GURPS®

This is Free Trader Beowulf,
calling anyone . . .
Mayday, Mayday . . . we are under attack . . .
main drive is gone . . .
turret number one not responding . . .
Mayday . . . losing cabin pressure fast . . .
calling anyone . . . please help . . .
This is Free Trader Beowulf . . .
Mayday . . .

Traveller®

Science Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

Second Edition

By Loren K. Wiseman

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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THE TRAVELLERS:

Written by
LOREN K. WISEMAN

Based on the Award-Winning Game by
MARC MILLER

Additional material by
DAVID PULVER
AND SEAN PUNCH

Edited by
JACK ELMY, STEVE JACKSON,
AND GENE SEABOLT

Illustrated by
YESSE AMERICA,
KURT BRUGEL,
ROB CASWELL,
JESSE DEGRAFF,
LANGDON FOSS,
GLENN GRANT,
MARCUS KIM,
DANIEL LUNSFORD,
ALAN NUNIS,
TOM PETERS, AND
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GURPS®

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Science Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

SECOND EDITION

By **LOREN WISEMAN**

Based on the award-winning Traveller science-fiction universe by **MARC MILLER**

Spaceship Design and Combat System by **DAVID PULVER**

Character Templates by **SEAN PUNCH**

Additional Material and Assistance by **M.J. DOUGHERTY, NEIL FRIER, WILLIAM H. KEITH, JR., J. ANDREW KEITH, DAVID NILSEN, DAVID SUMMERS, AND AERRON WINSOR**

Edited by **JACK ELMY, STEVE JACKSON, AND GENE SEABOLT**

Illustrated by **YESSE AMERICA, KURT BRUGEL, ROB CASWELL, JESSE DEGRAFF, LANGDON FOSS, GLENN GRANT, MARCUS KIM, DANIEL LUNSFORD, ALLEN NUNIS, TOM PETERS, AND LANCE WINKEL**

GURPS System Design ▌STEVE JACKSON

Managing Editor ▌ANDREW HACKARD

GURPS Line Editor ▌SEAN PUNCH

GURPS Traveller Line Editor ▌JON F. ZEIGLER

Production ▌JACK ELMY AND GENE SEABOLT

Production Assistance ▌ALEX FERNANDEZ AND J. ZAUDER

Print Buyer ▌MONICA STEPHENS

Art Direction ▌ALAIN H. DAWSON and LOREN WISEMAN

GURPS Errata Coordinator ▌ANDY VETROMILE

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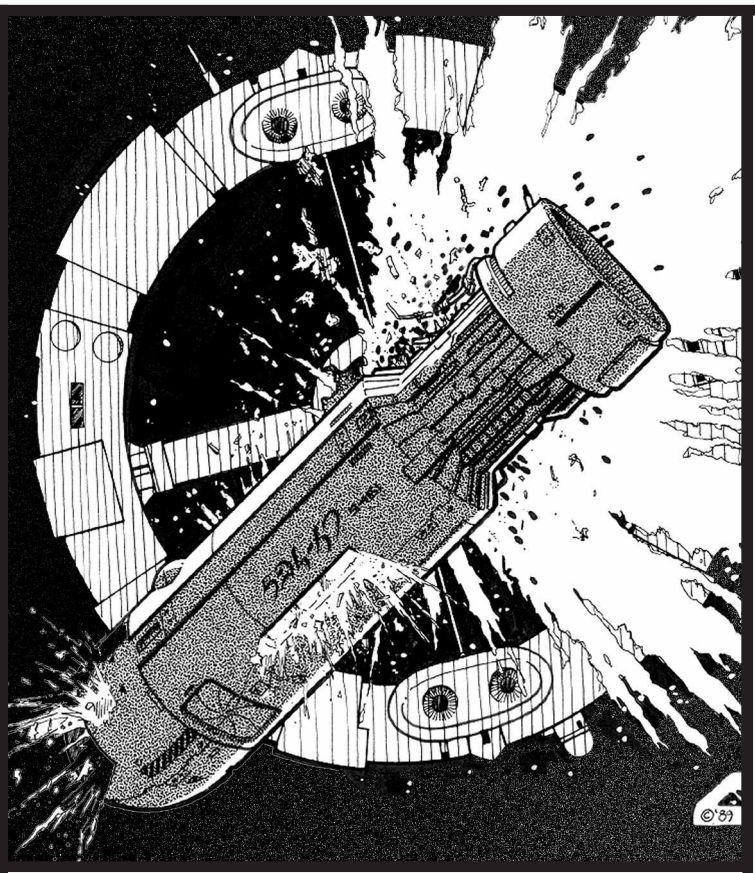

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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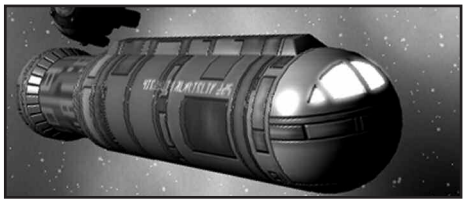

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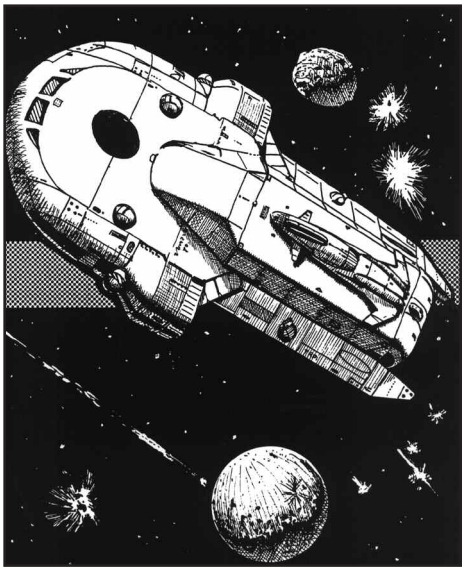


About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the ***GURPS*** system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (**www.sjgames.com/pyramid/**). Our online magazine includes new ***GURPS*** rules and articles. It also covers ***Dungeons and Dragons, Traveller, World of Darkness, Call of Cthulhu,*** and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like ***In Nomine, Illuminati, Car Wars, Toon, Ogre Miniatures,*** and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. ***GURPS*** continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our website (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all ***GURPS*** releases, including this book, are available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at **www.sjgames.com** for an online catalog, errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. ***GURPS*** has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of ***GURPS.*** To join, e-mail majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your web browser to **gurpsnet.sjgames.com**.

The ***GURPS Traveller*** web page is at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/**.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the ***GURPS Basic Set*** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate ***GURPS Compendium I.*** Other references are CII for ***GURPS Compendium II,*** S for ***GURPS Space,*** UT for ***GURPS Ultra-Tech,*** UTT for ***GURPS Ultra-Tech 2,*** and VE to ***GURPS Vehicles.*** The abbreviation for *this* book is GT. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html**.

Introduction

Traveller was first published by Game Designers' Workshop in 1977, and was one of the first science-fiction roleplaying games (indeed, one of the first roleplaying games of any sort). With one of the most extensive backgrounds of *any* RPG, ***Traveller*** quickly attracted many loyal fans (some of whom were inspired to add to the background themselves) and rapidly grew to become the standard against which other SF roleplaying games were measured. The broad scope of the game's milieu has given thousands a canvas upon which to paint, in broad strokes or fine, a universe all their own, but still one they could share with others. It is, after all, a big universe.

Traveller went through several editions over the years, and quite a few changes were incorporated along the way. One of those was the Rebellion. In the 1116th year of the Third Imperium, Emperor Strephon was assassinated by a power-seeking rival, and the Imperium split into several warring factions, shaking the very foundations of the game . . . and bringing conflict and excitement to languishing campaigns.

As fascinating as the Rebellion was, there existed a desire in the minds of many for the whole thing to have never happened! (GDW once parodied this sentiment in an April Fool's Day issue of *Challenge* magazine, wherein we described Strephon's assassin awakening to discover Strephon in the shower.) Over the years, GDW was approached by several outside authors, all with the idea for a sourcebook where Strephon lived and the Rebellion never happened – in essence, an alternate timeline for ***Traveller***. GDW never followed up on these proposals for various reasons. This same idea, however, is what Steve Jackson Games has undertaken: an alternate timeline, a parallel universe, if you will, where Strephon, the 43rd Emperor of the Third Imperium, lives. This is not to say that all is well with the universe. A story without conflict is not a very good story. So, expect things to happen in this universe . . . changes *will* occur.

There is another reason for ***GURPS Traveller***. Many of the original books that detail the history and background of the Third Imperium are long out of print. In this work, new players and referees can have access to the same information as 20-year collectors. Enjoy.

A number of individuals have contributed suggestions and ideas for this book. A few have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks (in great profusion, and in no particular order) to Sean Punch (aka Dr. Kromm), David Pulver, Brett Slocum, and David Summers, as well as the ***GURPS*** Brain Trust, the ***GURPS Traveller*** Impromptu Cabal (you know who you are), and the ***Traveller*** Mailing List.

Lastly, the author would like to pay tribute to those giants whose shoulders have served him so very well. ***Traveller*** is, was, and always will be a collective creation, and I don't have space to even mention, let alone properly honor, all of the people whose talents and imaginations have contributed to the game. Thanks.

– Loren Wiseman

About the Author

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publisher of ***Traveller,*** and spent over 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced for a time, and then came to SJ Games, where he is the ***Traveller*** Senior Line Editor, Senior Editor for the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* and expert-in-residence.

The Traveller News Service

For many years a feature of the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, ***TNS*** chronicled the ongoing life and times of the Imperium. Loren Wiseman is once again writing ***TNS*** as the alternate history of the Third Imperium develops. It is updated regularly; read it online at **www.sjgames. com/gurps/traveller/news.html**. "Back issues" of *TNS* are also online.

The SJ Games ***Traveller*** page has links to the ***Traveller*** Web Ring, and thus links to most of the major ***Traveller***-oriented web sites that exist. For information on subscribing to the ***Traveller*** Mailing List, contact rwm@mpgn.com.

The Xboat network puts the edge of the Imperium about 44 weeks out from Core/Capital; that represents a savings of better than 75% of normal travel time. And still the Imperium is straining under the effects of distance.

Feudalism

The vast distances separating stellar systems make individual responsibility and authority very important. The Imperium is divided into 20 sectors, each about 32-by-40 parsecs. Each sector is divided into 16 subsectors (8-by-10 parsecs). A subsector contains perhaps 30 or more systems, each with at least one star, worlds, and satellites.

Worlds and star systems are free to govern themselves pretty much as they desire, provided ultimate sovereignty over external affairs is accorded the Imperium. Interstellar government begins at the subsector level, on one world designated the subsector capital. The subsector capital is ruled by a high-ranking noble selected by higher levels of government. This figure, normally called a duke (technically a sector duke, but even in official documents the shorter title has come into vogue) has a free hand in government, and is subject only to broad guidelines from his superiors. At the same time, the duke owes fealty to the higher levels of government, ultimately to the emperor himself. The feudal approach depends greatly on a sense of honor, one cultivated by the hereditary aristocracy. This sense of honor is very strong within the Imperium; it has proven essential to the survival of such a far-flung community. The system has worked for a very long time.

Recovery was slow, but some worlds finally clawed their way back up the ladder of civilization. Gradually, as interstellar travel was rediscovered, star systems coalesced into larger interstellar states, and these began to grow. Finally, over 1,100 years ago, on a world named Sylea, a Human named Cleon Zhunastu converted the multi-world Sylean Federation into the Third Imperium.

It is now the 1120th year of that Third Imperium, and Cleon's 42nd successor now rules an empire larger and more advanced than either that preceded it. The Third Imperium is not alone. Other interstellar governments stand on its boundaries as neighbors, allies, enemies, partners, and competitors.

Some think that the Third Imperium has also grown too large, and is headed for collapse, but others believe it will adapt itself to changing conditions and continue ever stronger.

And the answer to the riddle as to where did Humaniti originate? In 1120, it is known that all Humans in the universe descend from groups removed from Terra more than 100 millennia in the past, and carried to dozens of worlds by an unknown agency. Who was this agency? Who scattered Humaniti throughout the galaxy, and why? For every answer, it seems, there is another question.

We Are Not Alone

The known interstellar community encompasses thousands of worlds, many of them inhabited, and not all by Humaniti. The number of intelligent life-forms that has been contacted is quite high: within the Imperium itself, more than 100. When regions beyond the Imperial boundaries are included, the total number rises to well over 400.

Major and Minor Races: A superficial classification system for the various intelligent races has been created, based on empirical evidence and to some extent on tradition. In general, the dominant races of known space are those which have achieved faster-than-light travel by themselves, rather than receiving it through contact with starfaring civilizations. These dominant races are called major races; all others are called minor races. Thus, the term major race has become attached to a single technical development regardless of other merit. A somewhat sound reason backs this concept: Races that developed FTL rapidly expanded into space, spreading their influence across the stars. Slower races were contacted before they had a chance to discover the FTL secret and emerged into a universe already controlled by the major races. Indeed, the shock of being found by a superior race (often superior only in their knowledge of FTL technology) may demoralize that race as a whole, causing them to reluctantly accept a secondary role in interstellar society. The classification scheme is, of course, simplistic, but the major races tend to perpetuate it since it works to their advantage.

Chapter Two
Details of a Universe

This chapter discusses the details of the ***Traveller*** universe, and serves more as a Game Master briefing than a players' guide. Most of the information in this chapter was designed to be given out during a game session, as part of a character's background knowledge or as a result of their research. Some sections are intended for GMs only, and are clearly marked as such.

FTL Travel – The Jump Drive

The key to the stars is the jump drive. Without it, the space between the stars takes years, even lifetimes, to cross; with it, starships travel parsec distances in a matter of days. The development of a jump drive marks the beginning of interstellar travel for any race, including Humaniti.

A jump drive is both fast and simple. With one, it is possible to move from *here* to *there* (where both places are at least 100 diameters out from any large masses) in a period of about a week. The time in transit is independent of the distance traveled, which makes this system practical for interstellar travel, but for little else. The distance traveled with the jump drive depends on the drive in use – from 1 to 6 parsecs, with greater distances as yet unavailable. In point of fact, the current theory of jump drive actually precludes greater jump distances (these can occasionally occur by accident, but the destination is totally uncontrollable). See p. 44 and p. 157 for more about jump drives.

Another central fact of interstellar travel is that no method of information transfer faster than jump drives has been invented. Ships can carry messages, but radio still lags at mere light speed. Communication is always restricted to the speed of interstellar transportation. The very fastest ships have jump-6 . . . so news and commerce never travel more than 6 parsecs per week, and usually more slowly than that.

Government

It is often said that the Imperium rules the space between worlds and leaves the dirt to the worlds themselves, but that is (as with most sayings) a simplification. In point of fact, the Imperium governs all things it chooses to govern, which includes the space between the worlds within its boundaries, but also includes many worlds themselves, and a great many places besides. The Imperium controls and/or regulates:

- All interstellar commerce and relations within its boundaries.
- Any planetary commerce and relations that affect the control and/or regulation of the above.
- Anything that constitutes a threat to the stability or security of the Imperium as a whole or in part.
- Any planetary or near-planetary bodies necessary to control and/or regulate the above.

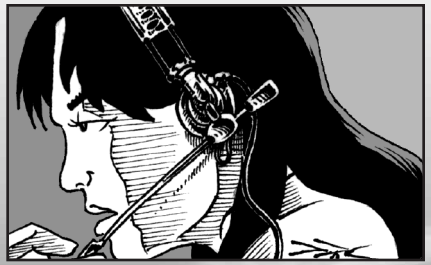
The Metric System

The original ***Traveller*** used – and in its present edition, still uses – the metric system of measurements. This was done to give the game a scientific basis, as well as a more international aspect and appeal. ***GURPS*** uses the imperial system of weights and measures in its American editions, but metric in its overseas translations (German, Spanish, etc.). ***GURPS Traveller*** will use the imperial system, for compatibility with other ***GURPS*** products.

Game Masters who wish to preserve the overall scientific feel of the original may make use of the metric system with the author's blessing, and a conversion table is provided herewith (please note that "imperial" on this table denotes the system of measurement used in the United States, and not that of the ***Traveller*** Imperium). The first column gives a "quick-and-dirty" conversion value, good enough for most gaming purposes, and the second gives a more precise value.

Imperial	*Game Metric*	*Real Metric*
1 foot (ft)	30 cm	30.48 cm
1 yd (yd)	1 meter	0.914 meter
1 mile (mi)	1.5 km	1.609 km
1 inch (in)	2.5 cm	2.54 cm
1 pound (lb)	0.5 kg	0.453 kg
1 ton (tn)	1 metric ton	0.907 metric tons
1 long ton (tn)	1 metric ton	1.02 metric tons
1 gallon (gal)	4 liters	3.785 liters
1 quart (qt)	1 liter	0.946 liters
1 ounce (oz)	30 grams	31.103 grams
1 cubic inch (ci)	16 cubic cm	16.387 cubic cm
1 cubic yard (cy)	0.75 cubic m	0.765 cubic m

Temperatures: To convert degrees Fahrenheit to degrees Celsius, subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit reading and multiply by 5/9. Note that -40 degrees is the same on both scales.



Merchant — 75 points

Many campaigns will focus on the crew of the futuristic equivalent of a tramp steamer, moving from place to place and eking out a living on the edge of the frontier. A keen eye for a bargain, and a sharp sense of profit and loss (and, in some places, a quick draw!) are vital job skills.

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 13 [30], HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 30 points in Ally Group (2-5 75-point crewmen, 9 or less) [10]; Charisma [5/level]; Claim to Hospitality (Trade guilds, etc.) [1 to 10]; Contacts (Business; skill-18, 9 or less, somewhat reliable) [3/contact]; Cultural Adaptability [25]; Empathy [15]; Intuition [15]; Language Talent [2/level]; Lightning Calculator [5]; Luck [15]; Strong Will [4/level]; and Wealth [10 to 30].

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points in Code of Honor (Merchant's) [-5]; Compulsive Gambling [-5]; Compulsive Generosity [-5]; Compulsive Spending [-5]; Enemy (Bounty hunter, 6 or less) [-5]; Extravagance [-10]; Greed [-15]; Jealousy [-10]; Miserliness [-10]; Overweight or Fat [-5 to -20]; Selfish [-5]; Stubbornness [-5]; and Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Merchant (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-15.

Secondary Skills: Accounting (M/H) IQ [4]-13; Administration (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Computer Operation (M/E) IQ [1]-13; Economics (M/H) IQ [4]-13; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Freight Handling (M/A) IQ [2]-13; and Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-13.

Background Skills: A total of 12 points in Area Knowledge (any) or Gesture, both (M/E); Astrogation, Gambling, Holdout, Language (any), or Streetwise, all (M/A); Detect Lies, Forgery, or Law, all (M/H); Appreciate Beauty (M/VH); Beam Weapons (any), Brawling, Fast-Draw (Pistol), or Guns (any), all (P/E); Piloting (Starship) (P/A); Carousing (P/A; HT); or any primary or secondary skill.

Customization Notes: Background skills should reflect your market, goods, and the size of your operation. A "lone wolf" selling stolen military technology out of the back of a scout ship will want Astrogation-13 [2], Piloting-12 [8], and Streetwise-13 [2]; the master of a corporate trading vessel is likely to use those points to get Administration-16 [8] and Economics-16 [10].

Professor — 70 points

This template represents an academician who spends more of his time teaching than in research (compare *Scientist,* p. 98).

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 14 [45], HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 20 points in Claim to Hospitality (Universities) [1 to 10]; Language Talent [2/level]; Lightning Calculator [5]; Mathematical Ability [10]; Reputation (Famous academician) [varies]; Status 1-2 [5 or 10]; Strong Will [4/level]; Tenure [5]; Versatile [5]; Voice [10]; and Wealth [10 or 20].

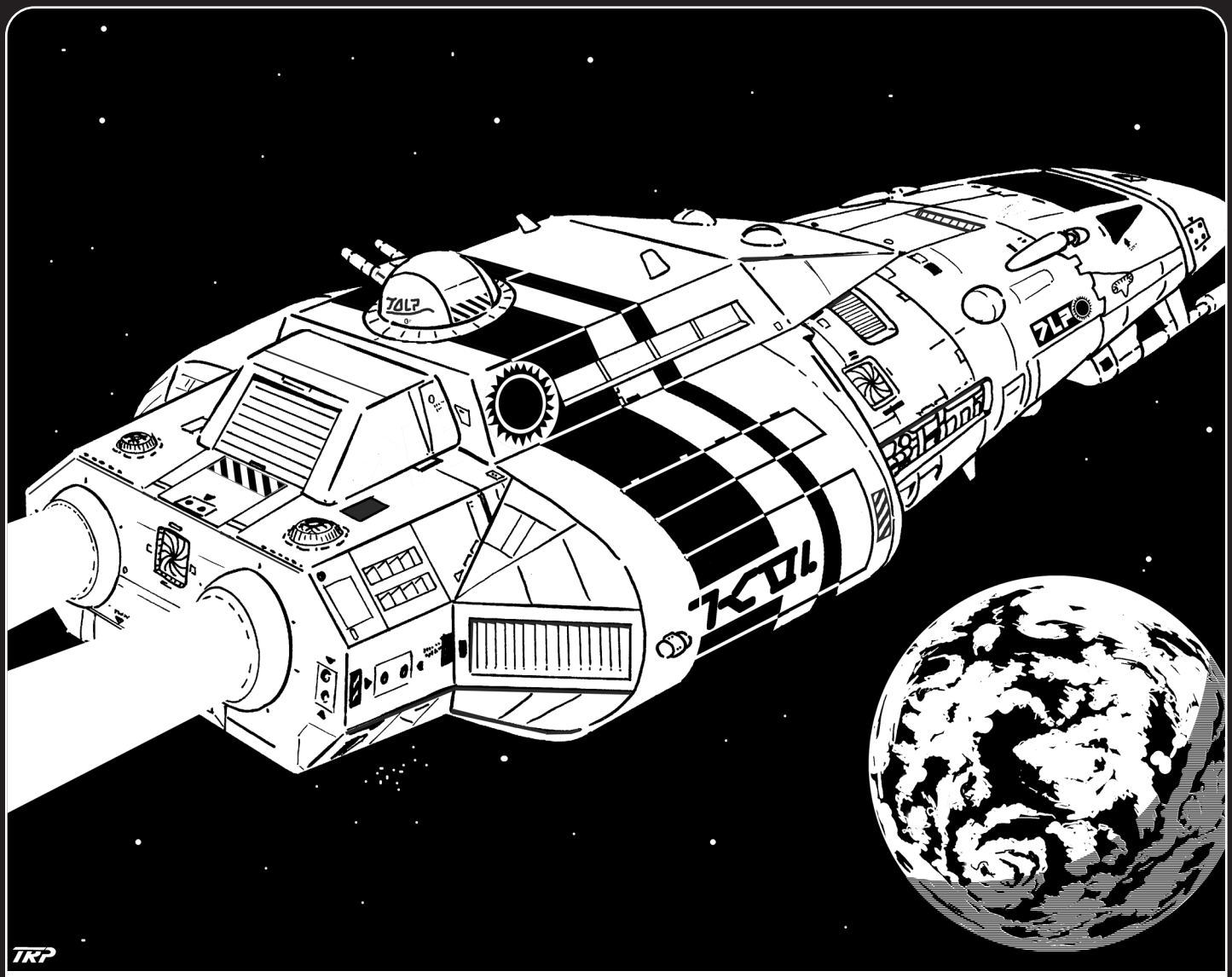
Disadvantages: A total of -20 points chosen from Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Age [-3/year]; Bad Sight (Correctable) [-10]; Clueless [-10]; Duty (Teaching; non-hazardous, 12 or less) [-5] or (15 or less) [-10]; Hard of Hearing [-10]; Indecisive [-10]; Intolerance (Uneducated people) [-5]; Oblivious [-3]; and Sense of Duty (Anyone who needs tutelage) [-10].

Primary Skills: Teaching (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-15; plus either **two** of Anthropology, Archaeology, Artificial Intelligence, Astronomy, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Programming, Cryptology, Ecology, Economics, Geology, History, Law, Literature, Mathematics, Paleontology, Philosophy, Physician, Physics, Psychology, Theology, or Xenology, all (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-16, or **one** of Genetics, Linguistics, or Physiology, all (M/VH) IQ+2 [16]-16.

Secondary Skills: Computer Operation (M/E) IQ-1 [½]-13; Research (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Speed-Reading (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-13; and Writing (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-13.

Background Skills: Bard (M/A) IQ-2 [½]-12; Language (any) (M/A) IQ-2 [½]-12; and Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ-1 [½]-13.

Customization Notes: If choosing two fields, make sure the combination is logical; e.g., Archaeology and Paleontology, Botany and Ecology, Philosophy and Theology. Professors often have skill in advanced fields like Biochemistry (M/VH) (requires Chemistry at 12+), Hyperspace Physics (M/VH) (requires Mathematics, Nuclear Physics, and Physics at 15+), Nuclear Physics (M/VH) (requires Mathematics and Physics at 15+), and Paraphysics (M/VH) (requires Physics and Biochemistry at 12+).



Beowulf-Class 200-ton Free Trader (TL10)

The *Beowulf* class is the most common design of Free Trader, at least in the frontier regions of the Imperium and the surrounding client states. Huge megacorporate transports dominate mercantile service in the Imperial core regions. These little freighters fill the irregular and small-lot needs of the less habitated fringes, while keeping overhead and crew administration needs to a minimum.

Numerous formal variants, and a myriad of individual modifications, mean that the deck plan layout presented is subject to considerable change.

The *Beowulf's* most serious limitation is that it is only capable of jump-1, meaning that it is restricted to the "mains," as the stretches of J-1 linked star systems are called.

Captains often omit the air/raft and use the spacedock for additional cargo.

- **Crew:** Captain/pilot, navigator, sensor/commo operator, steward, and two engineers. One of the crew will serve double duty as a pilot for the enclosed air/raft if carried aboard.
- **Design:** 200-ton SL Hull, DR 100. *Modules:* 1 Basic Bridge, 1 Engineering, 16 Maneuver, 4 Jump, 20 Fuel, 5 Low Berths (capacity 20), 10 Staterooms, 1 Spacedock (up to 250 cf air/raft), 1 Utility, 2 Fuel Processors, 2 Turrets, 68 Cargo (+6 in Turrets).
- **Statistics:** EMass 257, LMass 598, Cost MCr28.9, HP: 22,500. Size Modifier: +8.
- **Performance:** Accel 1.1 Gs, Jump 1, Air Speed 1,700.

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