment

4. **Sell Equipment.** PCs may sell any one item of surplus equipment and/or curios they have collected. Equipment may be sold at 33% of base cost; curios, etc., throw 9+ to find a buyer then negotiate. After sale is concluded, roll 1D6:
   1-3 Go to (3) Buy Equipment
   4 Go to (5) Healing
   5-6 Go to (6) Event

5. **Healing/Medical.** Recover Wounds or pay for Medical Aid. May also purchase medipacks, drugs, etc. Roll 1D6 when complete:
   1 Go to (7) Event
   2-3 Go to (10) Seek Patron
   4-6 Go to (8) Options

6. **Event.** Roll on Event Table. Events may affect the whole group, or just an individual. Some have long-reaching effects, see Event Table for details. After dealing with the Event, roll 1D6:
   1-3 Go to (8) Options
   4-6 Go to (9) Healing





7. **Event.** Roll on Event Table. Events may affect the whole group, or just an individual. Some have long-reaching effects, see Table for details. Deal with the event, then roll 1D6:
   1-2 Go to (8) Options
   3-4 Go to (10) Seek Patron
   5 Go to (12) Expenses
   6 Go to (3) Buy Equipment

8. **Options.** May take any Action, initiate new project, take a job etc. Afterward, roll 1D6:
   1-2 Go to (11) Hear Rumour
   3-4 Go to (13) Buy/Sell Equipment
   5 Go to (10) Seek Patron
   6 Go to (14) Encounter

9. **Healing/Medical.** Recover Wounds or pay for Medical Aid. May also purchase medipacks, drugs etc. Roll 1D6 when completed:
   1-3 Go to (13) Buy/Sell Equipment
   4-5 Go to (11) Hear Rumour
   6 Go to (8) Options

10. **Seek Patron?** Roll 1D (or choose using another method):
   1-4 Generate Patron as per Chart C
   5-6 No Patron

11. **Hear Rumour.** Roll on Rumour Table with appropriate mods. After generating Rumour, roll 1D6:
   1-3 +1 to next roll for cargo availability
   4-5 +1 to next roll for a Patron
   6 +1 to next roll for ship availability

   1-2 Go to (8) Options
   3 Go to (14) Encounter
   4-5 Go to (9) Healing
   6 Go to (13) Buy/Sell Equipment

12. **Misc. expenses**. An unforeseen expense that must be paid. Roll 1D:
   1-2 Cr100
   3-5 Cr1×soc2
   6 Cr5×soc2

   After payment, roll 1D6:
   1-3 Go to (14) Encounter
   4-6 Go to (16) End





13. **Buy/Sell Equipment.** Group may buy/sell as much equipment as is desired. Equipment may be sold at 33% of base cost; curios, etc., throw 9+ to find a buyer then negotiate.
    1 Go to (14) Encounter
    2-6 Go to (16) End

14. **Encounter.** Group may encounter NPC's, Law Enforcers or even creatures.
    1-2 No Encounter
    3 Law Enforcers. Throw 2D for Law Level+ to avoid.
    4-5 Roll on Encounter table and check reaction
    6 Animal. Roll on Animal Encounter table for area.

    After encounter, roll 1D6:
    1-4 Go to (15) Healing
    5-6 Go to (16) End.

15. **Healing/Medical.** Recover Wounds or pay for Medical Aid. May also purchase medipacks, drugs etc.
    Go to (16) End

16. **End.** Either repeat cycle if a further week on planet is necessary, else roll for Cargo availability, passengers etc. Check for passage off-world if you don't own your own ship.

B. Selling Cargo

Throw for availability of Broker; DMs Streetwise, Bribery, Admin.

Broker Skill	Available on 2D6 throw of
Broker-1	5+
Broker-2	7+
Broker-3	9+
Broker-4	11+

On an unmodified throw of 12 there is no broker available this week. PCs must cycle through Chart A and try again next week, or sell without a Broker.

C. Patron

Roll Patron

Generate Stats (if required), plus tags etc. See NPC creation.

Generate mission (or select one), decide if PCs will accept it (or roll 1D: 1-3 = Yes; 4-6 = No)

Return to Chart A (10)





D. Events

Throw D66 for the event:

11 Meet NPC
12 Meet new PC (a way to introduce new characters)
13 Legal encounter, throw Law Level+ to avoid
14 Gambling. Win Cr100×(2D + Gambling)
15 Misc. expenses. Pay Cr50×1D
16 Receive a message from….

21 Patron encounter
22 Random encounter
23 Hear Rumour
24 Get involved in a brawl (fight it out)
25 Shot at by accident (throw 10+ to be hit)
26 Meet NPC

31 Opportunity to buy exotic item
32 Close relative dies (who?)
33 Inherit Cr100×3D
34 Weapon rendered permanently useless (see notes)
35 Legal encounter, throw Law Level+ to avoid
36 Opportunity to buy property (may be worth rent etc.)

41 Hear some news about….
42 Opportunity to make TAS application (open entry)
43 Receive information about…
44 Meet NPC
45 Robbed/burgled. Lose 50% of possessions (see notes)
46 Mistaken identity (roll reaction)

51 Meet alien or group of aliens
52 Civil disorder on planet (why?)
53 Planetary event (see notes)
54 Hear Rumour
55 Patron encounter
56 Some equipment breaks down and needs to be fixed.

61 Papers/documents not in order. (see notes)
62 Complication with cargo (see below)
63 Special charter (transport to…, act as bodyguard to…, etc.)
64 Asked to carry message
65 Gain Contact or Favor owed by NPC (who, why, what)
66 Offered Illegal weapon/Black market goods/drugs etc.





Event Notes

34 Weapon rendered permanently useless: Customize this event to the particular weapon, e.g., a sword might have the blade broken off short, a gun's chamber might be damaged by firing a round with too much powder, etc.

45 Robbed or burgled: Divide possessions into two approximately equal piles. Randomly determine which pile was lost.

53 Planetary Event: This can be any sort of serious disruptive event appropriate to the world, e.g., earthquake, storm with severe flooding, breach of protective dome, meteorite strike, etc.

61 Papers or documents not in order: This is a bureaucratic annoyance. A scenario similar to the mini-adventure "Exit Visa" would be appropriate.

62 Complication with cargo: There is a potential problem with any cargo that will be picked up in the End Phase. Once cargos are generated, throw 2D6 for each, 9+ to have a potential problem. Then roll 1D6 for where the problem is, this end (3-) or at the destination (4+). If this end, then roll 1D on the table at the top of the next column to see what it is. If destination, do not roll until PCs get there!

Roll 1D	Type of Problem
1	Needs special import/export license (see Chart A (8) Options).
2	Damaged. Real value reduced by 10-30%
3	Offensive stench will permeate LS system and make passengers unhappy
4	Hazardous cargo, throw 12+/day in transit to leak/explode and damage cargo area
5	Customs believe it is contraband and cargo is impounded
6	Shipping manifest was wrong and half/double (roll) agreed amount has arrived

E. Passage Off-World

Check for ship availability depending on class of starport. The notation nD6:m+ should be read as "Roll nD6. The number you roll indicates how many D6 to roll. For each die that shows m+, a ship is available to take passage on." If the result of the first roll is zero (e.g., if 1D6-3 and you roll a 2), there are no ships available this week. For example, 2D6:3+: Roll 2D6; the result is 6. Now roll 6D6; the results are 3 4 2 5 3 1. Since four of the dice are showing 3 or more (3+), there are four ships available to take passage on.

Port Class	Ship Availability
A	2D6:3+
B	2D6:5+
C	1D6-1:4+
D	1D6-2:5+
E	1D6-3:5+
X	1D6-4:6+





Cepheus Lethal Hits

Wound Levels for Cepheus Engine.
By A. R. Kavli

Cepheus Engine (CE) and other Space OSR derivatives use an abstract combat system that combines hit location, armor protection, and injury into a single damage roll. A hit that does little or no damage is assumed to have been stopped by the armor or generated a minor flesh wound. The system is simple, familiar, and dangerous. An average, unarmored character with 777 for their physical stats essentially has 21 hit points (broken into three groups of increasing severity) in a universe where weapons do 2-4D6 per hit.

But for those who prefer discreet wounds, there are options. After all, damage is like real-estate; it's all about location, location, location! Otherwise known as shot placement. These systems replace reducing a character's physical stats with accruing wounds. Adopting this system certainly increases the lethality of combat, but it's no more deadly than character creation!

Step 1) Determine the location of each strike or individual shot by rolling it on the Lethality Table below, or by applying the chosen location of a successful Called Shot.

Step 2) Determine the location's Armor Rating (AR) and compare it to the Damage Dice of the incoming hit. Subtract the AR value from the number of Damage Dice. Any remaining Damage Dice are used to determine the Lethality of the hit. Additional pips (+2, -1, etc,) are ignored.

**Note that in this system Effect does not increase damage, as it is an abstract bonus for hitting in vulnerable spots. One could optionally add 1 Damage Die for an Effect of 6+

Step 3) Consult the Lethality value for the location struck and roll the remaining Damage Dice, using only the highest result.

A) If the highest Damage Die is equal to or greater than the Lethality Value, the wound is fatal. The target will die in 1D6 rounds; a roll of 1 results in instant death. The character can remain conscious during that time with an END 10+ throw. The wounded character can be stabilized with a Difficult First Aid test before time runs out. The victim will go down at the end of that time, saved or not.

B) If the highest Damage Die is greater than a 1 but not greater than the Lethality value, the character has suffered a serious wound. The character suffers a -2 DM on all tests per Wound. The character must throw END 6+ to carry on; this roll is allowed at the beginning of each round. The third and subsequent Wounds to the same Body Location (as opposed to Body Area) will automatically become Lethal hits.

C) Graze: On a roll of 1, it is a flesh wound or minor bruise. It will need treatment, but has no immediate mechanical penalty. The character might not even know they've been hit! A character may suffer any number of Grazes without penalty.





Armor Types:
This system assumes that weapons cannot penetrate certain armors no matter how good the shot: a 9mm pistol cannot penetrate an armored plate designed to stop rifle rounds. A sword cannot cut through plate armor. To damage an opponent wearing superior armor, one must use a superior weapon or target a location with weaker armor.

CE uses general armor descriptions. To convert to this system, AR is 1 for every 1-6 AR listed in equipment. Below is a list of common AR classes; note that low-tech level weapons will not be effective against high-tech projectiles. This list is designed to match the weapon descriptions that follow.

Armor:
Light Armor (AR 1). Examples: Quilted armor, Leather vest, Light Kevlar vest.
Medium Armor (AR 2) Examples: Maille, Scale, Executive Personal Armor, Tactical Armor.
Heavy Armor (AR 3) Examples: Brigandine, Plate, Great Helm, Tactical Armor with inserts.
Combat Armor (AR 4) (Futuristic Combat Suit) Stops 4D6.

The covered locations must be determined as well. A mail shirt will cover the torso, shoulders, and upper arms. A pot helm or tactical helmet generally cover the skull. Some armors will also have varying AR: Tactical armor might have AR 3 for the abdomen and groin, but AR 4 over the Thorax for inserts.

Weapons:
Though there are multiple iterations of the CE ruleset, most use similar xD6 values to express damage. The Damage Dice values will usually convert directly to this system; drop any additional pips if listed. Below is a general list of weapons. This system works best if each round fired is accounted for instead of adding DM's to the to-hit or damage rolls.

Small One-handed Weapons (1D6). Ex. Dagger, Claw Hammer, .22 pistol.
Large One-handed Weapons (2D6). Ex. Saber, Axe, Flintlock Pistol, 9mm pistol/SMG.
Two Handed Weapons (3-4D6). Ex. Halberd, Longsword, Shotgun, Auto Rifle.
Heavy Weapons (4+ D6). Ex. Hvy MG, Grenade, Missile Launcher.

Explosions will apply their damage to 1D6/2 random locations, splitting their Damage / PV as equally as possible. So if a Damage 4D6 grenade hits 2 locations, each will suffer 2D6 (before armor). If it hits 3 locations, 2 will suffer 1D6 and the third will suffer 2D6.

Some weapons will have Armor Piercing (AP) abilities, reducing the AR equal to the weapon's AP value. Generally speaking, thrusting weapons will have AP 1 vs cloth, leather, and maille armors. Armor Piercing (AP 1) rounds are usually available for firearms at up to 10x the cost!

Called Shots and Cover:
A character may make a Called Shot to aim at a specific Body Area (-2 DM) or a more specific Body Location (-3 DM) to bypass a target's armor. These are similar DM penalties for a target in cover. The attacker can either use the standard CE cover penalties and roll a random exposed location, perform a Called Shot for an exposed location, or suffer no penalty but if the location hit is behind cover, the shot is wasted.

Cover modifiers from the Cepheus Engine SRD are as follows based on how much is

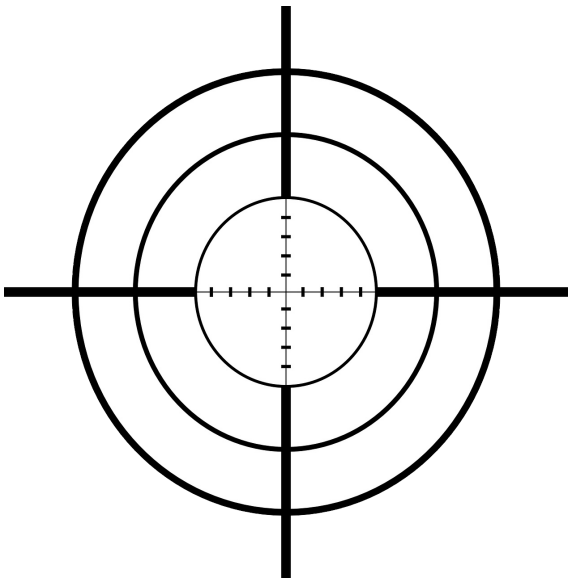




covered, crouching or prone targets increase their cover by one step:

Called Shots and Cover:
To hit a Body Area, -2 DM to hit.
To hit a specific Body Location, -3 DM to hit.

1/4 (undergrowth, small rock, corner of a building) –0 DM
1/2 (thick forest, low wall, crate) –1DM
3/4 (jungle, trench, reinforced position) –2 DM
Full (pillbox) –4 DM



Lethality Table

Body Area	Body Location	Lethal Hit
6) Head	1-3) Skull, 4-5) Face, 6) Neck	4+. Wounds to Face will ruin a random facial feature. Lethal skull hits result in immediate death. Lethal hits to the Neck may sever the head.
4-5) Torso	1-3) Abdomen, 4-5) Thorax, 6) Groin	5+. Penetrating Wounds to Abdomen or Thorax will generate internal bleeding.
2-3) Leg	1) Foot, 2) Shin, 3) Knee, 4-5) Thigh, 6) Hip	6+. Wounds to a joint will cripple the hit limb until medical care. Lethal hits may sever the limb.
1) Arm	1) Hand, 2) Forearm, 3) Elbow, 4-5) Upper Arm, 6) Shoulder	6+. Wounds to a joint will cripple the hit limb until medical care. Lethal hits may sever the limb.

Example: Johann shoots Grady while they sit in a shady nightclub. Johann has a blaster with 3D6 damage. The hit location rolled is 4 and 4; to the Torso Area and Thorax.
Grady is wearing his best blaster-ablation vest with an AR 1 over his Thorax. That means that 2 Damage Dice penetrate the armor for that shot. They are rolled, taking only the highest number, to determine the wound effect. Johann's rolls a 3 and a 5. Five is greater than the Lethality Value of a Thorax (4+), so Grady rolls 1D6 and gets a 2; he will die in 2 turns. Even if Johann was of a mind to deliver First Aid, 2 rounds (approx. 12 seconds) is not much time to do so!





More Options:

Blunt Trauma:
When flexible armor is hit with enough force, the impact will be felt by the wearer. To simulate this type of Blunt Trauma, whenever flexible armor such as maille or soft bullet proof vest hit by a weapon with the exact same Damage Dice as the AR (exactly 0 left over), roll a Blunt Trauma die, below. The results are location independent, as there is no penetration.

Blunt Trauma Die: 1-4) A painful but otherwise harmless bruise. 5-6) A non-penetrating Wound to the location, representing tiny fractures or severe bruising.

For melee weapons, Blunt Trauma should be limited to weapons that have significant mass behind their striking surfaces. This includes things such as axes, maces, and most two-handed weapons that are swung to attack.

Blunt Trauma can also be used to simulate punches, falls, being thrown to the ground, or other non-penetrating injuries.

Beasts and Aliens:
There are an endless number of shapes and sizes to the critters of the universe, and may seem inappropriate that large monsters might be killed in a single shot. Though single bullets are known to take down large prey such as elephants, the scale can seem off to some. And you might not want to create a location table for every specimen of xenomorphic flora or fauna you come across.

Simply determine the PV and roll; this can also be used for NPCs to speed up play.

5-6) Vitals are hit, target takes a Lethal hit.
2-4) Wounded, target suffers -2 DM to all tests per wound. Roll End 8+ to carry on. The 3rd Wounded result will be treated as a Lethal hit.
1) Grazed, no effect.

To use for larger creatures, apply a -1 DM (or more) which decreases the chance of an instant kill and increases the chance of a Graze.

Using the Lethality Roll system as an add-on:
If you prefer to keep Attribute attrition as part of your combat, or don't want to change your weapon and armor values, simply retain those rules but roll on the Lethality Table every 1-6 points of damage that penetrate the AR. For example, 1-6 damage = 1 Lethality Die; 7-12 damage = roll 2 Lethality dice; 13-18 = 3 Lethality dice, etc.

And finally, if you like the Lethality Dice but don't want to bother with locations, simply use a general AR rating, forgo the hit location, and instead roll 1D6:
1-4) is an extremity hit; Lethal Hit on 6+.
5-6) is a hit in the vitals; Lethal Hit on 4+.





The Raiders Lament Part 2

By Jo Jaquinta

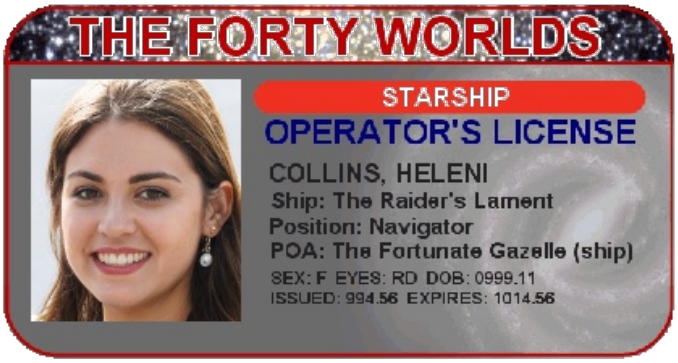
Chapter 3

Captain Seldon squared off with Heleni on the cargo deck. Netting and straps held the loading equipment and supplemental fuel bladders secure, leaving free the largest room on the ship. He wore a fencing uniform and mask and brandished a regulation sabre. "Again!" he said and lunged at her.

Heleni parried too late and too hard. She evaded the blow but was unable to ripost before Seldon was back on his guard. She breathed heavily and tried to brush the hair from her face, only to be blocked by the mask. Seldon dropped his guard to a relaxed stance. She relaxed in turn. He then lunged and marked her on the facemask. An overhead buzzer sounded the strike. He removed his facemask and shook his head. She watched suspiciously for a moment, and then took her own off. "Well," he said. "At least you learn quickly."

"I'm sorry. I didn't know fencing was a requirement for the navigation position." She drank the water he passed her.

"You look like someone who does their homework. You know this isn't any tramp freighter."



"The Raider's Lament. Registered to The Raider's Lament Incorporated. A refit of a decommissioned Naval Escort, Triumph Class, awarded to ex-Naval Lieutenant W. H. Seldon, then in the Merchant Marines, in recompense for the loss of his own ship in action against hijackers." She tossed the empty water bottle into a recycling bin.

"Indeed," he said, holstering his sabre. "As you can see from our hold and our armaments, we clearly don't make our living on shipping 1,000 talent cargo containers. We court higher risk for higher rewards. And, as we are often in harm's way, we need a crew who are able to act in such circumstances."

She shook her head and sheathed her own sabre. "It is not my forté, I'll admit."

"And what would be your forté?"

"Well, I'm sure you've done your homework too. I've been in the military most of my life". Seldon coughed. "Well, perhaps a Navy man like you doesn't consider the scouting division to be military, but I've traveled a lot and seen a lot. I'd have gone for the diplomatic corps but the problem with being able to see all sides of a problem is that it's much harder to take sides."

"I think you will find that with a sword to your throat it's much easier to take sides." Seldon smiled.

She shrugged. "I'm a talker, not a fighter.

It's much more productive to try to solve differences by discussion than combat."

"In that we both agree" said Seldon, to her surprise. "I've lost one ship in combat already, and just spent eighteen months fixing this one after its last voyage. When we put ourselves in harm's way it is because we have exhausted all other alternatives. Although with your skill I'm sure you could always present us with additional alternatives. I do value that. However, the position we are trying to fill is that of a navigator. Can you navigate?"

"I have my certificate," she said uncomfortably.

"Not exactly top of the class though." She looked uneasy. "But acceptable. You have talked to the other officers?"

"I talked to the Soconuscoian. Your Warrant Officer?" He nodded. "She seemed mostly concerned if my certificate was a forgery. And your Engineer, who asked me what I drank."

Seldon nodded. "Very well. We will confer and let you know our decision."

* * *

Elise ignored Kwok's wide grin and focused instead on the overlays her heads up presented her with. His eyes were reacting appropriately to the ambient light of the galley. Voice stress indicated that he was at ease and unlikely to be lying about whatever simulated shooting match he was going on about. His rest pulse showed he was relatively healthy and in good condition.

"But you've never actually used a PA turret?" she asked.



"I've done sand, missile, laser... even got to fire a fusion one once on this old tanker. It was radical. And I've done just about everything in sim."

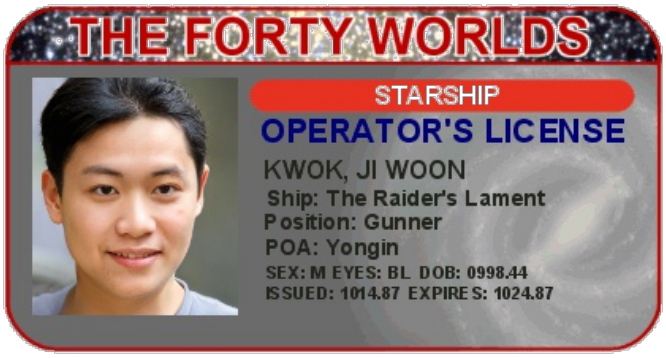
"Games aren't the same as real life," said Elise with no trace of irony.

"Fine with me. Open her up! Put me in!" He, literally, bounced in his chair. "I'll take it on. Give me a target and I'll show you what I can do. How many megawatts do you have? I saw the mass drivers mounted on the side on the way in. You guys must be pretty packing."

"I think we'll run some of our own sims before we let you on the real hardware." He looked disappointed. She pulled out a collar and handed it to him.

He examined it and pursed his lips. "Realvision 2000? That's pretty top of the line. Have you hacked its software?" She smiled and passed him a gravstick. He bent it in two places into a steering wheel and activated it. It snapped into alignment with the ship's artificial gravity. "I love feedback devices." He strapped on the collar with a practiced motion and pushed his chair back. The galley disappeared around him and was replaced with a simulation of the Lament's turret, the master gunnery control overlaying the gravstick.

"Familiarize yourself with the console and



power up when you are ready. We'll begin an attack run." He glanced at the controls and hit the power up button immediately. Elise rolled her eyes, threw an extra couple of targets into the first run, and hit initiate.

Simulated voices of the crew came over the PA channel describing a hostile situation and giving the captain's authorization to fire. Kwok drummed his fingers on the gravstick waiting as the navigator lined up the vectors and began the approach. Elise kept with the larger tactical view as the confrontation took shape before her. Three bogies darted in the direction of the Lament which dove in a wide arc between them bringing as much to bear as possible. Kwok deftly aced the first target with the ventral turret, quickly set it to autofire and then manually switched to the dorsal turret. A quick burst at closest approach destroyed that one leaving a sole winged bogie in retreat.

Elise slipped back to real mode. Annoyingly his pulse has barely risen above his rest position, and he had a real smug grin on. "That was a nice warm-up" she said and piped it over the ship's speakers. "Here come some more."

"Bring em on!" he cheered. "Only can I have tactical this time too?"

"The gunner always has tactical input. Lament standard operating procedures. Command has the option of overriding."

"Radical" he said and started lodging course requests as soon as the bogies appeared. These he also cleared without much difficulty. So, she put him into a convoy protection configuration, and then flipped a protected ship turncoat in the thick of the firefight. He took out the targets but not unscathed. His pulse rate finally climbed above 100.

"Need a break?" she asked.

He shook his head. "I'm not even sweating."

Elise smiled and dialed up a small phalanx of craft. There were a few traditional pirate-favored vessels and a small corvette and assigned it a few defensive fighters. She flexed her fingers and then plugged herself in as the corvette's pilot.

Kwok handled the pirates as well as in previous simulations. But when she popped the corvette out of silent running mode and launched fighters he howled. "No way! That's just not real!" She broadcast terms of surrender which a simulated Seldon sardonically declined. She danced and wove her fighters at close range until he made his play. He took out the fighters at the expense of suffering a full salvo from the corvette. Red lights flared in his cockpit as damage control indicators lit up. A less composed Seldon voice was heard to broadcast a request for repetition of the surrender terms followed by her own voice telling gunnery to get cracking on repairs while they bought time. She switched her control of the sim to auto and watched his reactions.

His pulse had pleasantly climbed to 150 as he fought for a while with the dead controls. He then stopped and swearing

up a stream started popping all the maintenance panels. The corvette loomed large in his viewports and a call to repel boarders was sounded. He swore more loudly as he realized there was a physical break in the power feed to the one remaining PA's primary coils. He slammed his fist through the non-existent console twice. Elise smirked.

But he leapt into action again and started rerouting power conduits and control circuits. Elise wasn't following what he was doing until the vehicular weapon safety went up and he punched the override. With an inarticulate scream he fired up the mass drivers, backed by the full output power of the ship's drive, and cut the traversing boarding party into ribbons. He then started peppering the corvette with slugs. At spatial distances the mass drivers were inaccurate and ineffective. But at visual range like this they packed a punch. He couldn't breach their hull but in short order he had pummeled their airlock door into an unworkable mess, sheared off their communications and sensor arrays, and destroyed their turrets. Elise set them into retreat and signed it a stalemate.

Kwok took off the collar and ran his fingers through his hair. "Well, that was a ride. No way was that AI though. You were plugged in. Unreasonable odds not good enough for you?"

Elise raised an eyebrow. "In the real-world cowards never fight unless the odds are unreasonably in their favor. The scenario was based on the one that put this ship in dry dock for 18 months." She let that sink in. "Nice move with the mass drivers though."

"Heh" he said. "Didn't think of that one yourselves on the spot?"



"Not an option. We only installed them during the refit."

"So how did you get out of it?"

"We launched our own party from the breach in engineering, counter boarded, and took their captain hostage. They had our ship. We had their captain. Game to us." She smiled.

* * *

The Chief cracked another three tubes of beer and slid them down the workbench to Vikhagen and Juanita. "Thank you!" cheered Vikhagen.

"Yeah, right. Nice of you to pay me back all at once" he patted the crate of beer she'd brought.

"Call it interest," she said.

Juanita made a face as she guzzled it. "Remind me never to owe you money!" They all laughed. "So, this is it from the old crew?"

"Yeah," said the Chief. "Us plus Seldon and Elise. I guess the rest got tired of getting their ass shot at." They all laughed again.

"What's a little shooting?" chortled Vikhagen. "It wasn't high profile all the time."

"Oh, yeah," said Juanita. "I remember when we had to bluff our way into that luxury resort. Get in, stay low, keep our ears open and look for clues for that smuggling ring."

"I was on the outside for that one," said the Chief.

"You were flat on your back after head butting that asteroid!" corrected Vikhagen.

"You were lucky," said Juanita. "You didn't have to put up with Viki here. She doesn't know the meaning of the words 'low profile' and gets it into her head to start making passes at some princess guest." Vikhagen laughed, bowed, and drank more beer. "So, she gets her ass transferred to catering. But, no, that's not good enough. She has them convinced she's an expert at ice sculpture."

Between laughs Vikhagen starts miming frantically stabbing away with an ice pick. "Ta dah!" she proclaimed.

Juanita rolls her eyes. "What is it Viki?"

"It's an Iceberg!" she proclaimed. They all laughed some more.

"And then she does the same thing the next night!"

"Hey! It kept them distracted!"

"God. The things I miss," said the Chief. "I'm not sure we should take you two back!"

"Don't tar me with her brush!" cried Juanita. "Who put up with your midnight inspections? Your white gloves smear tests on the transitional drive? Your endless maintenance on perfectly good equipment?"

"Kept the ship running, eh? You got to trust your elders and betters."

"I think you just do it to keep us busy" She hid behind her beertube.

The Chief laughed. "Are you sure you want to come back for more?"

Juanita laughed and saluted him with the beer can. "Nothing in space or trans-space could keep me away."

"Vikhagen? You know you'll get yourself killed if you keep this up with us."

"I'm going to die someday. I might as well have fun in the meantime. Besides, you've got my dory."

"The 'Sweeping Generalization'? That's Lament property."

"You never should have let her name it" said Juanita under her breath.

"Oh, you just think it's yours. She knows she's mine." They all laughed, and the Chief cracked open another round.

* * *

Seldon buzzed open the door to his office at the soft knock outside. Elise and a less than sober Chief ambled in. The latter laughing at some joke clearly at Elise's expense. "I take it then the interviews went well?"

"They are still the same mad lot we shipped out with. Eager to pick up where we left off" reported the Chief. "How boring is the new lot?"





"Kwok's a hot-head, but he's good," said Elise. "I ran the Nairobi Belt sim on him, and he stalemated it." Seldon raised an eyebrow. "I'll send you the recap. Lateral thinking."

"That's good in a gunner," said the Chief. "It'll be interesting to see him matched up with Vikhagen. It'll either be love or hate at first sight," he laughed.

"Heleni only barely passes muster as a navigator" said Seldon. "I'm reluctant to take on less than the best."

"So, send her sorry arse out the airlock," said the Chief. "She drinks fruity beer."

"It's not that critical a position though," said Elise. "Software will cover us 90% of the time."

"Yeah, but the other 10% is what will kill you," said the Chief.

Seldon steepled his hands. "She has skills we don't otherwise have. More importantly she doesn't think the same."

"During battle stations I'd rather have everything thinking the same," said the Chief.

"The last thing we need is dissent during a delicate operation" agreed Elise.

"I'm not so sure I agree," said Seldon, confusing both of them. "We're not a regulation ship. We're not merchant marine, nor high navy. We make our living doing things they can't. Much of that is because we have a mix of things they don't normally have."

"You're saying our strength is in our diversity," said Elise.

"It's still a risk," said the Chief. "One too many nuts in the nuthouse and we flip from genius to madness."

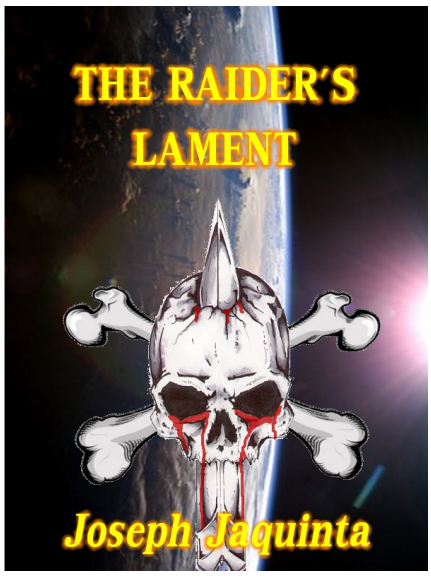
"A fair point" said Seldon and paused for a moment. "This is my decision: we'll offer berths to Vikhagen and Juanita at their cumulative level of seniority as secondary pilot and deputy engineer, respectively. We'll offer Kwok a standard contract as a gunner. To Heleni we'll offer a standard contract as navigator, but with a six-month probation period. She'll be junior-most and have to pick up extra shift work in all departments. And if things don't work out, we have a six-month window to send her on her way with no severance pay. Comments?"

"Trial by fire. I like it," said the Chief. "If she can take scrubbing the deck on the midnight shift that'll be good enough for me."

"I'll draft the contracts and have them on your desk in an hour," said Elise.

"Thank you. Send word to your mysterious factor, Elise, and set a departure time for thirty-six hours. You can take final leave from now till six hours before we cast off."

"Yes sir" they both chorused.



Future Galaxy

A Tour of Future Galaxy
By Jo Jaquinta

Welcome Traveller! Do you seek adventure? Do you seek to unlock the mysteries of the universe? Or are you an explorer? Well, it doesn't matter to me. I am 2046, your automated assistant and tour guide. Manufactured by Future Galaxy's welcome committee, my duty is to introduce you to the wonders that await you as you adventure, seek, or explore the amazing worlds we have in our galaxy.

Ticonderoga Space Station

I see you have made an excellent choice to start your journey at the Ticonderoga Space Station. This is located on the frontier of Future Galaxy and is inhabited by our brave and hardy frontiersmen.

The main truss of the space station is made of girders of tubular hyper-steel and forms the backbone of the facility. The Space Station Transit Authority runs a shuttle service up and down the length of the main truss and is the primary means that citizens travel from different areas of the space station to one another.

Along the top of the truss are the eight habitat domes that comprise the living, work and recreation spaces of the people who live here. Each of these is a large circular pad that can be several miles in radius. Arching majestically overhead are geodesic domes made of more tubular hyper-steel and paned with pure uber-quartz panels that keep out harmful radiation, and keep in the air. Pleasant by-ways and avenues are laid out on the base pad. These are lined with buildings, soaring elegantly high in the middle, and low towards the edges.

For the best ordering of society, people are segregated amongst the domes based on what role they play.

The outermost dome contains the Star Militia, charged with guarding this sector of Future Galaxy. There are many parade grounds where they practice their maneuvers, firing ranges where they test their equipment, and spacious hangers where they maintain their Peace Fighters.

The next dome down contains the office of High Oversight. This is the nerve center of the entire complex! All requisitions are processed here, plans constructed, and decisions made. The job of the citizens here is to, literally, build the future!

The third dome is for Domicile Development and Edutainment. These hard workers are in charge of maintaining the beautiful structure of Ticonderoga itself, building and rebuilding the houses to meet the changing needs of the station, and providing for the enlightened education and entertainment of the citizens.

The fourth dome is given over to the Guardians of the Peace. These brave men and women are responsible for ensuring that all citizens follow the laws of the space station. They direct traffic, rescue pets from trees, disrupt organized crime gangs, and infiltrate and destroy alien invasion plots.

The fifth dome is enormous and is the breadbasket of the station. Crops are grown, ore smelted, and items





manufactured. Almost everything you see in Ticonderoga station was manufactured at some point in the fifth dome.

The sixth dome is home to Ticonderoga Power and Light. Huge solar collectors here harness the power of the sun and convert it into forms that are easily consumed by the mechanisms of the station. This includes the main power conduits, rechargeable receptacles for mobile units, and the massive elemental enrichment station that creates fissionable materials to power the spaceships.

The seventh dome contains the Academy of Science. The thinkers here collect all manner of data from returning scouts, collate it and examine it. They probe the boundaries of reality to further our understanding of the laws of physics. With this knowledge they produce new creations to make everyone's life easier everywhere.

The last dome is home to the System Reliability Engineers. Ticonderoga is built on technology, and that technology always needs updates and maintenance. The Engineers here work on all sections of the station, making sure that strict safety measures are maintained, and that the citizens enjoy the highest standards of service.

And, finally, the last stop on our tour here is the underside of the station. Here are the docking bays, storage warehouses, raw material tanks, and many of the more dangerous production facilities of the station. It is not as pretty as the glittering domes and soaring spires of the top side, but it is just as crucial.

Meal-in-a-Pill

Before we move on, first a word from one of our sponsors…

Oh, I hear you are hungry. Well, first you need to work out what you want to eat. There are so many choices, and selections to make. That could take some time. Once you've worked that out, you then need to get the ingredients for your meal. That might take you to several shops in several places. How tiring! Now that you have the ingredients, you need to make the meal. You need to chop, slice, stir, blend, roast, boil, fry, or all of these. And, if you aren't completely exhausted after all of this, you now need to eat all that food you just made.

That's so much work! And there are so many things to do with your life. Places to go, things to do, novels to read, frontiers to forge. It can be hard to make all that eating stuff fit in between what you want to do.

We have the solution for you: meal-in-a-pill.

Our expert food scientists have done all the work for you. They have selected prime ingredients that contain superlative nutritional requirements needed by your body. They have cooked them to perfection, and then reduced them down to their most basic form. The result is a single pill you can swallow, most effectively, at your ideal meal time. In seconds your body will have all the essential ingredients it needs to be healthy and you can move on with your busy life.

But what of human choice? Human endeavour? If we are not faced with challenging decisions, what do we have to rise up against? Well, we at meal-in-a-pill have the answer for you. We create our wondrous pills in two varieties: red and blue. For those up to the challenge, you can select between them. And, having





thus exercised your intellect, you can carry on with your day.

White Bow

Moving deeper into Future Galaxy we have the charming settlement of White Bow. When humans discovered this planet, they found the remains of an ancient civilization. They had built an orbital ring connected by six space elevators to the surface of the planet. Whatever great calamity had wiped them out had also severely damaged this facility. But human ingenuity and resourcefulness has been rebuilding it.

The station itself was built of a wondrous malleable rock from the surface of the planet. It has oxidized in the solar rays, over time, rendering the surface of the planet, the elevators and rings a dark black. But the fresh rock from the re-opened queries is a brilliant white. With the first elevator and its counterweight restored, the local builders have been working their way along the orbital ring to either side. From a distance, the new construction shines out against the black of the stars and strongly resembles a great bow, curved back, with an arrow fitted to launch. It is from this image, and the high aspirations of the residents, that the name of White Bow comes.

The orbital ring left by the ancients was several miles wide, and progressed around an entire orbit of the planet. It is edged with some unknown and highly resilient material which is still strong enough to retain an atmosphere, held in place by the pressure of its orbital rotation. So the whole facility is open to space from above, but has a normal atmosphere. This makes docking very convenient!

The most developed areas are close to the operational elevator. These graceful buildings crest either side of the elevator, tallest nearby, and then tapering down. Many of them are just refits of buildings made by the ancients, with their broad terraces and wide doors and ramps. Even the newer constructions follow the ancient aesthetic, giving a unique feel to the architecture. Decorative motifs are similar, with cascading, overlapping geometric designs in long strips along the edges and corners of the buildings.

The people themselves are also fond of wearing white, like their buildings. These are sometimes accented with cream or light grey and often have thin golden embroidery reminiscent of the copied carvings. Visitors often stand out sharply just because of the contrast their clothes make. If you wish to blend it, though, the locals favor long flowing all encompassing robes and simple white, hooded cloaks are easily acquired.

In temperament the residents are considered and contemplative. Even when just going about their business they move with deliberateness and thought. They are slow to anger and peaceful to a fault. It's a general understanding amongst them that you must give offence three times before it is taken, to avoid misunderstandings. Many of the most majestic buildings are temples to the spirits of the ancients. They house many of the discovered manuscripts of the ancients. Although they still remain untranslated, much time is spent contemplating them, seeking wisdom and understanding from them, each supplicant hoping for enlightenment from them.

The orbital ring is vast, curving around the whole planet, and only a fraction of it is inhabited. However, the atmosphere extends to the entire ring, although it can





be somewhat stale the further away from the central elevator one is. An eclectic selection of people have taken to set up shop in more remote reaches, seeking solitude or avoiding something else.

There are frequent archaeological expeditions and pilgrimages along the rim, to deeper locations. Sometimes fabulous artifacts or mysterious oracles are returned. Other times, people return driven mad, raving of having met some ancients still living there or having touched knowledge man is not ready for. Sometimes no one returns at all.

Elegant and refined, curious and mysterious. All these things are White Bow. A visit is highly recommended, but visitors should also beware.

Manservant Friday

And from our next sponsor…

People often harkent to the past, when good servants were easy to come by, and served well with gratitude, and didn't demand high wages. But people forget that not everyone had a servant, and many people of those societies had to be servants. It wasn't always as rosy from the other side, for who does not have hopes, dreams, and ambitions of their own?

But there is no problem faced by humanity today that cannot be solved with technology! Enter: Manservant Friday.

Made from the best materials and state-of-the-art design, our humaniform robot is there to serve your every need. It can polish your shoes, light your cigarette, convey your guests to your parlour, or escort the boorish away. Once you buy it, or subscribe to our low monthly payment service, you do not need to pay, tip or provide any gratuity to Manservant Friday for continued pleasant, enthusiastic and rapid service.

Manservant Friday only exists to serve your needs and has no hopes, dreams or ambitions of its own, and requires no one else's hopes, dreams and ambitions to be trodden upon to fulfil your own desire for exceptional service.

With Manservant Friday, you can finally take Friday off!

Ultra

As you cruise down the spiral arm you will come to a bend where it joins the bar at the central bulge. Here you can find the mega-city of Ultra, the capital of Future Galaxy. Under a flawless azure sky and expansive planes of amber grain the city rises, a flower of bright and shiny metal and glass, reaching upwards in spires and pillars like the hopes and dreams of the galaxy.

And that is precisely what Ultra is: the culmination of all that Future Galaxy aspires to. All of the best of the galaxy has gone into making Ultra the perfect fusion of technology and society. It is an example to the rest of the galaxy of what humanity can achieve and is a blueprint for bringing this golden vision of prosperity to the rest of the universe.

Everyone eats as much as they like, dresses how they like, and works as hard as they want. Technology takes care of the rest. Someone merely has to speak a request, and the universal processing system will hear and the resources of the city will be put to work to fulfil that request. A meticulously engineered fairness engine weighs each request against the resources required and where extra are needed, volunteers contribute. Most citizens are glad to spend some time





away from their artistic and philosophical pursuits to help a fellow being.

Visitors are treated no differently from residents. Applications must be made in person, and no one is refused. But because everyone wants to visit, time may be rationed during peak demand. But take heart: no one is ever refused. They dearly want to share their vision with the rest of the galaxy and inspire people to go out and make it a reality.

What to do with your allotted time is up to you. Some choose to experience the culinary delights, crafted by people who have devoted their lives to creating the perfect gastronomic experiences. Others attend concerts or poetry readings that they remember for the rest of their lives.

If you are unsure and wish to just experience everything, I suggest you hop on a monorail tour. This swift and silent transport will whisk you around the city giving you stunning views of the elegant architecture with the greenery of the parks and scintillating fountains reflected in the curving glass and steel buildings. Then out, over the fields, where you can see the automated planting , harvesting, and weather control systems in operation. Every day has perfect weather and the healthy crops grow vibrantly. They are even planted in elegant decorative rows that swirl and form pleasing designs.

Both before and after your surface visit, you can make use of the extensive orbital facilities. They offer many remote tours of the city, for those eager to experience more. And their entire corpus of scientific data is available, free to all, from an extensive research library. If you come with problems, you can enter them into a public version of their request engine which will seek answers in their databases. If your problem is truly unique, that will catch their attention. Citizens are always willing to hear of problems faced by planets in the outer galaxy so they can bend their effort into making life better for everyone. They make their belief that there is no problem that can't be solved with technology a point of pride and will go to great lengths to demonstrate this.

Like an active galactic nucleus, Ultra shines radiantly for the whole galaxy to see. But the torch they bear is not a fire that consumes, but one that inspires. And as the flame spreads from person to person, and world to world, the light of technology passes, infinitely repeatable, and never extinguished. This is their dream, and the hope they bring to humanity.

Red Rocket Jetpacks

And from our last sponsor…

The strength of the Red Rocket sports jetpack has always been its dynamic style, visual compactness, elegant lines, and proportions typical of our top of the line sporting jetpacks. The new SuperSky 950, thanks to new fairings, becomes more sporty and shapely with new full fusion accelerators and side air vents. The new fairings highlight the fluidity of its form, and the double extractor extends to the side silencer, hiding the mechanical components and producing aerodynamic perfection.

For those who are solely driven by the science of speed, we have the Farthingale V4. Year after year, we renew this model to become faster and more exciting on the circuit for both the amateur and the professional packer. The avionics package that equips the Farthingale V4 also evolves and now





includes the latest generation Red Rocket Friction Control which is even more predictive. The Thrust Mode strategy is also new; specifically, the Race Thrust Mode has been split into two mappings that can now be freely compared in the individual parameters, allowing the pilot to quickly compare two different configurations to define the best set-up based on the course and flying style. In addition, for those who use their jetpack all year round, there is now provision for heated grips, which have a new, more modern, design.

Riven

Once Ultra has shown you how far we can go, you should continue your journey to the very center of Future Galaxy to see how far we have yet to go.

Orbiting a star that revolves around the supermassive black hole anchoring the galaxy is the planet of Riven. Out of that nest of darkness has crawled the fanatical alien species of the Kraven. They want nothing more than to extinguish the light of Future Galaxy and draw it all into their dark depths. They swarmed out into the galaxy with a fierce fleet of ships, and it was all the forces of good could do to muster a defense force of all the inner galactic ships they could find. There was a titanic battle and the Kraven were driven back, but they managed to secure a foothold on Riven.

The world itself was split in two in that epic battle and both halves now orbit, a nasty crack between the two sides. In and out of its nether reaches crawl the Kraven, plotting, planning and preparing for their next attack. All the prisoners they acquired during the battle are forced to work as slaves, like a nation in the mines. They labor, digging the guts out of the wounded planet, making more warrens for the Kraven and producing materials for the bottomless pit of their war machine.

But a beacon of hope is kept lit. On a secret far comet, orbiting the outer reaches of the system, the great Don John of Acturus maintains an advance base. From here he leads dangerous raids, sometimes as far as Riven itself, in order to bring relief to the people, and give warning to the Kraven that they will not be allowed to continue their atrocities unchecked. He is always looking for doughty volunteers to carry out such relief efforts, or even to act as distractions. To those who are so brave as to be considered foolhardy, he even has undercover missions to the surface of Riven itself, to rescue prisoners and to sabotage high value installations.

Don John of Acturus believes that it is the strength, forbearing and indefatigable nature of humanity's characters that will ultimately defeat the Kraven. They may have unguessed resources under cover of their monstrous black hole. They may have staggering alien technology that can burst planets asunder. Their tyrannical oppression may force countless mindless minions into suicidal attacks. But they do not have the spirit of man. As long as there is one, who is willing to stand up to the courage of their convictions, humanity can never be defeated.

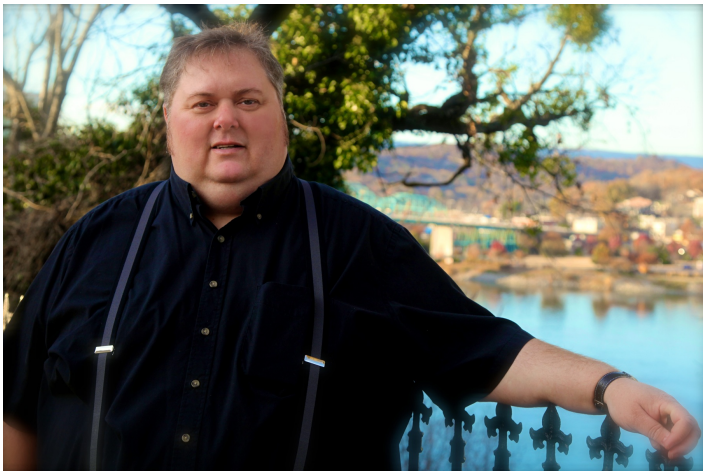
And there you have it! If you have found this a useful and informative overview of what Future Galaxy has to offer, my programming will activate my pleasure circuits and I will have a nice day. I hope that you, too, will find much to interest and inspire you about your visit to Future Galaxy!





Chatting with... John Watts

Interview with John Watts of Independence Games
By Brett Kruger (CJ Editor)



In the first of what I hope will be many interviews with Cepheus Engine publishers, writers and artists, I had a (virtual) sit down with the owner of Independence Games, John Watts. One of the bigger publishers under the Cepheus Engine banner, I found our conversation fascinating. I hope you do too.

CJ - First up, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to answer some questions for our readers. Could you tell us when did you first get into roleplaying games, what was your first and what is your favourite?

JW – The first RPG that I ever played was TSR's Star Frontiers. I had watched kids in my junior high school (what's called middle school in most places) playing D&D and I wanted to play but I never did. When I approached my parents concerning D&D, it was the height of the "Satanic Panic" and they had read the horror stories and refused to allow me to play.

So my solution to this was to get into Star Frontiers. The mall that was within bicycle riding distance of my home had a toy store that had some TSR products in it and I bought the Star Frontiers box set. My parents, particularly my Dad who loved science fiction, had no problem with it and I loved the game.

After that I got into Victory Games' James Bond 007, a game which I still love and, honestly, is still my favorite rule system. I love the skill system in that game and the chase system.

After that, my gaming group and I wanted to get into science fiction again and we discovered Traveller in 1987. After that, the majority of my gaming became me running Traveller though we never really cared for the Third Imperium setting.

CJ – Your company, Independence Games, used to be called Gypsy Knights Games. When did you first start the company and is this your first foray into RPG publishing?

JW – The company started in February of 2011. That was the first time I'd ever been involved with any kind of publishing.

CJ – How did you get into writing roleplaying games and what do you enjoy most about it? What inspiration do you draw from?

JW – Well, as I was saying before, in 1987 my gaming group and I discovered Traveller. Quite honestly, we loved the simplicity of the system, but we were not enamored with the Third Imperium setting so we made a few changes right off the bat to change it to be something we'd enjoy. In 1988, I left home and went to The University of Georgia and took my Traveller campaign with me.

When I got to college, I took the smaller changes that I'd made and continued the campaign with new players that I met at the university. Again, this new set of players agreed with the players from my hometown that we didn't care much for the Third Imperium setting and the players tasked me with coming up with something else that better matched our idea of how science fiction should be. I had recently gotten into Westerns and so that was a huge influence as well as my recent discovery of the British TV show Blake's 7. So I distilled those two things and my love for other media and books into what would become Clement Sector.

So as early as 1989, I was writing supplements, rules changes, and planetary systems for my players to read to get an idea of the setting. I never considered publishing any of that until I discovered in 2010 that Mongoose and Marc Miller had made the Traveller rules OGL. At that point, I started making plans, put together a business plan, and went into publishing the setting I'd been using for 22 years as Clement Sector.

CJ – Independence Games, how did that name come about, and would you like to share why you change the name from Gypsy Knight Games?

JW – Gypsy Knights had been the name of my gaming group since the early 90s and, in 2011, when I decided to begin publishing, it seemed to be the natural name to use for the company. In doing so, I fully expected that the members of the gaming group would also make contributions. As it turned out that really wasn't the case, so that was one reason that I decided there should be a name change.

The name of the gaming group stems from a campaign that I ran at a game shop in East Ridge, TN. The guy who was playing the captain was a guy named Tim Lee who thought it would be clever both as a nod to his last to name the ship "Gypsy Rose" as in the famous stripper, Gypsy Rose Lee. Gypsy Rose was the ship used by the characters until the end of that campaign when they became rulers of their own world. At that point, the captain, now king, determined that they would be "Gypsy Knights". Hence, the name of the gaming group and, later, the name of the company.
I embraced the name not only because of the gaming group but also because, at the time, I worked in construction. Those who were "independent" and were not part of the local union or part of a large corporation were called "gypsies" which carried the implication that they were independent and that was something I wanted to convey with the company name.

So I'd never really heard the term used as a pejorative nor did I think it could ever be offensive to anyone. I'd never heard it used as any sort of negative term, so it somewhat took me by surprise when folks began telling me that it was around 2015 or so. As I looked into it, I determined that it seemed to be a pejorative in Europe and the UK, so I started taking time to kind of look at changing the name... something I had considered since the first paragraph of this story became true. The troubles with Mongoose and all of the resulting problems of changing 30+ books at the time, resulted in me shelving the name change idea for a while as I had to retool everything for Cepheus.

By 2019, it became obvious that a name change was not only something I wanted to do, but something that was needed as we continued to be more popular in





places that might find the name somewhat offensive. So I started looking for replacement names and was shocked that the name I wanted all along "Independence Games" was not taken. So I acted rather quickly and changed the name of the company within a day or two of this realization.

I'm in the business to sell games. I want people to have fun. I've no intent or desire to offend anyone, so that coupled with my earlier desire to change the name anyway made the name change a no-brainer.

On top of all of that, "Gypsy Knights Games" has an error built right into the name. As I intended to have the company be a group effort of my gaming group, it was originally intended to be "Gypsy Knights' Games". As it became unclear if this would be the case, I left out the apostrophe. Over time, folks thought I was the "Gypsy Knight" and it was "Gypsy Knight's Games". The error in the name of the company irritated me greatly and that was also a major contributing factor to the change.

CJ – Besides yourself, does Independence Games have any other members on the team? If so, when and how did they join Independence Games and what unique qualities do they bring?

JW – Technically, the only employees of Independence Games are myself and my wife who handles some of the money transactions. So in a technical sense, there's only two employees of the company. My wife and I are in Ringgold, Georgia which is a suburb of Chattanooga, Tennessee in the Southeast US.

However, we do use many of the same freelancers on our products and I value them as members of the overall team. Our current freelancer team includes:

Michael Johnson - Michael is a civil engineer from Perth, Australia who has become the Independence Games starship design guru. I'm not a fan of making starship designs, but Michael loves doing it and he has designed some amazing starships for the company. Michael has been responsible for writing all of our starship books and The Anderson & Felix Guide to Naval Architecture which is our starship design system for Clement Sector. He's also written our military guides such as Hub Federation Navy, the Wendy's series, and the Tim's series. Michael has been with us since some of our earliest days.

Ian Stead - Ian is a professional artist from the UK who is, in my opinion, the greatest starship artist working today. I was lucky enough to get Ian doing some work for my books in the earliest days of the company and he's still working with us on the books today.

Jennifer Leonard - Jennifer is a comic book artist from my local area who has worked with Zenoscope and several others. I met Jennifer through a local comic book shop and she's been doing art for the books for several years now and we're happy to have her onboard.

Curtis Rickman - I've known Curtis since I was in high school and his attention to detail has made him a fantastic editor. Curtis goes over everything that is written for Independence Games and catches all of the dropped words, grammar errors, and misspellings and tries to keep us error-free in that regard. Curtis has been with Independence Games since the earliest days as well. Curtis lives in Missouri.





CJ – What was your first product, which is your best-selling product and which product are you most proud of?

JW – Our first product was a supplement introducing the world Kyiv in the Cascadia Subsector. This was one of many worlds which were part of the setting I'd worked on in college and it seemed like a natural start for the Quick Worlds series of books which was the first series we published.

Clement Sector is both our best-selling product and the one of which I'm most proud. It's the setting book for the overall Clement Sector game and really the foundation for a lot of the products we publish.

CJ – Independence Games has a range of settings/rules, including Clement Sector, Earth Sector and Rider. Was there a plan for how these titles came out, or just an organic growth, or maybe something else?

JW – Clement Sector is, for the most part, my campaign for my gaming group with some additions made from our freelancers as well as things that I thought would be improvements to the setting. There was a definite plan for how the setting would be brought out to the public in the form of the setting book and supplements. Some of that got derailed in 2016 with the "messy divorce" from Mongoose, but after that was placed firmly in the rearview mirror, we were able to get back to the overall plan of introducing people to the setting.

Action Movie Physics was next. It was based on the Classified SRD which was retro-clone of the James Bond 007 game to which I referred earlier. It was my attempt to create an "action movie RPG" which met with limited success.

Earth Sector came after that. Earth Sector, while a bit of a separate game, is really just an extension of the Clement Sector setting. A lot of people online and at conventions would approach me and ask me to tell the story of what happened in Earth Sector after the wormhole (or "Conduit" as we like to call it) collapsed and the two sectors were separated. Whereas Clement Sector was largely something I created over time from the late 80s to the early 2010s, Earth Sector is a newer creation and something whose creation is still ongoing.

Rider comes from my love of Westerns. In all honesty, I've always wanted to make a Western RPG and that affected the design of Clement Sector. With the advent of Rider, I've achieved my goal of creating a Western RPG and we've just recently released New Liberty, which is a setting book for Rider.

CJ – What attracted you to the Cepheus Engine? Which of your titles was the most fun to write?

JW – After the Mongoose unpleasantness, we were faced with finding a new way to continue publishing our setting because we had absolutely no desire to work with Mongoose after that in any way. At first, we had felt the best thing for us to do was just use the OGL portions of the Traveller rules, but Jason Kemp approached us about his recent creation of Cepheus Engine. So we happily moved everything over to Cepheus.

I'd met Jason at GenCon and played in several of his Traveller games there, so I knew him to be a quality individual and I was happy to throw in with Cepheus.

I have fun writing all of the books I've





written. Despite this being my primary job and the sole way I make money to pay my bills, it's still a lot of fun for me to do. By far, this is the best job I've ever had.

Most recently, I had an absolute blast putting together New Liberty, working with a new freelancer (TA Maps) on the town itself, and coming up with all of the NPCs who inhabit the small town.

CJ – What are you working on now? Any plans for future titles you would like to share with our readers?

JW – My current project is putting the Clement Sector Core Setting Book and Clement Sector: The Rules (our version of the Cepheus Engine) into a single book. So sort of a version 2.5 I suppose as we're making a few minor changes that I've always felt needed to be made (For instance, I hate having Social Standing as a stat...) and repairing a few errors that slipped into the original books.

After that, we have more adventures planned for Clement Sector, more expansion of Earth Sector in the form of more subsector books, another Wendy's Guide to the Fleets of Earth Sector, more Tim's Guide set in Clement Sector, and more adventures for Rider.

So tons more to come from us!

CJ – Besides DriveThruRPG, what other avenues are available for purchasing your books? Any other web presences (blogs, Facebook, etc.) you'd like to promote for Independence Games?

JW – We also have a webstore that is here: https://independencerpgs.com/ . Currently, you can only buy PDFs there, but we're hoping to get print books available there soon as well.

We have an active presence on Facebook, MeWe, and Discord. If you search for the Independence Games Discussion Group on Facebook or MeWe, you'll find us there.

And this is an invitation link to our Discord server where we talk about all of our games: https://discord.gg/846ypJtCaH

CJ – Do you/Independence Games, ever make it to any conventions, at least before Covid? Do you get to interact much with fans?

JW – I love going to conventions and usually make it to several across the Southeastern US where I run games, do panels, and sell books. We also usually get to TravellerCon/USA in Lancaster, PA each year as well. Covid has put a serious dampener on all of that unfortunately for a variety of reasons, but hopefully we can put that in the rearview soon.

We definitely have a lot of contact with fans online in the online discussion groups, but I do miss seeing people at conventions and hopefully we can get back to that soon.

CJ – One final question, what do you like to do to unwind when you're not writing?

JW – I read a lot. I tend to read a lot of detective and crime novels. I'm currently working my way through Robert Parker's Spenser series and I just finished Lawrence Block's Scudder series. I'm a huge fan of the Longmire novel series by Craig Johnson.

My wife has recently gotten me into watching Formula 1, so I do love to watch a race on Sundays when they are on TV. I do play several of the Paradox strategy



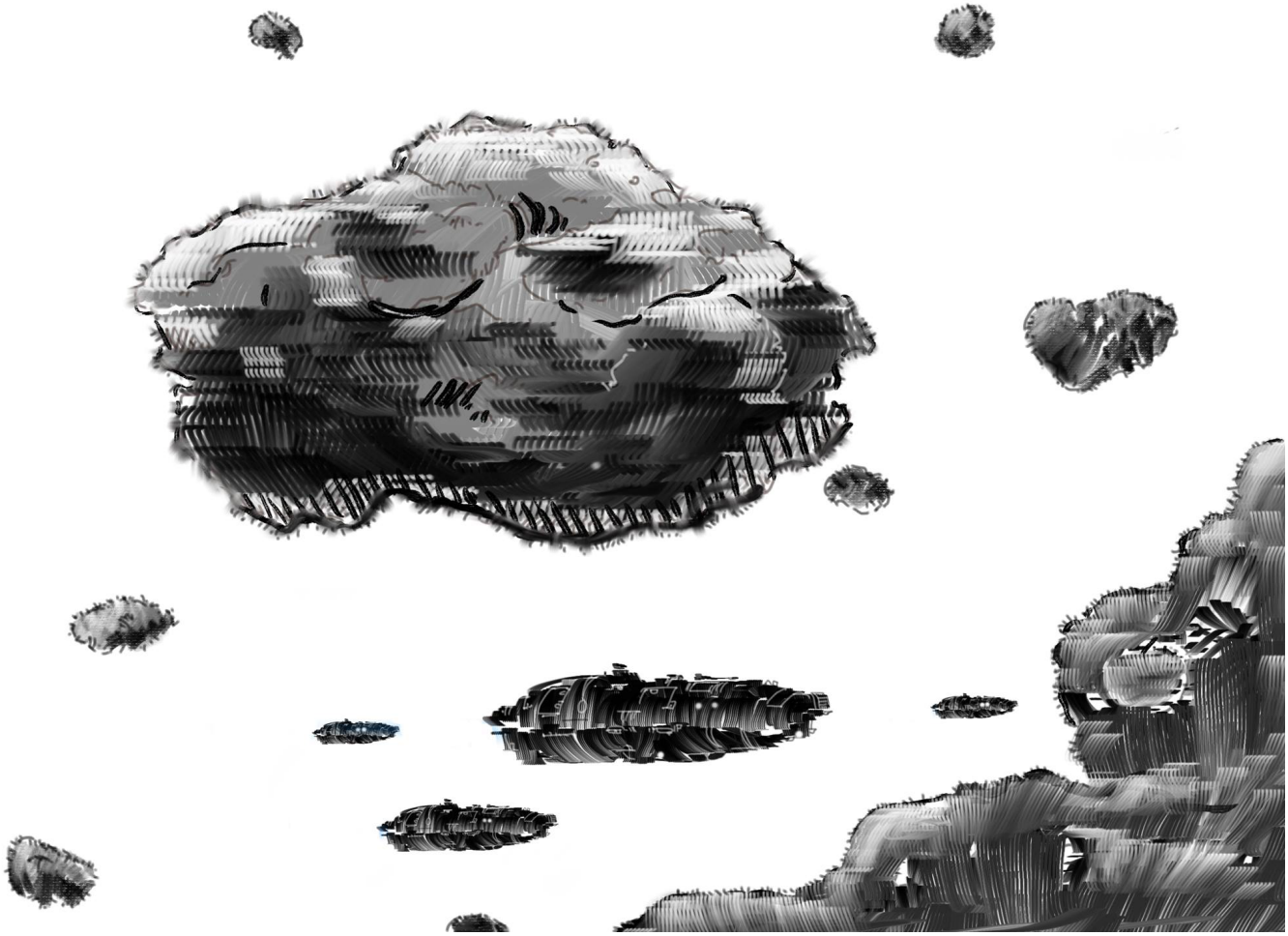


games such as Imperator: Rome, Stellaris, and Europa Universalis.

And I'm a member of the Chattanooga Irregular Wargames Association where we tend to play miniatures wargames of various types. We've recently been playing a campaign of Eastern Front WW2 and before that we were playing a Gaslands campaign. I'm probably the only wargamer on the planet who hates painting miniatures, so I tend to play more than collect.

CJ – Again, thank you for your time, John.

JW - Thanks for interviewing me! It's been fun!



What's New

By Brett Kruger

The following products were released during the months of August and September.

Ordo Arcanorum
- Opus Magi: Hidden Ways

Old School Role Playing
- Starport
  - A Rumble in the Jungle
  - The Sleeper Awakens
  - Furnace
  - The Gods Left It Behind

Felbrigg Herriot
- Cepheus Map
- Cepheus Trade
- Cepheus Wilderness Encounters
- Cepheus Characters
- Cepheus Shipyard
- Cepheus Galaxy
- Imperial Credits: The New Spaceman

Independence Games
- Rider Core Bundle [BUNDLE]
- New Liberty
- Brightwater-class Personal Yacht
- 21 Characters: Clement Sector

Stellagama Publishing
- Cepheus Deluxe Reference
- Cepheus Light: Upgraded
- Cepheus Deluxe

Menagerie Press
- The Pool Below (Sword of Cepheus Compatible)

Zozer Games
- HOSTILE Situation Report 005 - One Of Us
- Colony Builder

Ordo Arcanorum
- Opus Magi

Wild Bee Publishing
- Solis People of the Sun

EDGE Studio
- Solo Rules Supplement

Earl of Fife Games
- Mirror Image - Adventure for Cepheus RPG

CyborgPrime Publishing
- Type E Starport For VTT: Tropical Downport Day and Night

Monachus Press
- Moth System Observation Post

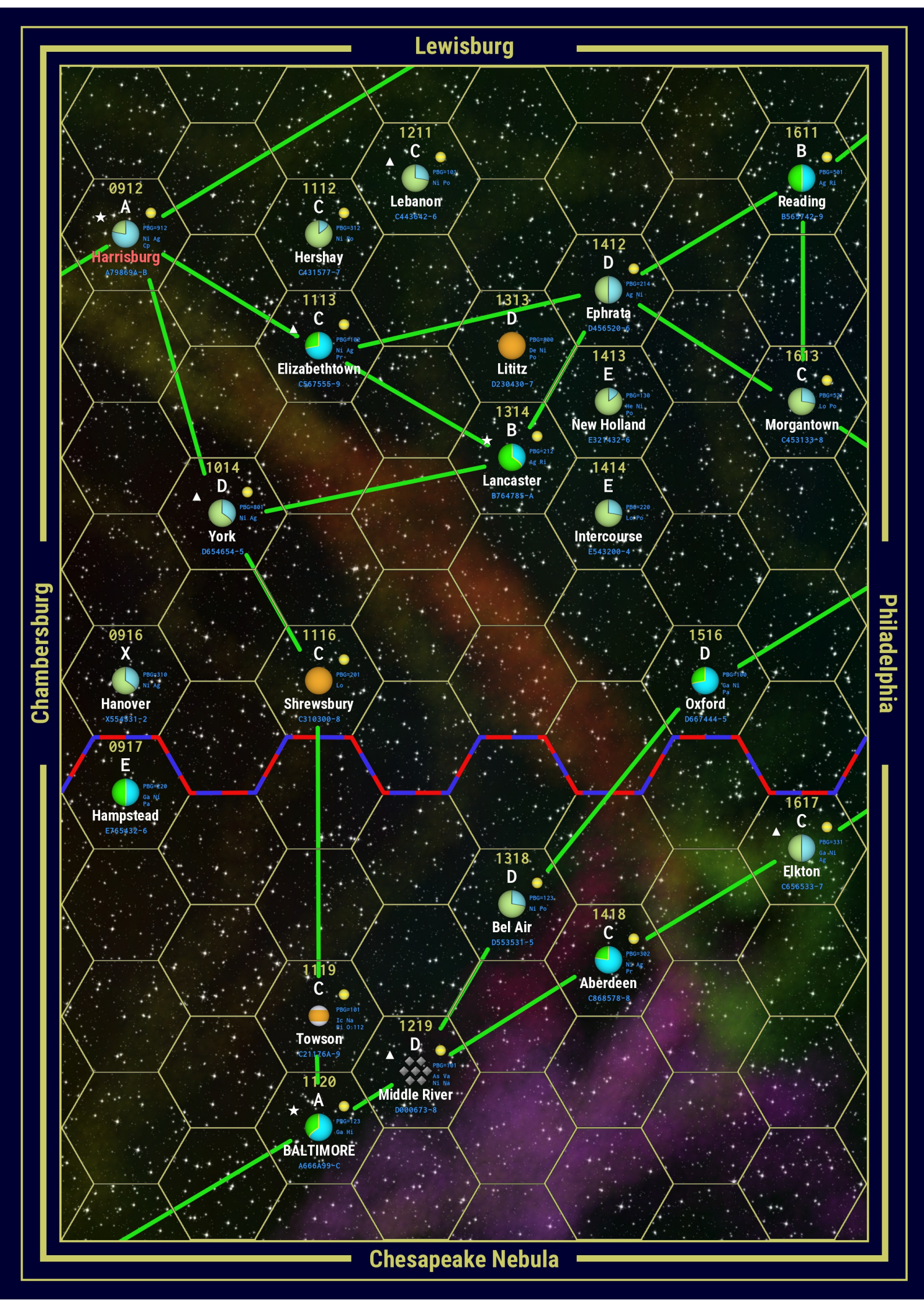
Moon Toad Publishing
- Gladius Battalion Handbook

EN Publishing
- What is NEW is Solo

Michael Brown
- New World: 2D6 Adventure in a Cyberpunk America
- Port of Call: Harrigan's Rock
- Posse Comitatus
- Sunset
- Mapping Vacuum Worlds
- Betrayal on Bethic
- Port of Call: Shahrazad and Dunyazad
- The Abaddon Enigma
- That Which Is Hidden
- Burst Transmissions, vol. 7
- Burst Transmissions, vols. 1-7 [BUNDLE]






Lewisburg
Chambersburg
Philadelphia
Chesapeake Nebula
0912
A
Harrisburg
A79869A-B
1112
C
Hershay
C431577-7
1211
C
Lebanon
C443642-6
1611
B
Reading
B565742-9
1412
D
Ephrata
D456520-6
1113
C
Elizabethtown
C567555-9
1313
D
Lititz
D230430-7
1413
E
New Holland
E327432-6
1613
C
Morgantown
C453133-8
1314
B
Lancaster
B764785-A
1014
D
York
D654654-5
1414
E
Intercourse
E543200-4
0916
X
Hanover
X554331-2
1116
C
Shrewsbury
C310300-8
1516
D
Oxford
D667444-5
0917
E
Hampstead
E765432-6
1617
C
Elkton
C656533-7
1318
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Bel Air
D553531-5
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Aberdeen
C868578-8
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Towson
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