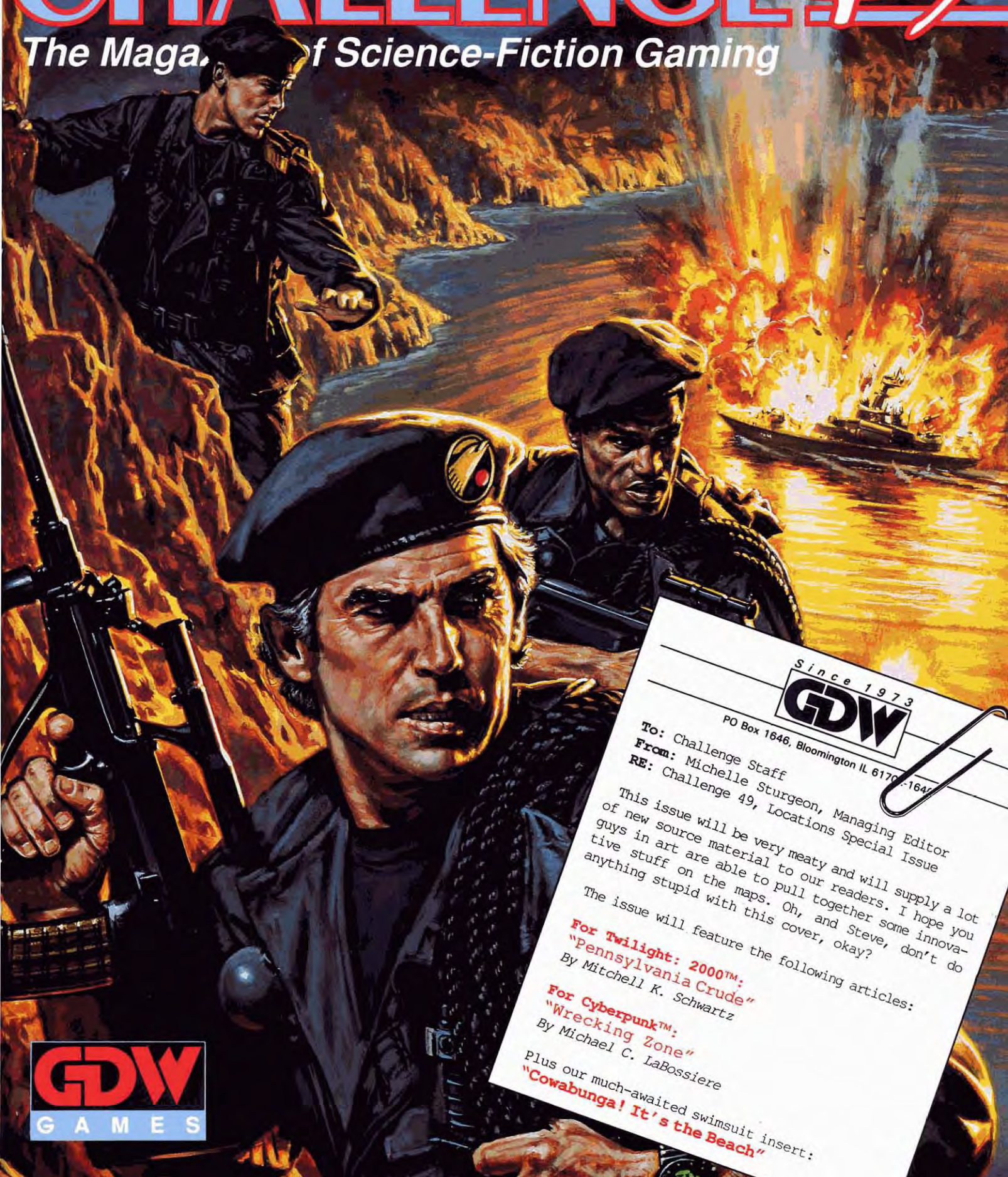


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CHALLENGE 49

The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming



Since 1973
GDW

PO Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646

To: Challenge Staff
From: Michelle Sturgeon, Managing Editor
RE: Challenge 49, Locations Special Issue

This issue will be very meaty and will supply a lot of new source material to our readers. I hope you guys in art are able to pull together some innovative stuff on the maps. Oh, and Steve, don't do anything stupid with this cover, okay?

The issue will feature the following articles:

- For Twilight: 2000™:**
"Pennsylvania Crude"
By Mitchell K. Schwartz
- For Cyberpunk™:**
"Wrecking Zone"
By Michael C. LaBossiere

Plus our much-awaited swimsuit insert:
"Cowabunga! It's the Beach"

GDW
GAMES

Referees who fear that their PCs are running too quickly through the adventure can cut the travel rate road speeds by as much as half due to poor road conditions. A few sample road problems can be played out by having the PCs negotiate a washout or a landslide.

If player characters have not already hit one, initiate a mandatory encounter within five kilometers of Warren, Oil City, Franklin, or Titusville if the PCs pass that close to any of the named towns. Warren and Oil City are occupied by gangs, and Franklin and Titusville are guarded by local militia.

Negotiation is usually the better way out of a confrontation in these towns. MacGivern will try to pay off either gang to secure passage if he must, but will put off trying to explain what the project team is doing. If forced, he will offer a 5% cut of the profits for passage. If MacGivern is not along, the PCs will have to decide how to handle this situation. If they can manage a treaty, MacGivern should pay them a bonus.

It is important to keep track of how many people are told about the purpose of this journey. This project will draw marauders like flies to jelly.

Where the Oil Is: MacGivern's site is on an abandoned farm, which is three miles east of PA 227 and south of PA 36. The original well had been drilled and capped before the turn of the century. Geologic action in the last 30 years plus the atom-inspired seismic shocks of 1997 and 1998 reopened the well a bit—enough to provide enough oil to pump.

The farm consists of a farmhouse, a small barn, two small sheds, the wreckage of another couple of sheds, a water well with a hand pump, and a cement-capped well-head (see the Farm Site Map). The pump works once its been primed (Kincaid knows—he primed it last November). The wellhead is cracked (that's how it Kincaid found it) and does not pose much of a problem to remove (Easy: Combat Engineer or Easy: Civil Engineer). Termant can supervise this half-hour task.) The buildings are surrounded mostly by open fields for a few hundred meters in any direction.

The farm has been abandoned for a couple of years. There are signs of a fire on the buildings (broken glass, bullet holes, a couple of dark stains on the floor) that happened a while ago, but no signs of more recent habitation. The farm has been picked over a couple of times and nothing useful has been left behind. (But, Scrounging skill could find something useful like a cache of ammo or tools or a little canned food.)

Continue normal encounter checks while the group is at the farm (once a day as the team is halted). However, increase the frequency of curious other groups once an armed encounter has occurred. Note that

the food the party has will not last long, so hunting and foraging will be required.

Farmhouse: The farmhouse has two stories and a partially finished basement (see the Farmhouse Map):

1. The office now contains some chopped wood furniture and a few empty shelves.

2. The dining room is empty.

3. The kitchen is empty except for its built-in cabinets. Someone dropped an explosive in the refrigerator at one point. The tap does not work. The kitchen includes a door with steps leading down to the basement. Someone has torn out some plumbing in the wall to the dining room.

4. The living room is empty except for a smashed picture frame and a small sofa with slashed cushions and removed stuffing. There are dark stains on the floor.

5. All the bedrooms are empty, except for box springs. The middle bedroom also contains a slashed mattress. The large bedroom has a small balcony on the front of the house.

6. The bathroom fixtures do not function. There are dark stains in the bathtub.

7. The basement includes an oil furnace that had a fire in it at one point, a non-functional water pump and heater, and a storm/fallout shelter. The shelter is empty except for some shelves and wooden benches. The storm door is intact.

8. The back porch has half a room (half the porch and some of the surrounding area is covered with rubble), with a short set of stairs leading to the ground.

PUMPING CRUDE

There are four phases to pumping the oil:

1. Termant sets up his equipment.

2. Drill until oil is struck.

3. Pump the crude into the trucks.

4. Cap the well and strike the pump equipment.

Set Up: It will take Termant and his team eight hours to set up their equipment. Add two hours for each assistant who was incapacitated before this point. Subtract one hour for each additional character who helps (up to a maximum of three). Setting up counts as heavy work for determining fatigue and can only be accomplished during daylight hours.

Drill: Once set up, make a Difficult roll once every watch against Termant's Civilian Engineer skill to strike oil.

Pump: Once oil is struck, it is pumped out at about 1000 liters per hour. Check against Termant's Civil Engineer skill once a watch (Average). Failed rolls mean some kind of problem. Problems will cause an hour's delay and require an Average: Civil Engineer roll to fix. If Termant fails to fix a problem after three consecutive hours, Termant declares the well dry. No further attempts will

succeed at this well. Pumping oil is easy work for fatigue purposes. Pumping can continue 24 hours a day.

Strike the Equipment: Once finished, Termant and crew will take four hours to pack their equipment. Packing the drilling equipment counts as heavy work for fatigue purposes and can only be done during daylight hours.

The crude can be turned into diesel by allowing it to sit for some five days and settle. One 55-gallon (205-liter) barrel yields 80 liters of diesel fuel with a fuel energy rating of 1.5 (normal gasoline or diesel is rated 1, ethanol is rated 3).

RETURN

With any luck, the team should be ready to leave with full tank trucks in less than a week. If the team has been scrupulously quiet about what it is doing, use only the normal encounter charts. "Scrupulously quiet" means that no one outside of the team (and perhaps the Razz or the Blackhawks if they have been bought off) knows that the team is carrying crude oil.

If word has leaked out, the team will be quite popular. Marauders will not hear the *crude* part—just *oil*. Many small marauder groups will try to grab some oil. For that matter, so will most anyone—including the Titusville militia, though it is willing to charge it as a "toll." If the PCs were not able to keep that they are carrying crude secure, double the number of encounter rolls. On the "extra" rolls, skip those rolls that are not armed. This situation continues until the convoy crosses the New York border.

Payoff: Depending on which offer the PCs chose in The Terms (above), the PCs are paid in western New York notes (called Buffalo hides or Winnies), which can be traded for a domestic food and alcohol fuel or used as a medium of exchange in western New York.

If the team brought back more than 40,000 liters of crude (four trucks), one month after the team delivers the crude a small amount of gasoline will appear on the domestic market—one-quarter (25%) of the amount of crude the PCs brought out with them. Double the normal price of gasoline to \$16 per liter.

However, for those using **Howling Wilderness**, that means waiting in Buffalo as the spring drought of 2001 wears on...

Other Endings: If the party cannot complete the contract but it returns to western New York, it must return any equipment borrowed from MacGivern and repay any loans. If the team is due any payment from the mission, survivors will be paid.

If the PCs return without the rest of the team, there will be an investigation, but unless there is proof of foul play by the player characters, nothing will happen to

Stormtroopers: DEX 2D [1D], Blaster 4D [3D], Brawling Parry 4D [3D], Dodge 4D [3D], STR 2D [3D for damage purposes only], Brawl 3D; all other attributes and skills are 2D. The numbers in brackets are the modifications made by stormtrooper armor. The troopers are armed with blaster pistols, which are set on stun.

Information in the Captured! section of Episode 4: Prisonbound describes what happens if the characters are arrested.

Staging Tips: If you can manage it, have both the fight and the chase going on at the same time. Complete one round of the chase scene, and then cut to the fight scene for a round. This technique will increase the excitement and (hopefully) the enjoyment of these two scenes.

PAWNS OF STI GROON

The first problem is finding Sti Groon. If the characters have been given directions by the informant, they will only have to make a very easy (3-5) Streetwise roll. Without directions, the Streetwise roll becomes difficult (16-20). In both cases, the difficulty number can be reduced by one for each 10 credits spent in bribes, buying drinks, etc. One roll may be made each hour. Although there is no time limit, you should make the characters feel as though every second is precious.

Sti Groon's residence is a low formex building with durasteel doors. They slide open without any prompting. "ShhhhhhhhClang."

The building's interior is sparsely furnished and dry. The room is very large, and Sti Groon himself sits atop a pile of cushions, way in the back.

"Greetingssss," he hisses. "Enter Rebelsss, and make yourssselvesss comfortable."

Sti Groon: DEX 3D+2, KNO 5D, Bureaucracy 6D, Streetwise 7D, Languages 6D, Gameboard 6D, MEC 1D, PER 3D+2, Bargain 5D+2, Con 4D+2, Gambling 6D, STR 3D+1, Swimming 8D, TEC 1D+1. Sti Groon hides a hold-out blaster under his pillows.

Talking to Sti Groon: There is a new saying in Lon Drasna: "Nothing without Sti Groon," meaning there is nothing that goes on in the city without Sti Groon knowing about it—and it's true. Sti Groon, the foremost newsmonger in the galaxy, is frog-like in appearance, complete with bulging eyes and green, wrinkled skin. He is rather lanky and sly looking but is beginning to get lazy. He enjoys games of all types, and frequently bets on the illicit swoop races that occur in town. He has no love for the Empire, but neither does he side with the Rebellion, referring to it as a "goody-goody organisssssation."

He knows why the characters have come, and has pertinent information. However, he is unwilling to give away this information for free. After all, this is his job. He wants 5000 credits. Characters may haggle if they wish, although Sti Groon is very hard to bargain with.

If the characters don't have this kind of money, Sti Groon is willing to give the information to them if they partake in a contest. He loves games and will give them a choice of two. The first is for one character and him to play Vrax, the chess game played by Chewbacca and R2-D2 in *Star Wars*. To simulate the game, each contestant rolls his KNO skill or Gameboard subskill (if they have it, as Sti Groon does). The player with the higher roll wins the round. The first contestant to win a total of five rounds wins the game. If Sti Groon loses, he gives away the information for free.

The second contest pits the Rebel's champion against Sti Groon's champion in a gladiatorial-type combat. After the PCs have chosen their champion (one of the characters—no dragging a person off the street), most of the floor in the room pulls back to reveal a 10-meter-square pit. Prowling around the bottom is a Wookiee-sized tyrannosaur with a gaping maw and sharp teeth. Too late, the characters realize this bonecrusher is Sti Groon's champion. The Rebel cham-

panion may pick his weapon from the following list: mace (as club), spear, gaderffii, knife, axe (hatchet), or sword (bayonet). No blasters or lightsabers are allowed.

Bonecrusher: DEX 4D, PER 1D, STR 5D, SP 2D. The bonecrusher attacks with one bite which does 6D damage.

If the Rebel champion wins the duel, Sti Groon congratulates him on his courage and tells the PCs all he knows regarding Admiral Joser.

Sti Groon knows that Admiral Joser is being kept in a top-security prison on Alpha-Omega, the largest asteroid in Dandrian's Ring. This is not a lot of information, but enough to lead the characters to the next episode.

PRISONBOUND

Blasting off from the Lon Drasna spaceport, you head for Dandrian's Ring and Alpha-Omega prison. Your hearts beat more rapidly when you see an Imperial star destroyer come out of hyperspace just as you enter Dandrian's Ring. You have a bad feeling about this.

Traversing the asteroids is rather simple if one is cautious. Set the Starship Piloting difficulty at 3-5. Failure results in striking an asteroid, but the ship takes only 2D damage. The characters may leave their ships in orbit around Alpha-Omega or on the asteroid itself, as it is quite large. Trying to dock in the prison's docking bay could lead to trouble.

The *Carpagian's* lockers hold six spacesuits and rocket packs which could be used to reach the prison. There are two ways in. The first is through the docking bay. Human-sized intruders are too small to be picked up by radar. The second means of access is through a garbage chute on the underside of the asteroid that leads to area 1. The exterior hatch can be opened by force (the hatch has STR of 1D) or by a very easy (3-5) Security roll.

Carpagian

Craft: *Saryabo IV* Pinnacle Scoutcraft

Type: Scout transport

Length: 20 meters

Crew: 2

Passengers: 10

Cargo Capacity: 1000 kilograms

Consumables: 1 month

Hyperdrive Multiplier: [x1]

Sublight Speed: [2D]

Maneuverability: [None]

Hull: [4D]

Weapons:

One Laser Cannon

Fire Control: [2D]

Damage: [4D]

Shields:

Rating: [1D]

The *Saryabo IV* pinnacle scoutcraft was first developed during the final years of the Clone Wars. Now only a few dozen of these ships are in existence. The *Saryabo* was primarily designed to transport elite troops to and from key target areas. To achieve this, it was given a top-notch hyperdrive system and nav computer. Minor offensive and defensive components were also included to ensure the troops reached their destination.



