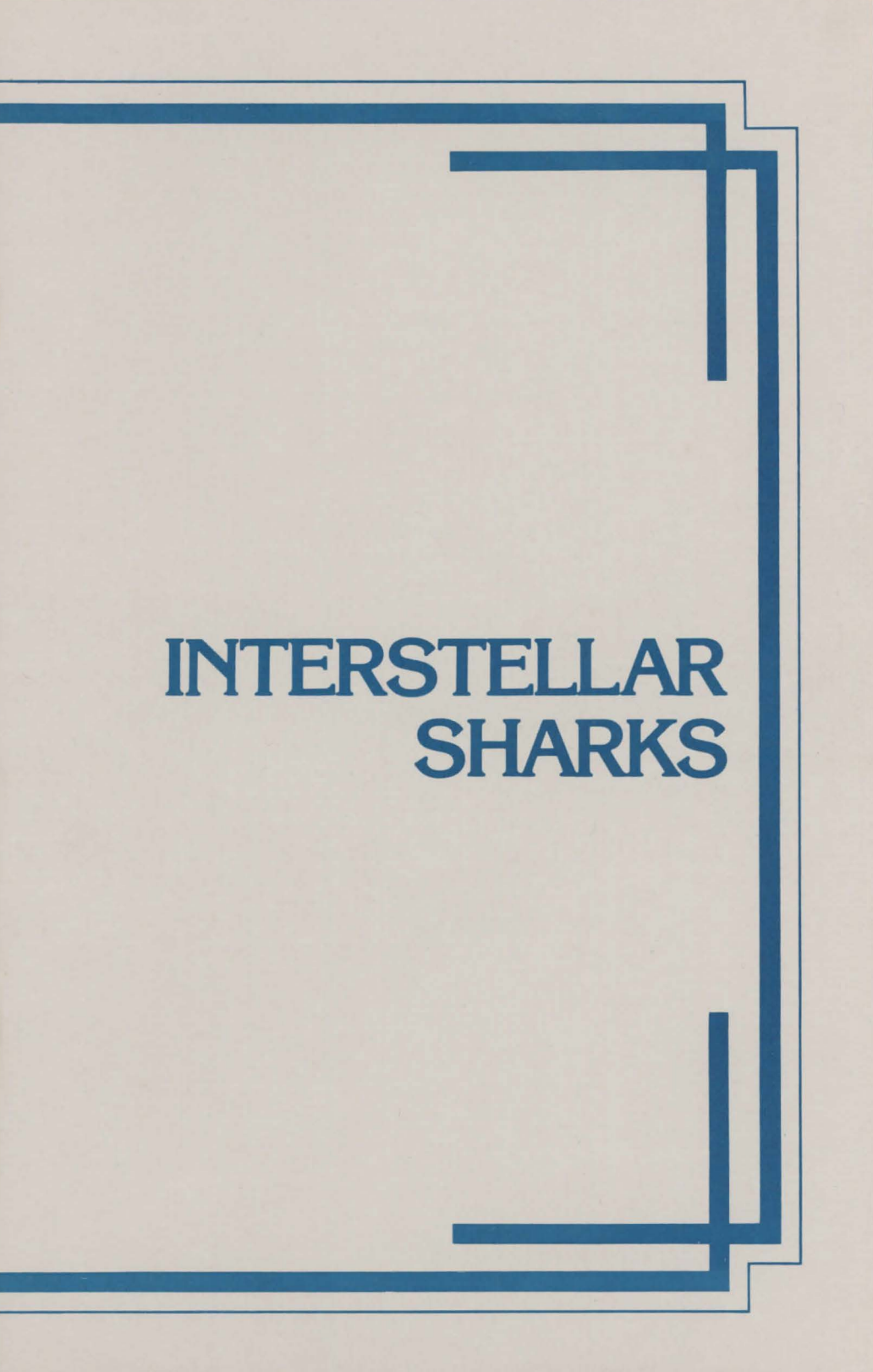




INTERSTELLAR SHARKS

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by

David Mullich



Interactive
fantasies

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DAVID MULLICH designed the entire set of programs, developed the Interactive Fantasies high-resolution graphics system, and authored this Player's Manual.

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◀ INTRODUCTION

INTERSTELLAR SHARKS is the second component of the Empire Gaming Trilogy, begun by WORLD BUILDERS and to be completed by ARMAGEDDON. Set in the zenith of an interstellar civilization, INTERSTELLAR SHARKS chronicles the lives of entrepreneurs striving to succeed in a bureaucratic society. Gone are the days of frontiers and rugged individualism; red tape and regulations have become the obstacles in life amid the stars.

Unlike WORLD BUILDERS, which allowed pioneer characters to choose their own objectives in life, this era of Imperial civilization has a fixed ultimate goal; to reach the Imperial home planet, Triskelion. Once arriving at Triskelion, the player will be given a clue which will prove valuable in winning the conclusion of the Empire series, ARMAGEDDON.

The concept behind INTERSTELLAR SHARKS is similar to that of many science-fiction/fantasy role-playing games popular today. As an Imperial citizen, you become a personality defined by characteristics which provide channels for control over the game. Success depends on your ability to gather information, your strength and dexterity in manipulating objects, and your charisma and psionics for influencing others.

Keeping in mind the inherent attributes of your character, you then choose one of three career paths: pilot, businessman, or diplomat. Intelligence, dexterity, and keen senses are the hallmarks of the pilot, who spends his life transporting commodities from one planet to another where he can sell them for a profit. The businessman uses his intelligence and charisma to conduct stock transactions and carry out covert operations for the company which he serves. The diplomat's profession demands charisma and physical prowess to execute assignments for his Empire. Each career grants the character unique possessions or powers to aid him in reaching the Imperial home planet.

INTERSTELLAR SHARKS is a simulation of the complexities of modern day life projected onto a galactic scale. Once you become an Imperial citizen, you have the opportunity to participate in the dynamics of an Empire torn by conflicting factions. Align yourself with the Technocracy, the Free Market, or the Imperium. Your task is to choose the appropriate arm of the Empire as your character's starting point, climb the ladder of success, and discover the path to power.

◀ PLAYING THE GAME

INTERSTELLAR SHARKS may be played on any Apple computer equipped with 48K of memory, Applesoft, and DOS 3.3. Simply insert the diskette into your drive, close the drive door, and turn on the power switch. After approximately thirty seconds of disk activity, you will see the Interactive Fantasies logo, the INTERSTELLAR SHARKS title, and then the game itself.

This is a highly disk-intensive game. Under no circumstances should you open the disk drive door while the busy light is on, even if you are attempting to prevent the death of a valued character. You run the risk of damaging the game diskette and rendering it unusable. Since characters are saved on the diskette for later use, do not place a write-protect tab over the diskette's write-protect slot.

The display consists of a large window which presents the world as seen through the eyes of your character. Beneath this window is a smaller one in which messages are transmitted to the player. Below that is a strip in which your commands will appear. Next to the command strip is a box for die rolls. All segments of the display are outlined in purple.

Vocabulary ▲

Your character's actions are controlled by an INTERSTELLAR SHARKS' language of more than 180 words. This vocabulary has been categorized into verbs (**GO, FIGHT, USE, LOOK**), adjectives (**ON, LEFT**), and nouns (**LASGUN, SHIP, TICKET**). Many words have synonyms (**GO, MOVE, TRAVEL**) or abbreviations (**LEFT, L**). Commands may be given in any order; words not in the vocabulary will be ignored, and precedence given to words of the category typed last.

Words used at one point in the game may not necessarily be used at another. Using a word that is not operational at a particular point in the game will generate the response **THAT WORD IS NOT USED NOW**. If your commands do not contain any recognizable word, the response **REPHRASE YOUR COMMAND** will be given.

Vocabulary words are printed in capital letters throughout this Player's manual and a complete vocabulary list is given in the appendices.

Time ▲

Characters enter the game at eighteen years of age and are given a birthdate. Both birthdate and age make up the current Imperial year. As the game is played, time passes. Major actions, such as space travel, take weeks while minor actions, such as purchasing goods, take only minutes.

The passage of time has two important consequences. First, the solar systems of the galaxy revolve slowly. In different years, planets appear in different locations. This is critical if you are navigating a spacecraft without computer aid. While you can make space maps, eventually they will become outdated. Second, as your character ages his abilities will deteriorate. These effects are undetectable until you bring that character out of hibernation. Also, age increases the risk of dying during the refresh process.

To keep track of elapsed time, use the command **DATE**.

Money ▲

Most of the time your character will be engaged in acquiring and spending credits, the Imperial monetary unit. Pilots earn their livings by buying commodities on one planet, transporting them to another, and selling those items for a profit. Businessmen amass their fortunes by buying and selling stock, and occasionally executing assignments for their companies. Diplomats, in turn, carry out assignments for their embassy and are handsomely rewarded for their efforts.

Your character's financial status will be in constant flux. There are spaceflight tickets to be purchased, possessions to be bought, and fines to be paid. A character will not survive long without adequate funds. In hard times it may become necessary to resort to stealing from other characters. But be forewarned; the risks are high!

There are as many ways to spend money in the Empire as there are to acquire it. Money has two forms: cash and credit. In most buying situations you can **PAY CASH** or **INSERT CREDIT** (insert your credit card into a banking computer terminal). Each character is issued a credit card with a specified credit limit. This limit may be raised or lowered at a bank. Unofficial purchases (such as items bought on the black market) are cash only transactions.

Non-player Characters ▲

Non-player characters are those generated by the computer. They may be officials (diplomats, businessmen, technocrats, bureaucrats); police officers (Imperial Guard, Space Safety Administration, Strongarm Security); or various citizens (doctors, pilots, priests, criminals). When you encounter another character, you may discover his occupation by typing **LOOK**. There is also a device called a **GENETOSCOPE** which can provide you with the non-player character's attributes. This information will assist you in deciding to fight, steal from, or obey the character.

◀ THE SPACE STATION

INTERSTELLAR SHARKS begins and ends at a spaceport orbiting an unnamed planet which supports the bulk of the Empire's population. From this satellite you may generate new characters, review the status of old characters, embark on new adventures, or end the game.

Useful Words ▲

Moving through the hallways and doors of the space station is accomplished by using the commands **LEFT**, **RIGHT**, **FORWARD**, and **BACK**. Information about the surrounding environment may be obtained by using **LOOK** and **INVENTORY**. In some situations, you may wish to discard or retrieve possessions with the commands **DROP** and **GET**, respectively.

The Airlock ▲

The airlock gives you an opportunity to end the game by taking the left corridor to the Hibernation Chamber, or to continue play by travelling in one of the other two directions. If you wish to generate a new character, go forward to the Materialization Chamber. To retrieve a previously created character, turn right into the Refresh Chamber.

Generating a New Character ▲

Taking the **FORWARD** door from the airlock will allow you to create a new character. Since only nine characters may exist at any one time, you will be ejected from the game if this limit has been reached.

Generating a character requires a series of simulated "die rolls" to determine the values of the qualities of that character. All new colonists come into the game at age eighteen. They may be either male or female. Ten basic attributes ranging in value from three to eighteen, with ten as the average, are established.

Dexterity: physical coordination and the ability to do manual tasks.

Constitution: capacity to withstand injury, disease, deprivation of food and water, and other forms of physical hardship.

Strength: ability to lift, carry, and move objects against the pull of gravity.

Aim: skill in sending a projectile toward its chosen target.

Senses: general measure of the ability to perceive the environment through the five primary senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch).

Intelligence: measure of the mental faculties and memory recall of the character.

Charisma: special quality which permits individuals to influence the actions of others.

Willpower: ability to withstand temptation to respond emotionally

Speed: rate at which a body can move in any given segment of time.

Psionics: power which determines success in communicating with animals, playing games of chance, and contacting supernatural beings.

These attributes will be tested extensively throughout the course of the game.

Often when attempting to perform some task, such as landing a spacecraft, you will be asked to press the [SPACE] bar in order to "roll" a particular attribute. Pressing the [SPACE] bar will generate a number between one and twenty. This number will be compared against your character's value of that attribute. If the number that is rolled is less than or equal to your character's value of the attribute, then you have succeeded in performing that task.

After acquiring attributes, you must select the career path which best suits your character. The Imperium then bestows inaugural possessions upon the character.

The pilot receives a pilot's license, basic ship components (hull, power generator, engine, navbeam, environmental shield, computer, ID beacon, and navigation program), and a credit card limit of 2,500.

The businessman is given a high-level passport to the planet COBOL, one set of low level passports to the other planets, a stock exchange seat, stock in the company he represents, and a 10,000 credit card limit.

The diplomat is granted high level passports to all planets, diplomatic immunity, and a 5,000 credit card limit.

In addition, all characters are given an identification card, a credit card, and 2,500 credits (the Imperial monetary unit) in cash.

Finally, you must give your character a name of less than fifteen alphabetic characters. No two living characters may possess the same name.

Playing a Stored Character ▲

By taking the right door at the airlock, you may retrieve a previously stored character. If no characters currently exist, you will receive the message **NO CHARACTERS ARE IN HIBERNATION** and you will be sent back to the airlock. To retrieve a character, simply enter the number corresponding to the name of the character that you wish to play. Characters with weak constitutions may be injured or older characters killed in the revival process.

The Isolation Corridor ▲

After creating or retrieving a character, you will emerge into the isolation corridor. From here, you may proceed to the information booth, medical services, the spaceport, or return to the airlock.

Medical Services ▲

Turning right from the isolation corridor allows you access to your character's health records. Of particular importance are hit points. A character can survive damage to his torso equal to the value of his constitution, and damage to his head equal to half that of his constitution rounded down. The limbs can sustain damage equal to half the constitution value rounded up. It is possible to buy artificial limbs at the MEDISCI corporation.

You may **HEAL** damage at a cost of 10 credits per hit point.

Information Booth ▲

The information booth is forward from the isolation corridor. It is a free service which provides information about your character's financial status, possessions, and warrants for arrest (also called All Points Bulletins, or APB).

◀ THE SPACEPORT

Lobby ▲

There are spaceports on almost all planets, although some landing sites may lack particular facilities. To the left of their lobbies all spaceports have a space dock for housing personal spacecraft. Most spaceports have an entrance to Transtar Space Lines to the right.

Space Dock Departure Corridor ▲

From here, you may travel **FORWARD** to the docks if you have a pilot's license and a personal ship, **LEFT** to the maintenance facilities, or **RIGHT** to the administration facilities.

Space Dock Maintenance ▲

The space dock maintenance area is a large hangar built for the supply and repair of spacecraft. To the left is a repair shop where you may **FIX** a broken component of your spacecraft. To the right is a supply station where you may **BUY** food, water, air, and fuel for your journey. By going **BACK**, you will re-enter the departure corridor.

Space Dock Administration ▲

Depending upon the technology level of the planet that it serves, the spaceport may supply a variety of services for pilots.

Flight Planning Service: a free service enabling you to file a flight plan for any planet that is a permissible destination from that spaceport. Your ship's navigation systems will be programmed to travel to that destination automatically. Type **PLAN** followed by the planet name.

Space Safety Administration: **APPLY** here for a **PILOT's** license if you do not already own one. You may also **GET** your **SHIP** if it has been impounded due to a safety violation.

Strongarm Security: agency will **INSURE** your cargo. If your cargo is destroyed in a flight mishap, then you may **COLLECT** on the insurance.

Imperial Health Services: you may **COLLECT** your **CARGO** here if it has been impounded for health code violations.

Transtar Spacelines ▲

Transtar Spacelines is the interstellar equivalent of our international airlines. There are two requirements for boarding a spaceliner: a ticket and a passport. If you do not possess these, you must **ESCAPE** past the guards and become a stowaway.

Passport Agency

You may **APPLY** here for a low-level passport to a particular planet. Low-level passports may be used only once. High-level passports must be obtained by other means, and may be reused. Applicants with criminal records on a planet will be refused at that planet's passport office. Passports are not required for traveling to the Space Station.

Tickets

To purchase a ticket, type **BUY TICKET** and the planet name. Certain planets may not be on the standard space routes from that spaceport.

Customs

Before boarding you will be checked for illegal possessions. To get past customs, type **PRESENT POSSESSIONS** or, if you want to risk it, **ESCAPE**.

Boarding Gate

Here, a final check of your tickets is made. If all is in order type **FORWARD**; if not, try to **ESCAPE**. Board the spaceliner and travel to your destination. When you land at your destination's spaceport, you must pass through customs again before being allowed onto the planet's surface.

◀ PERSONAL SPACECRAFT

The basic spacecraft consist of a **HULL**, **POWER** generator, **FUSION** engine, **ROCKETS**, **NAVBEAM**, **ENVIRONMENTAL** shield, **COMPUTER**, **NAVIGATION** program, and an identification **BEACON**. A pilot is granted these possessions. Other characters must purchase them.

If you are interested in trading, you will want to purchase a **CARGO** hold, and perhaps the specialized **REEFER** hold (for refrigerated goods), **PASSENGER** hold, or **SECRET** hold (for contraband).

Lift Off ▲

Before lifting off from the space dock, the **ENVIRONMENTAL** shield should be turned **on**. This is your only protection against cosmic rays and other deadly space perils. The Hull is merely a modular shell for integrating the spacecraft components.

Lift off requires **ROCKETS** and one unit of fuel. There are two ways to lift off:

LOAD your shipboard computer with the **NAVIGATION** program and type **RUN**.

or

If you prefer to navigate by your senses rather than risk the possibility of a bug in the navigation program, type **LIFT**.

Interstellar Flight ▲

Interstellar flight takes weeks. To suspend the aging process you can purchase a **HIBERNATION** chamber which operates automatically. There must be an adequate supply of food, water, fuel, and air (air is not needed if there is an **AIRGEN** onboard). Power is supplied constantly by the **POWER** generator; however, in the event of a break down, it is wise to have a back-up **BATTERY** unit.

There are several ways to travel through interstellar space when using conventional **FUSION** engines:

If you have filed a flight plan at the Flight Planning Service, then the command **GO PLANET** will transport you to your registered destination.

or

You may **LOAD** a **FLIGHTPLAN** program into your

shipboard computer and **RUN** it. Then type in your destination.

or

You may type **GO LEFT, RIGHT, FORWARD, or BACK** to move one week's worth of time in any of those directions. This procedure requires acute senses.

or

It is said that the illegal drug **SNUFF** enhances navigation skills. If you own some and wish to risk the dangers involved in its use, type **USE SNUFF** and then name of your destination.

Interstellar travel using a **MOBIUS** engine reduces flight time. You must turn **ON** your **ESCHER** field for safety and type **GO SUN**, since a **MOBIUS** engine moves your ship from the center of gravity of a sun in one solar system to that of your destination. Once in the sun's interior, you may:

LOAD the interstellar **JUMP** program and **RUN** it on your shipboard computer.

or

USE SNUFF and enter the destination planet.

There are many hazards in space, but there is equipment available to protect you from them. When you turn **ON** the **NAVBEAM**, it will sweep the space ahead of you clear of asteroids. It is possible for your equipment to break down. You may purchase a **DAMAGE** report program. **LOAD** and **RUN** it on the computer, and it will report on the status of the ship. Each component may sustain only five points of damage. Before damage becomes critical, you may try to **FIX** the broken equipment.

Hostile spacecraft present another space danger, whether they are acting independently of or in the name of the law. There are weapon systems available to protect you against marauding space pirates. Though these weapons are illegal, they may be purchased in some quarters. Turning **ON DEFLECTORS**, if you own any, is the only adequate means of defense. If you wish to attack, you need a **LASERCANNON**. It may be fired manually by typing **SHOOT**, or, you may **LOAD** a **FIRECONTROL** program and **RUN** it.

Planetary Landing ▲

When you arrive at a planet, you are automatically placed into its orbit. It is desirable to own some communications equipment. By turning **ON** a **LASERADIO**, you can find out which planet you are orbiting and what warrants may be out for your arrest. The **NETHERADIO** is more powerful and gives you the same information about any planet that is within one week's travel time.

Ship-to-ship communication is accomplished by using the **LASERADIO**. However, messages are often encoded and can't be read

unless you **LOAD** and **RUN** a **CODEBREAK** program on your shipboard computer.

There are three ways to land on a planet:

Turn **ON** your identification **BEACON**. This device will track the spaceport's planetary beam rider and bring you down safely. However, it also alerts the authorities to your presence; an unfortunate circumstance if you have a warrant on that planet.

or

You may **LOAD** and **RUN** your **NAVIGATION** program on your shipboard computer.

or

You may rely on your senses and type **LAND**.

Once you land, you may venture **OUT** of your spacecraft and enter the spaceport arrival corridor. (You may also go **OUT** of your spacecraft while in space, but be sure to wear your **VACSUIT** first!). Before you are permitted to leave the spaceport, you must pay berthing charges.

◀ PLANETARY STRUCTURE

The Planets ▲

There are eleven planets along the major space routes. They are:

Space Station: though an artificial satellite of a planet, this body is of greater importance than the planet which it orbits. Each character begins and ends his journey here.

Cobol: the seat of the Free Market. The Stock Exchange is located here.

Hwitrokken: the seat of the Technocracy. Many of the technology-oriented companies are based here.

Coporalis: a planet known for major breakthroughs in medical technology.

Apollin: a planet rumored to be a haven for the last worshippers of the Lord of Light.

Prothocole: accommodates the embassy for the only alien race known to this galaxy.

Wereguld: a planet perpetually engaged in civil war.

Agrosphaire: an agricultural planet.

Denieves: a planet only loosely under Imperial control; illegal activities flourish here.

Fyrokken: a mining planet that supplies fuel and ores to the Empire. It can be reached only by personal spacecraft.

Triskelion: the seat of the Imperium; it is protected by an enormous and powerful force field.

NOTE: The planet Fyrokken has no cities. The miners inhabiting the planet live in underground caverns. While the caverns surrounding the spaceport and mining office are ventilated, those on the outskirts are airless and entering them requires the use of VACSUITs. Do not venture into these areas unless you plan to **MINE**.

The Planetary Surface ▲

Now that the galaxy has been tamed, your planetside experiences will be confined to metropolitan areas. The exit from the spaceport leads to a road encircling a city. You may travel **FORWARD** and **BACK** along the

road. The road is bordered by buildings, parkland, and other property. You may turn off the road by typing **LEFT** or **RIGHT**, depending on the place you wish to enter. To exit, type **BACK** or **OUT**.

Businesses

Depending upon the economy of the planet, a landing site may have stores from which to purchase supplies, equipment, and other goods. You may also **SELL** some of your possessions to these businesses. However, some establishments operate illegally. Deal with them at your own risk!

Coronal Shipwright Corporation: a monopoly under the control of the Technocracy. This business sells components for personal spacecraft. It supplies both basic components (ship **HULL**, power **GENERATOR**, **FUSION** engine, **ROCKETS**, **NAVBEAM**, and **ENVIRONMENTAL** shield) and accessories (**MOBIUS** drive, **ESCHER** field, **CARGO** hold, **REEFER** hold, **PERSONEL** hold, **AIRGEN**, and **BATTERIES**). You may also purchase a **VACSUIT** and **AIRTANK** here.

Neurotech Systems: leaders in neurotronic technology. This Technocracy corporation offers **COMPUTERS**, interstellar **JUMP** programs, **FLIGHTPLAN** programs, **NAVIGATION** programs, and **DAMAGE** report programs.

Telcom Corporation: communications firm dominated by the Technocracy. Telcom leases **LASERRADIOS** and **NETH-ERADIOS** for which they charge a small fee each time the equipment is used. You may also purchase an identification **BEACON** or a **MACROPHONE**.

Transtar Spacelines: found at most spaceports on major planets. The Technocracy maintains control over public transportation through this company.

Hybrid Foodstuffs: this agricultural firm supplies the Empire with **FOOD**, **WATER**, **LIVESTOCK**, **VEGETABLES**, and **GRAIN**.

General Mercantile: tools such as a **KNIFE** or **DRILL** may be purchased here.

Medisci, Inc.: a medical technology firm. Its stock includes anti-radiation **MIST**, **HIBERNATION** chambers, **ARTIARM**, **ARTILEG**, and **GENETOSCOPE**.

Mercenary Supplies: this black market operation offers such contraband as **LASGUNS**, **PERSONAL** shields, sonic **BOMBS**, and, for personal spacecraft, **FIRECONTROL** programs, **DEFLECTORS**, **LASCANNONS**, **CODEBREAK** programs, and **SECRET** holds.

Hedonistic Services: an illegal corporation cornering the market on drugs (**SNUFF**), prostitution, and the interstellar game of chance **FIZZBIN**. It is played as follows:

Fizzbin is a two-handed card game played with a seven suit deck. The object is to bet on the hand with the greatest number of "like" cards. The house is dealt five cards face down; the player's hand is dealt face up. The player then bets.

One house card is turned over. If the player decides that he has a losing hand, he may cut his losses by folding immediately and forfeiting one-sixth of his bet. If he folds after the second card is revealed, he will lose one-third of his bet, and so on. If the game continues until all of the house cards are turned face up, the hand with the greatest number of matching cards wins the bet. In the event of a tie, the dealer will collect one-tenth of the bet as tithe.

Information Booth and Health Services

On most planets you will find an information booth and health services facilities identical to the one described in the Space Station section.

Fremark Bank

This banking service is operated by the Free Market. You may **DEPOSIT** money into your credit card account, **WITHDRAW** money from your credit card in the form of cash, **NEGOTIATE** for a higher credit limit, **APPLY** for a new credit card, or even **STEAL** from the bank.

Mining Office

The mining office on Fyrokken coordinates all mining activities on that planet. Here you may **BUY FUEL**, **OMNIMIUM**, **RADIOACTIVES**, and **METAL** at low cost but of inferior quality. Cash only, please. If you are a businessman or diplomat, you may also **NEGOTIATE** for an assigned mining contract.

Fremark Stock Exchange

Located only on the planet Cobol, the stock exchange is the headquarters for all businessmen. To the **LEFT** is the Main Office, where you may **APPLY** for an exchange **SEAT**. You must own a SEAT in order to go **FORWARD** onto the exchange floor. Once on the floor you may **BUY** and **SELL** various stocks (**NEUROTECH**, **CORONAL**, **HYBRID**, **TELCOM**, **TRANSTAR**, **MERCANTILE**, **MEDISCI**, **MERCENARY**, **HEDONISTIC**).

If you are paged, go out into the lobby and turn **RIGHT**. There will be a call for you on one of the busiphones. You will be given an assignment such as negotiating a trade agreement or conducting industrial sabotage. Upon completion of the assignment, you will be given a cash reward. Type **BACK** to return to the lobby.

Embassy

This is headquarters for diplomats and may be found on most planets. Diplomats are given assignments ranging from collecting taxes to performing political assassinations. Upon completion of the assignment, they are paid in cash for their efforts.

Note that the embassy on the planet Prothocole belongs to an alien civilization and does not represent the Empire.

Commodities Exchange

At a planet's commodities exchange a trader may **BUY** and **SELL** cargo. Trading is done on the exchange floor, **FORWARD** from the main lobby. The commodities board lists the prices of all commodities available to be traded at that time. In order to participate on the floor, you must first **APPLY** for a **TRADER** license, which is available at the commodities office to the **LEFT** of the lobby.

Capture and Combat ▲

When committing an illegal act, you must weigh the possibility of being caught by the authorities. Your chances of capture are based upon the governmental control of the planet. In the event you are discovered, a governmental police authority will appear and state your crime. Crimes have the following penalties:

Murder: whether you kill a government official or a lowly criminal, the penalty is 10 years in prison.

Slavery: transporting slaves as cargo carries an 8 year prison term.

Industrial Sabotage: if you are caught attempting to blow up a business office, the mandatory sentence is 8 years in prison.

Drug Abuse: the penalty for using drugs is 5 years in prison.

Contraband: the penalty for carrying illegal goods (drugs, weapons) is a 4 year prison term. All your illegal possessions will be confiscated.

Seizure of Mail: stealing mail from a diplomatic pouch will cost you 3 years in prison.

Escaping: the penalty for escape in any form, whether it be gate crashing or running from authorities, is 2 years.

Prostitution: the mandatory sentence for soliciting a prostitute is 2 years in prison.

Gambling: gambling carries a 2 year prison term.

Stowaway: if you are caught aboard a spaceliner without a ticket, you will be sentenced to 2 years.

Death of Passengers: if any passenger dies aboard your personal spacecraft, the Space Safety Administration will revoke your pilot's license and sentence you to 5 years in prison.

Stealing: your credit will be reduced by half if you are caught stealing.

Diplomats carry diplomatic immunity, and so their sentences for most crimes are suspended. However, their diplomatic immunity may be permanently revoked if their crime is against the government.

Once you are apprehended by the authorities you have the option to **NEGOTIATE**, **BRIBE**, **ESCAPE** or **FIGHT**. Successful negotiation will reduce your sentence by half, but an unsuccessful bribe will double your

sentence. There are no additional penalties for attempting to **ESCAPE** or **FIGHT**.

Whether you are fighting a police officer or a citizen, the rules for combat are the same. Your charisma and your opponent's will power will determine who acts first. From then on, the combatants alternate turns, each taking one to five moves per turn based upon his dexterity and speed.

Once engaged in combat with your opponent, you must either **FIGHT** or **ESCAPE**. If you choose the former, then you must fight to the death. To kill an opponent, you must inflict damage to his head equal to half his constitution value or wounds to his torso equal to his constitution. Damage to the limbs equal to half his constitution will permanently reduce the character's strength by half if the limb was an arm, speed by half if the limb was a leg. Artificial limbs are not affected in combat. You may **AIM** at a particular body part (**HEAD**, **TORSO**, **ARM**, **LEG**) or allow chance to decide.

Only player characters will automatically kill their opponent on an attack roll of one. An attack roll of twenty for either party will bring about a fumble which could result in losing a turn or destroying one's own weapon accidentally.

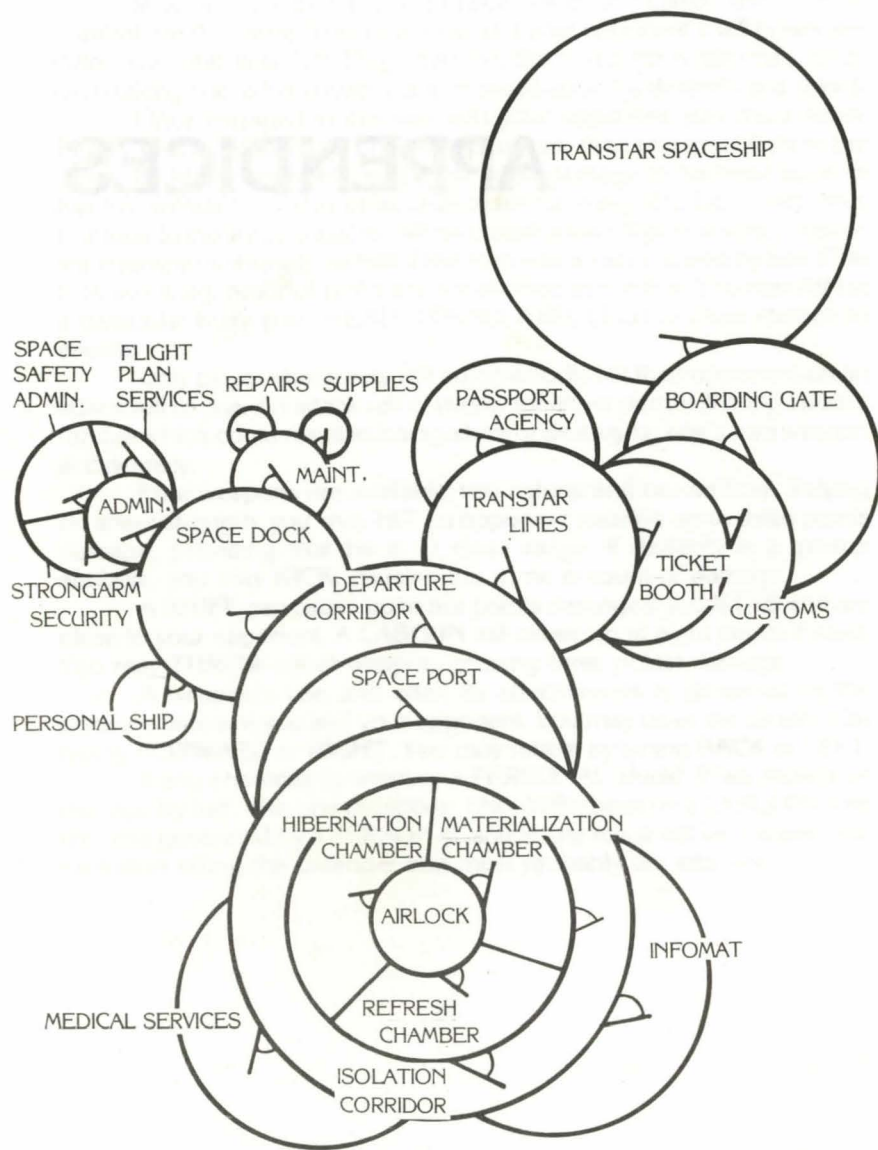
Four weapons are available; two natural and two artificial. Relying on sheer strength, you may **HIT** an opponent causing up to three points damage, providing that he is in close range. If dexterity is a greater attribute, you may **KICK**, causing the same amount of damage.

A **KNIFE** can cause up to five points damage if you **STAB** and are close to your opponent. A **LASGUN** will cause up to eight points if used. You may **THROW** either weapon, causing three points damage.

A weapon's use and often its effectiveness is governed by the distance between you and your opponent. You may close the distance by typing **FORWARD** or **RIGHT**. You may retreat by typing **BACK** or **LEFT**.

If any character is wearing a **PERSONAL** shield, it will reduce all damage by half, with one exception. Should the beam of a **LASGUN** cross the field generated by a **PERSONAL** shield, the result will be a subatomic explosion killing the defender and most probably the attacker.

APPENDICES



The Empire

APPENDIX I: VOCABULARY

Movement

BACK, B: directional adjective.

ESCAPE: verb used to get past lines, officials, and other bureaucratic obstacles. The use of this verb risks a chance of being caught for a criminal offense.

FORWARD, F: directional adjective.

IN: enter a building or room.

LEFT, L: directional adjective.

OUT: leave a building or room.

RIGHT, R: directional adjective.

Information Gathering

DATE: establishes the current time and date.

GENETOSCOPE: a device for determining non-player character attributes.

INVENTORY, INV: produces a list of the character's possessions. Items listed in lower case letters may be dropped.

LOOK: identifies object, person, or place in view.

MACROPHONE: a covert listening device.

NO: negative response to a question.

YES, Y, OKAY: positive response to a question.

Economics

BRIBE: attempt to cut through red tape by using greenbacks.

BUY: purchase the named possession from a store.

CREDIT: an Imperial credit card, or payment by credit.

DEPOSIT: (at a bank,) transfer cash to your credit card account.

DROP: discard named possession.

GET, TAKE: acquire a named possession within reach.

INSERT: insert credit card into the card slot of a bank computer terminal. Used when buying items on credit.

MONEY, CASH: actual currency (as opposed to credit).

PAY: use cash as payment.

SELL: sell the named possession to a store.

STEAL, ROB: illegally acquire the named possession from another character.

WITHDRAW: (at a bank) convert credit into cash.

Combat

AIM: direct weapon at a named body location.

ARM: body location named when aiming a weapon. Can sustain damage equal to half the constitution rounded up before the limb is destroyed.

FIGHT: initiate combat with a non-player character.

HEAD: body location named when aiming a weapon. Can sustain damage equal to half the constitution rounded down before death occurs.

HIT: use fists as a weapon.

KICK: use legs as a weapon.

KNIFE: a hand-held weapon causing up to five points damage when thrust at an opponent. It can incur three points damage when thrown.

LASGUN: a hand-held laser projector that is illegal within the jurisdiction of the Empire. It can inflict up to eight points damage. However, if fired at a target wearing a PERSONAL shield, it will cause a subatomic explosion killing the target and most likely the aggressor.

LEG: body location named when aiming a weapon. Can sustain damage equal to half the constitution rounded down before the limb is destroyed.

PERSONAL: a belt device for generating a deflector shield around an individual. It reduces the effectiveness of all weapons by half, with the exception of a LASGUN (see above). It is an illegal possession.

SHOOT, FIRE: use a LASGUN or LASCANNON.

SONIC, BOMB: an explosive device using ultrasonic vibrations to disrupt matter. It is an illegal possession.

SWING, STAB: use a KNIFE at close range.

THROW: use the named or current weapon as a projectile.

TORSO, BODY: body location named when aiming a weapon. Can sustain damage equal to the character's constitution before death occurs.

Personal Spacecraft

AGROSPHAIRE: an agricultural planet.

AIR: one unit is required per being per week aboard a ship.

AIRGEN: a device for generating a breathable atmosphere.

AIRTANK: air storage for a VACSUIT. It has a one week capacity.

APOLLIN: the last haven for worshippers of The Lord of Light.
BATTERIES: back-up power supply should the power generator fail.

BEACON: a homing beacon that identifies your ship and uses a spaceport's planetary beam rider as a guidance system for landing.

CARGO: a hold for carrying bulk cargo.

COBOL: the seat of the Free Market.

CODEBREAK: an illegal computer program for deciphering encoded radio messages.

COMPUTER: the shipboard computer.

COPORALIS: a planet especially known for its medical technology.

DAMAGE: a computer program reporting on any damaged ship's component. Each component can sustain five points damage.

DEFLECTOR: an illegal byproduct of Escher technology protecting a ship against LASCANNON. It does not have the drawbacks of a PERSONAL shield.

DENIEVES: a planet infamous for its illegal activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL: a byproduct of the ESCHER field that protects the ship's occupants from the hostile environment of space.

ESCHER: a revolutionary field, discovered by the great physicist Escher, that can protect a ship within the interior of a sun.

FIRECONTROL: an illegal computer program for automatic control of DEFLECTORS and LASCANNON.

FIX, REPAIR: repair a damaged ship component.

FLIGHTPLAN: a computer program used for generating a flight plan to the named planet.

FOOD: one unit is required per being per week aboard a ship.

FUEL: fuel required for using the ROCKETS and FUSION engine.

FUSION, ENGINE: drive used for slow interstellar flight.

FYROKKEN: a mining planet.

GO, TRAVEL, MOVE: when followed by a directional adjective, this command moves the ship for one week in that direction. When followed by a named location it takes the ship to any planet for which a flight plan was filed. When followed by SUN, takes a ship into the interior of a solar system's sun.

HELP, RESCUE: returns character to the space station without his ship.

HIBERNATION: a shipboard chamber used for suspended animation during extended spaceflights.

HULL: the main module comprising a ship.

HWITROKKEN: the seat of the Technocracy.

JUMP: a computer program used in conjunction with the MOBIUS drive.

LAND: move the ship from a planet's orbit to its surface.

LASCANNON: an illegal shipboard laser projector.

LASERADIO: a radio using laser telemetry for communications within a solar system.

LIFT: move the ship from a planet's surface to its orbit.

LOAD: load the named computer program into the ship's computer.

MIST: a spray for protection against radiation poisoning.

MOBIUS: drive used for instantaneous interstellar flight. It can be implemented only within a sun's interior.

NAVBEAM: a particle beam projector that sweeps the ship's path free of debris.

NAVIGATION: a computer program used for planetary take off and landing.

NETHERADIO: a radio capable of penetrating netherspace; used for interstellar communications.

OFF: turn off the named device.

ON: turn on the named device.

PASSENGER: a hold for carrying passengers.

PILOT: license required to use a spaceport's space dock.

PLAN: file a flight plan to a named planet with the Flight Planning Service.

PLANET: used with GO, to implement a filed flight plan.

POWER: a power generation device required for supplying energy to a ship's components.

PROTHOCOLE: a planet housing the embassy for the only known alien race.

REEFER: a hold for carrying cargo requiring refrigeration.

ROCKETS: drive required for travel to and from a planet's surface.

RUN: execute the current program in the ship's computer.

SECRET: a cargo hold specially designed for secretly carrying contraband without detection.

SHIP: a reference to the character's personal spacecraft.

STATION: the space station at which all journeys begin and end.

SUN, STAR: used with GO, to move the ship into the solar system's primary.

TRISKELION: the seat of the Imperium.

UNDRESS: take off VACSUIT.

VACSUIT: protective gear for existing in an airless environment.

WATER: one unit is required per being per week aboard a ship.

WEREGULD: a planet engaged in eternal civil war.

Bureaucracy

APPLY: request for a license or privilege.

CHARGES: payment required to berth at the space dock.

ID: an identification card.

PASSPORT, HIGH: permission to travel to a planet on a space-liner. These are issued only to diplomats and can be reused.

PASSPORT, LOW: permission to travel to a planet on a space-liner. Good for one flight only.

High Finance

CORONAL: refers to stock in that company.

ELECTRONICS: a commodity

GRAIN: a commodity.

HEDONISTIC: refers to stock in that company.

HYBRID: refers to stock in that company.

LIVESTOCK: a commodity.

MEDISCI: refers to stock in that company.

MERCANTILE: refers to stock in that company.

MERCENARY: refers to stock in that company.

METALS: a commodity.

NEUROTECH: refers to stock in that company.

NEUOTRONICS: a commodity.

RADIOACTIVES: a commodity.

SEAT: a document entitling the bearer to sit on the Stock Exchange.

SLAVES: an illegal commodity.

SNUFF: an illegal commodity.

TELCOM: refers to stock in that company.

TRADER: license required to enter the Commodities Exchange floor.

TRANSTAR: refers to stock in that company.

VEGETABLES: a commodity.

WEAPONS: an illegal commodity.

Diplomacy

CLOSE: close diplomatic pouch.

COLLECT: collect taxes from a business.

MAIL: mail carried in a diplomatic pouch.

NEGOTIATE: come to an agreement with a non-player character.

OPEN: open diplomatic pouch.

POUCH: diplomatic pouch used for transporting mail money between embassies.

PRAISE: flatter the named personage.

TAXES: money collected from businesses to finance the Empire.

Miscellaneous

APEX, EMPRESS: the ruler of the Imperium.

ARTIARM: an artificial arm. It must be implanted immediately after the loss of the original limb.

ARTILEG: an artificial leg. It must be implanted immediately after the loss of the original limb.

CURE, HEAL: a request for medical treatment.

GAMBLE: play the illegal game Fizzbin at a Hedonistic Services casino.

HOME: return to the Space Station.

LORD, LIGHT: a false deity.

MATE: solicit a prostitute's services.

MINE, DIG: search for minerals in a side cavern on Fyrokken. Minerals may be sold at the Commodities Exchange.

OMNIMIUM: a valuable mineral with an abundant number of properties and uses in the Empire.

TORCH: a primitive illumination device.

USE, TRY: employ a device, especially a weapon.

WHITE, ROCK: a mineral with no known practical use.

APPENDIX II: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE EMPIRE

The functions of the Empire's government are controlled by three ruling bodies. At the top of this triad is the Imperium, managing all political matters. Beneath the Imperium, on equal levels, is the Free Market, which maintains the Empire's economy, and the Technocracy, controlling the technology that makes the Empire's existence possible.

No arm of the triad can exist without the other two. Each has bureaucratic agencies and police forces for maintaining their respective powers. Each is a check and balance on the other, and all appear to exist in a symbiotic equilibrium.

The Imperium

Agencies: Imperial Passport Agency, Imperial Customs Service, Imperial Health Standard Enforcement Bureau, embassies.

Enforcement: Imperial Guard.

Home Planet: Triskelion.

Licenses: identification card, passports.

Ruler: the Empress.

The Technocracy

Agencies: Flight Planning Service, starports, refineries, high technology corporations.

Enforcement: Space Safety Administration.

Home Planet: Hwitrokken.

Illegal Operations: Hedonistic Services.

Licenses: pilot license.

Ruler: the Escherman.

The Free Market

Agencies: Fremark Bank, Fremark Stock Exchange, Fremark Commodities Exchange, many businesses.

Enforcement: Strongarm Securities.

Home Planet: Cobol.

Illegal Operations: Mercenary Supplies.

Licenses: credit card, trader license.

Ruler: the Capulet.

APPENDIX III: THE ESCHER THEORY

Following are excerpts from the revolutionary paper written by the great scientist ESCHER, whose theories made our galactic empire possible.

Scientists from our ancient past advanced the theory that space was naturally straight, but under the influence of gravitational forces becomes curved. The sum total of our universe's gravitational forces caused space to curve around and greet itself, forming a closed universe, much like a giant sphere. If one were to set out and travel along a straight line, she would eventually travel around the sphere of space and end up at the starting point.

However, the equations I have recently derived indicate that space is not straight in the absence of gravity, but is naturally curved. Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that between any two masses in space, there exists sufficient gravitational force to warp the circular strip of space linking them into a Mobius strip, with both masses on opposite sides of the strip separated only by the fabric of space composing the strip.

For the laymen, I have prepared an illustration of this concept. *Take a strip of paper and fasten both ends together. Place a pencil dot on one side and another dot on the opposite side. Now take another strip of paper of the same length as the first. Twist one end 180 degrees (a semi-circle) before joining the two ends. If you run your finger along the two strips, the first strip has two sides; this represents space without gravitational influence between two points.*

The second strip, a Mobius strip, has but one side. If you were to place two dots equidistant in both directions, they would be separated only by the thickness of the paper.

Notice that to travel between the two dots on the first strip, you must travel half way around the strip. On the Mobius strip you may do that, too, but the shortest distance is directly through the paper!

This model is applicable to three-dimensional space. The shortest distance between any two masses is

through the space fabric, or netherspace, separating them. Therefore, a spaceship need not travel across the space between any two destinations, but through it.

Unfortunately, the only masses generating enough gravity to weaken the space fabric for any man-made force to penetrate are stars, according to my calculations. In order for this new mode of travel to be practical, we must find a method for surviving the madness of a star's interior.

It would be possible to do this by travelling tangentially to the curve of space rather than along it while travelling towards the star's interior. This can be accomplished by generating a field that sweeps back and forth across the travelling mass to simultaneously reverse the charge and spin of each subatomic particle, thus oscillating that mass from matter to anti-matter and back again. This phenomenon, although achievable, would be a physical paradox in our own space. Its effect would cause that mass to exist in our physical universe and outside of it at the same time. Thus, the mass would continue to exist, but only at instantaneous intervals. Therefore it would not be consistent with the forces operating within the universe's framework.

This theory represents more than a physicist's mathematical calisthenics. Substitute the word *spaceship* for *mass*, and we have profound implications for our infant Empire. If the Empire's technicians implement the equations that I have provided in this paper, I predict that we will be able to reach outside of our cosmic cradle and fulfill our manifest destiny of the outer stars.

