



Time Traders/Galactic Derelict

Andre Norton

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This omnibus edition includes: "The Time Traders" and "Galactic Derelict."

DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY OF TIME

Intelligence agents have uncovered something which seems beyond belief, but the evidence is incontrovertible: the USAs greatest adversary on the world stage is sending its agents back through time! And someone or something unknown to our history is presenting them with technologies -- and weapons -- far beyond our most advanced science. We have only one option: create time-transfer technology ourselves, find the opposition's ancient source...and take it dawn.

When small-time criminal Ross Murdock and Apache rancher Travis Fox stumble separately onto America's secret time travel project, Operation Retrograde, they are faced with a challenge greater than either could have imagined possible. Their mere presence means that they know too much to go free. But Murdock and Fox have a thirst for adventure, and Operation Retrograde offers that in spades.

Both men will become time agents, finding reserves of inner heroism they had never expected. Their journeys will take the battle to the enemy, from ancient Britain to prehistoric America, and finally to the farthest reaches of interstellar space...

Time Traders/Galactic Derelict Details

Date : Published November 1st 2000 by Baen Books (first published 1959)

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Author : Andre Norton

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From Reader Review Time Traders/Galactic Derelict for online ebook

Kerry says

This omnibus contains "The Time Traders" and "Galactic Derelict," both written in the late 1950s. I read them in the mid-Sixties, when they were not too old. Fifty-some years after their original publication, they still hold up fairly well as adventure stories. The only anachronistic item at all is the use of the Russians as the bad guys. However, it is the Russians of the new Russian Empire that was formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Not a bad prediction, but it still feels somewhat Cold War-ish. But that is a minor quibble. The interesting projection in the novel was that Americans gave up the Space Race after reaching the moon. Eerily accurate considering that the novels were written before we had even obtained orbit. The story is an interesting mix of time travel and space opera. Mankind venturing into the past to discover the technology of the now seemingly extinct aliens. Good fun.

Andrew Spink says

Classic sci-fi; aliens, spaceships, time travel, adventure and bizarre elements of the moment it was written inserted into the story (in this case the Cold War). Great fun. Just right for reading in the garden on a late spring warm Sunday afternoon.

Carrie says

This was a Sword and Laser bookclub pick. It didn't really age well, very light characterization, plotting practically nonexistent, more of a pulpy action book. Only one woman making a brief appearance in the book of course, and plenty of casual racism, exactly what you would expect for the time this was produced.

There are parts that move along, the beginning of Time Traders is good, but the middle becomes repetitive and the end cuts off a bit abruptly. The second book is a bit better, and features a minority character but the characterization is uneven, and towards the end the plot feels like it is just checking off some boxes. If very old fashioned pulp sci-fi is your thing, this is short enough to give it a try, but I found it dragged and took me a long time to read.

terpkristin says

The July S&L pick, this was a refreshingly quick read. I like time travel books, so the premise of this one was good to start out with. I think it started strong and got a little weird in the middle/last third or so. But luckily, it didn't have time to meander too long, as it was a rather short book overall. I could point out flaws and concerns with the book, but honestly, it was a quick and fun romp into the past with an unlikeable dude as the narrator, and the flaws didn't kill the book for me. I guess it's the first in a series, and maybe at some point I'll go and read the next one (seeing as I have it already in this edition), but I was pretty good with how it ended. I liked the book.

Kat says

Travel back to the far reaches of history! Race against time versus Russian spies! Blast off into outer space using thousand-year-old alien tech! Encounter strange alien creatures on distant worlds! This book basically is a kitchen sink of everything nifty in science fiction, a fun ride following a batch of fairly interesting characters. After getting used to Ross's point of view during the first half, the switch to Travis in the second kind of threw me, and I missed getting to hear Ross's thoughts, but it was still an enjoyable read.

Sandi says

I am copying the short blurb reviews I gave to the two separate ebooks I read earlier this year.

Time Traders - A good, short read, suitable for younger readers. The reactions and attitude of the young punk at the beginning felt authentic. The only part I found a little unrealistic was the way they tried to keep him in the dark after bringing him to their training base without any explanation; counting on some magical sense of rightness and patriotism to make him subsume himself to their agenda was a little contrived. With the other technology in place being used, you would think they would have some sort of locator beacon or portable communications device, although I realize that would get in the way of the story as it was told. And the number of times the people got hit over the head or otherwise hurt pointed out some flaws in their reasoning. Still, a fun read.

Galactic Derelict - more of the same, thank goodness. Classic short scifi that is fun and easy to read.

Peter says

Ross Murdock is a criminal, but has enough potential that instead of jail time, he's offered the chance to work with the government on a secret project... a project that turns out to involve travelling in time.

This is classic, old-style SF, and entertaining on that level, although for a couple reasons this didn't work out well for me.

One of them was simply that it was actually two books, merged into one. And that's fine in some cases, but in this case, the second book is quite different in focus than the first... the time travel aspect is basically just there as a brief introduction. So it leads to the annoying experience where you're reading a book called Time Traders and expecting Time Travel shenanigans and spend half the book having nothing to do with time travel.

Leaving it aside, it's decent enough plot, even though the characters seem rather thin and often all feel interchangeable, except the main who has a little more depth. Although, I have to say, the main character (of the first half of the book) almost lost me for good when he learned that the secret project he was involved in actually involved travelling in time, and... he tried to escape. Clearly we are very different people. You tell me I'm involved in a secret project to travel in time (or for that matter, space, like a Stargate project), and I'm in even more. Heck, you can kidnap me and put me in danger and cut me off from everyone I know and I'll still thank you for the opportunity. If there's a secret project out there to that effect, that's an offer. In fact, if I

ever disappear suddenly without a trace, that's probably what happened.

Beyond that I was enjoying the first half of the book for the most part up until an annoyingly long section in which the main character forgot who he was and believed he was actually an inhabitant of the past because... well, the plot needed him to, I guess? It never really rang true and pulled me out of the story and made me conscious of how often the story hinged on accidental happenings.

Still, I mildly enjoyed it, and then we got to the second half. The second half, in addition to the change in focus, also changes the main character, to a Native American. And here's another area where the book shows its age a little... it's got that kind of well-meaning, innocently racist writing that you might expect from the time... heck, for the time, you might even applaud the author for using a non-white protagonist and trying to portray them as equal in talents to the others, but it still reads a bit awkward. (Similarly, the lack of important female characters is hard to miss

The plot of the second half also feels a bit less like a plot and more like an excuse for the author to briefly visit locals and imagine alien races. Some of this is inventive, but doesn't feel dramatically so, and again, reading a book called Time Traders (even if this was originally a second book with a more appropriate title) it felt disappointing. The technology's another thing that's dated, with much hinging on whether a 'tape' that holds navigational data can be reversed. It's not bad but by this point I was just reading because I wanted it to be done with.

I'd say it's worth a look but they should package it a different way, it does a disservice to the author. I'm not rating the author, or even the story, but the book, mashed-together as it is, so I have to take that into account.

All in all, I'd have to rate it a two. Could have been a three if I read it just the first.

Michael says

A time travel book plus its sequel. An interesting premise and a relatively quick read although now somewhat dated having been written in the late 1950s.

Time agents Ross Murdock and Travis Fox travel through time and space to safeguard Earth. Linked to Andre Norton's "Forerunner" stories.

Andre Norton was one of a number of excellent female SF writers who, in the early days of SF, had to hid her gender to get published. Thankfully those days are now long gone.

Doren Damico says

The story does keep you turning pages to find out what will happen next. There are interesting and creative aliens, landscapes and some unexpected outcomes (somewhat) throughout the adventures. However it doesn't do much more.

Kaethe says

So, just to be confusing, I've completed the first novel in this two-in-one edition, which is also called Time Traders.

And it's good reading. Ross Murdock, ne'er do well, is offered the choice of rehabilitation or volunteering by the judge in charge of sentencing. So he signs up for something with the military, that turns out to be time travel. Mostly, though, it's the story of Ross fighting it out with pre-historical people and survival in the wilderness.

For those who care, there isn't any sex or swearing, and the fighting is all in self-defense.

I could see Norton scoring big with the middle-grades for the adventure aspect alone.

Now having completed the second volume, I have a few more thoughts. I'm disappointed that there aren't really any female characters, except one in the first volume. And the science isn't really important, being so advanced as to be magic to the characters.

But there are lots of positives. Both stories are action-packed, from the subtle tension of trying out alien food to see if humans can use it, to thrilling fights with fierce creatures, to the constant tension of survival in a large and unknowable universe. And although the stories are relatively brief, there's time to comment on the architecture, the art, the culture of aliens.

I'd suggest these to younger readers particularly, because there isn't a lot of ambiguity. Our heroes are able to distinguish intelligent beings from animals pretty quickly, and reliably, nor do they encounter any culture they can't quickly identify as such. And the introduction of an Apache in the second book is an opportunity to deal with discrimination without being too heavy-handed.

Fun stuff. The second volume will remind readers of *The Time Machine* for its quick survey of other beings, thankfully without the moralizing.

Library copy.

Eric says

It is absolutely worth your time to go and grab this one.

I picked up the Baen Free Library version when I was in between other titles and was just drawn into this one. Fantastic fun idea - Time Agents. There are certain aspects of this book that date it, both in world view from the time (America's greatest enemy) and in the descriptions of certain technology that was alien to the main characters. At one point in the book a set of headphones are described. I knew what they were, but the way they were described gave me a vision of some very old (from my point of view) headphones. I'm sure those would have been very cutting edge at the time. That is one of the dangers or drawbacks to describing any "super future" technology.

Despite all those things I was still in on the adventure. I could absolutely see this as a television series.

Kristen says

Time Traders:

Interesting book. I loved the concepts and ideas behind the story but the overall feel of the plot was disjointed.

Ross Murdock is a man who is constantly getting into and usually out of trouble with the law until this one judge gives him a choice. Ross chooses the secret government program. I really enjoyed Ross's perspective on the world in general but thought it could be better expressed. His training and getting to know Ashe was jumpy and undeveloped as well.

I loved the time travel parts. I really enjoyed the part anthropologist, actor, survivalist, explorer, and researcher roles Ashe and Ross took on. There were a lot of capture/escape parts that I agree with others may have made this a better game than book but they were enjoyable to read for the most part. There was a weird spot where Ross forgets he is not from the past that didn't flow well with his character.

I was surprised at how well it stood up once I saw it was published in 1958 even though I was reading the 2000 revised edition. Even with those small changes (for example Norton changed the Reds to the Russians) there is one spot where Ross tunes alien technology like a TV. Also there were literally no female characters at all. That was okay I terms of the story and then I didn't have to feel annoyed at 1950's gender dynamics being obvious in this story.

Galactic Derelict:

This is the second book in the Time Traders series and it was much better than the first book. For one, the narrator shifts from Ross to a new character Travis Fox. Fox is an Apache rancher wandering through an unused area of the ranch on a feeling when he stumbles upon the time traders group. I enjoyed his narration better. His introduction to the group felt rushed but flowed much better.

This story has a bit of time travel but a large chunk is the group accidentally become stuck on a space voyage. The different world they see were intriguing. The home planet of the collapsed empire was fascinating. I loved the challenge of using human anthropology skills on an alien race that is no longer there. I wish there had been more exploration but I loved the fact that they left that world with more questions than answers. The mysteries of a race were not easily explain away and they didn't magically learn the alien language.

Jim says

From Booklist

For this volume, Norton has updated *The Time Traders* (1958) and *Galactic Derelict* (1959) to take into account 40 years of political, social, and technological developments--such as computer games, a concluded cold war, and many more female characters in sf--without essentially changing them. In *Time Traders*, Ross Murdock has the choice of rehabilitation or volunteering for a secret research project, which turns out to be searching the past for the source of illicit technological innovations. In *Galactic Derelict*, Travis Fox stumbles on a time-travel project and has to be recruited for it; then he and his comrades take an involuntary trip aboard an alien starship that crashed on Earth before recorded history. The characters' can-do attitude and Norton's magic with a story have survived two generations in fine style, and these tales remain the same sort of quintessential fun as *Star Wars*, and with more intelligence. May there be a market for their further reprinting in 2040! *Roland Green*

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Product Description

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Intelligence agents have uncovered something which seems beyond belief, but the evidence is incontrovertible: the USAs greatest adversary on the world stage is sending its agents back through time! And someone or something unknown to our history is presenting them with technologies -- and weapons -- far beyond our most advanced science. We have only one option: create time-transfer technology ourselves, find the opposition's ancient source...and take it down.

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-- My Notes

Omnibus edition of the Ross Murdock/Time Traders series, volumes 1 & 2.

Derek says

Having re-read the book(s) some 30 years after my first reading, they hold up really well (this version of 1888744 is actually an omnibus edition of the first two volumes of the series, 1888744 and Galactic Derelict).

It holds up fairly well - there are few anachronisms introduced by the advance of technology since Norton wrote the stories, but there are a few strange quirks of technology. Why is a refueling station still operative (barely) thousands of years after its abandonment, but the components that store the memory of spaceship navigation are so fragile that they have to worry about even new ones? If your ship's navigation is broken, you're doomed. If the refueler breaks, you call out a repair crew: it doesn't need to be nearly so durable.

That said, the characters are enjoyable and mostly believable; the technology is not inconceivable; and the plot works. The stories are still, after 50 or 60 years enjoyable enough that now I'll have to read the sequels - which I haven't read before.

Kathi says

2018 Popsugar Challenge: A book with a female author who uses a male pseudonym. I didn't realize this was 2 books in 1. I was really engaged in the beginning but then got bored and started skimming a lot towards the end.
