An adventure for

Traveller

CORE

*Suitable for use with **GURPS Traveller** and **Marc Miller's Traveller***

DELTA 3 IS DOWN

Delta 3 is Down

An adventure for

Traveller®

> *"Admiral! Incoming signal."*
> *"Real-time translation, immediate!"*
> *"It's Galanglic – translating: 'Unidentified Zhodani vessel, you have entered Imperial space in the Emerald system restricted zone."*
> *"Brienshqlor be cursed – the misjump was worse than we thought."*
> *"The message continues: 'Confirm identification and follow flight path now being transmitted into geosynchronous orbit, where you will be boarded by Imperial Customs agents. Your ship is subject to seizure should you be proven to be in this system without appropriate clearance. Failure to comply will result in the use of deadly force.'"*
> *"Get us out of here pilot!"*
> *"Too late, they've got a sensor lock on us..."*

Contents

Delta 3 is Down

or

"The long walk home"

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Introduction

Delta 3 is Down revolves around a Zhodani naval courier ship which crashes on an Imperial border world. The Zhodani player-characters (PCs) must evade the 'criminally' minded Imperials and return to Zhodani space before their presence triggers an interstellar incident.

Format

This book is written for a Traveller Games Master (GM). The adventure is divided into a series of "nuggets", presented in chronological order, although the nuggets may be adapted, removed or re-ordered to fit with the manner in which the players react to the storyline.

Scene-setting text to be read, paraphrased or otherwise conveyed to the players is shown as:

> Example text to be read to the players.

Sidebars are used to present data relevant to particular nuggets; the latter part of this book (p.49 onwards) holds general Library Data.

For added flavour, names (of worlds, etc.) are often given in Zhodani, followed by the Imperial equivalent, e.g. Tloql [Spinward Marches].

Background

This adventure can be set at any point after the Imperium's first contact with the Zhodani in the Spinward Marches; added tension may be introduced by setting it in the period just prior to the Fifth Frontier War.

Dates: Dates are generally given in Zhodani format, followed by the Imperial equivalent. For simplicity, time periods are in standard (Terran) minutes and hours unless otherwise stated.

Location: This adventure is set on the border of the Third Imperium, in the Jewell subsector, on the world of Emerald (Spinward Marches 1106). However, it may be transposed to any similar world on or near the Imperial/ Zhodani border.

Author's Notes

Delta 3 Is Down was first published as a BITS tournament adventure for Gen Con UK 1999. This book significantly extends the original adventure, but can still be run as a tournament (see the notes on p.5); if desired, the players can then be graded (and rewarded!) according to roleplaying ability.

Characters

Six pregenerated Zhodani characters are provided on pp.9-12 with the appropriate mix of skills and personalities to create an interesting game. Alternatively, you may choose to use existing or new Zhodani characters, either military types or perhaps even a merchant crew. Where necessary, you should modify the adventure (descriptions, events, etc.) to suit the type and number of PCs.

Guidance on roleplaying Zhodani is given on pp.7-8, and additional notes on psionics and reference material on the Zhodani is given in the GM's Overview, pp.5-6. You should strongly encourage the players to roleplay the differences between the Zhodani and Imperial mentalities, as this adds significantly to the flavour of the game.

In addition, a PC's skills reflect familiarity with Zhodani equipment and Zhodani perspectives, so PCs should suffer penalties for tasks involving:

- unfamiliar Imperial equipment,
- interacting with Imperials,
- understanding the Imperial mindset or tactics.

Non-Player Characters

Major and minor NPCs are described in the relevant scenario nuggets.

The majority of NPCs do not require detailed descriptions; in this adventure their abilities are summarised in the format A/S *(a/s)* where "A" is the average attribute value and "S" the level in their key skill(s). The equivalent GURPS Traveller (GT) data are "*a*" and "*s*" respectively. For a NPC soldier graded 8/3 *(11/15)*, you might decide that his key attributes are Strength, Dexterity and Endurance, therefore he would have a Universal Personality Profile (UPP) of 888--- *(GT: ST 11, DX 11, HT 11)* and his key skills (e.g. weapons) will be at level 3 *(GT: 15)*. The equivalent NPC scientist would have primary attributes of Intelligence and Education, giving a UPP of ---88-.

Subsidiary attributes and skills will be one or more levels lower. You need only determine whether an NPC has a subsidiary skill if such a skill is specifically called for. Where more detail is required, full NPC statistics are given.

Note that where felt appropriate by the authors, GT data does not always follow the simple conversion guidelines given in the GT rule book.

Rules

This adventure uses the BITS Generic Task System; tasks are presented using skills and attributes for the later versions of Traveller (T4) and GURPS Traveller (GT). These can easily be adapted to other Traveller rule sets.

Some skill and attribute names differ between rule sets, e.g. where Education is referred to, GT uses IQ. Care should be taken not to confuse skills, e.g. Navigation in earlier rule sets referred to interstellar navigation, whereas in T4 and GT this skill is Astrogation and Navigation refers instead to planet-bound mapping. This adventure always uses the later definitions. Unless otherwise noted, data is given in T4 format with GT-specific information in *italics*, thus: INT 10 *(GT: IQ 14)*.

For GT weapons statistics, see the GURPS Basic Rules (p.206) or GT worldbook (p.114).

Tasks

Task definitions are used in this adventure. However, it is the responsibility of the GM to refine tasks and determine the required skills and equipment for each situation. Simple tasks are included in the text, e.g. "make a **Difficult Recon** *(GT: Tracking)* roll". Where a more complex task roll is required, it uses the following format:

To locate a safe path through the swamp:
➢**Difficult Recon *(GT: Tracking)*, or**
➢**Difficult Hunting, or**
➢**Formidable Survival**
- +1 Difficulty if running.
- -1 Difficulty if moving cautiously.

Spectacular Success: As Success, and the PC can maintain a fast jogging speed.
Success: A safe path is found, but the PC's progress is slowed to a walk.
Failure: Finding a safe path is slow and difficult. This task must be repeated to avoid getting lost.
Spectacular Failure: The PC has wandered off the path and into an area of quicksand…

+1 Difficulty indicates a harder task (e.g. an Average task becomes Difficult); -1 Difficulty means the task is easier (e.g. a Difficult task becomes Average difficulty).

MegaTraveller (MT), Traveller: The New Era (TNE) and Marc Miller's Traveller (T4) all use a graduated system of task difficulty ratings – Average, Difficult, Formidable, etc. 'Classic' Traveller (CT) and GURPS Traveller (GT) use modifiers to the task rolls instead. The BITS Generic Task System provides a simplified common ground for all these rule sets, using difficulty ratings with corresponding task modifiers for CT and GT as shown in Table 1.

The means by which spectacular *(GT: critical)* success or failure are achieved are defined by the rule set used. Similarly, the rules for special tasks – opposed, co-operative, hasty, cautious, etc. – should be applied according to the rule set used. As always, these are only guidelines – the GM may alter any task roll as appropriate to enhance the game.

Example

Maria Charles is forging a complex document which the GM rules is a Staggering task. Maria has Forgery-4 *(GT: Forgery-16)* and the relevant attribute (MT, T4) is INT 10 (TNE: INT 9).

CT: Task success is normally 2D + Skill ≥ 8. Maria requires 2D + Forgery ≥ 12 (8 + 4 for Staggering difficulty). Alternatively, the GM may prefer to apply the target modifier as a negative modifier on the dice roll, i.e. 2D + 4 – 4 ≥ 8.

MT: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to MT's Formidable (15+), thus the task is 2D + Skill + (Stat / 5) ≥ 15. For Maria this is: 2D + 4 + 2 ≥ 15.

TNE: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to TNE's Impossible, thus the task is d20 ≤ (Skill + Stat) × ¼. For Maria this is d20 ≤ 3, i.e. (9 + 4) / 4 rounded down.

T4: Maria requires 4D ≤ INT + Forgery. (Note that T4's Staggering rating of 3.5D is ignored.)

GT: Maria requires 3D ≤ Forgery + Target Modifier, i.e. 3D ≤ 16 – 6.

TABLE 1: TASK DIFFICULTIES						
BITS Task Difficulty	**T4 Task Difficulty**	**T4.1 Task Difficulty**	**GT Target Modifier**	**TNE Task Difficulty**	**MT Task Difficulty**	**CT Target Modifier**
Easy	Easy (Auto)	Easy (1D)	+6	Easy	Simple	-4
Average	Average (2D)	Average (2D)	+3	Average	Routine	-2
Difficult	Difficult (2.5D)	Difficult (2.5D)	0	Difficult	Difficult	0
Formidable	Formidable (3D)	Formidable (3D)	-3	Formidable	Difficult	+2
Staggering	Impossible (4D)	Staggering (4D)	-6	Impossible	Formidable	+4
Hopeless	(5D)	Hopeless (5D)	-9	Impossible	Impossible	+6
Impossible	(6D)	Impossible (6D)	-12	Impossible	Impossible	+8

An overview of this adventure with guidance on running it as a tournament.

Overview

This adventure is based around a Zhodani ship which suffers a power plant fault and misjumps into the Imperial Emerald border system. Further faults damage the jump and manoeuvre drives, requiring the Zhodani to crash (or land) on Emerald for repairs or to find an alternative starship to return them to Zhodani space.

However, you may choose to implement only some parts of the adventure, adapting it to fit an existing campaign or to reflect novel solutions proposed by the PCs. Suggestions are given in this section for handling plot divergence (marked **?**) and tournament play (marked ✪).

Tournament Play

✪ *A tournament game should take 3 or 4 hours, allowing 20-30 minutes per Scenario.*

✪ *If a PC might die early in the game due to bad luck, fudge the dice rolls to avoid this. If the PC acted stupidly, they should end up badly injured; this is actually more debilitating as their colleagues now have to care for, and carry them.*

✪ *New players may not realise that high-tech weaponry can kill PCs with one shot, though their characters would know this from their military experience. If a first shot is likely to kill a PC outright, make it a close miss – "a shot whistles over your head". If they don't get the hint and duck, then roll the subsequent shots normally.*

Sabotage

As an additional twist to this adventure, you may decide that the power plant fault which drives the adventure was caused by sabotage, either by an Imperial agent at Sachebr or by one of the PCs. In the latter case, decide which PC is the traitor (it may even be the Vice-Admiral, trying to defect to the Imperium!) and brief them before the start of the game. If the traitor is not one of the crew, then they need an opportunity to plant a small bomb in engineering – it should be assumed that they manage this during the shipboard tour in Scenario 1. Whether the traitor is a Zhodani or an Imperial deep cover agent, to avoid detection by their comrades they must either have an extremely strong psi mind shield or have a psi-shield mesh implanted under their scalp.

Preparation

Let the players select their characters, then provide them with their 'background knowledge': the information on Zhodani (pp. 7-8), the *Vehrsabl Courier* (pp.13-14) and the area of operations (p.49). You can also encourage them to read up on the Zhodani using the bibliography below.

✪ You may opt to distribute the characters randomly to the players. Provide copies of the background information noted above. Allow them to read their sheets thoroughly, particularly their background and personal views of each other.

Scenario 1: Pre-emergence

The PCs' ship leaves Sachebr on an urgent mission, but misjumps due to a power plant fault.

✪ *The pregenerated PCs (pp.9-12) already give their first impressions of each other, so briefly describe the running jump and go straight to Nugget 3. Allow the players a maxmimum of 10 minutes to describe the party's actions in jump.*

Scenario 2: Break Out

The ship emerges from jump in the Emerald system, 100 diameters out from the sun but with a high residual velocity towards it. The PCs have a chance to find out where they are.

✪ *Spend no more than 10 minutes in this scenario; go to Scenario 3 as soon as possible.*

Scenario 3: Fire Aboard!

Activating the manoeuvre drive causes an explosion in engineering which damages more of the ship's power systems. The crew must race to repair the ship before it dives into the sun.

? The PCs may wish to hide in the asteroids or in a gas giant but these have Imperial navy ships lurking in them, so the Zhodani will be intercepted, boarded and taken to Emerald as prisoners. Running for deep space is pointless while their jump drive is inoperative; they will either run out of air, be intercepted by an Imperial ship or, if they're really lucky, find a Zhodani ship.

✪ *Reward players for ingenuity, but don't let them waste too much time discussing what to do; if necessary use hostile Imperial ships, solar flares or the complexities of high velocity course changes to direct them towards Emerald.*

Scenario 4: Crash and Burn

The PCs must brave interdiction satellites and Imperial ships to reach Emerald. Almost certainly the PCs' ship will be severely damaged and crash on the planet. The PCs must then salvage their kit from the burning wreck before it explodes.

? Rapid repair of the drives and skillful tactics may allow the party to evade their pursuers and land the ship covertly on the planet. They still require fuel, and spares to repair the jump drive, so they must still try to reach the downport.

✧ *The ship should be badly damaged to ensure the PCs don't waste time trying to repair it but instead head straight for Emerald downport.*

Scenario 5: Pursuit

The Zhodani must keep moving as the Imperials will track them from the crash site.

✧ *The arrival of Marines at the crashed ship should be used to encourage the PCs to leave quickly. The subsequent pursuit by Scout air/rafts and S3 team(s) should keep the Zhodani on the move towards the starport, discouraging long diversions into the farms or villages.*

Scenario 6: The Long Walk

On their way to the downport, the party have the opportunity to encounter a Scout research team and their base, hostile flora and fauna, a bigoted local farmer, farms and villages, even the Chukniang rebels. They also have the opportunity to acquire transport, disguises and identity paperwork to aid them in entering the downport.

✧ *Run Nuggets 2, 3 and 5; if the PCs are running well ahead of schedule, add in Nugget 4 and then either 6, 7 or 8 as appropriate.*

Scenario 7: Port Emerald

The characters need to study the city and downport to determine their best approach. If they enter the city they must evade police checkpoints and patrols but may rescue a latent child psionic.

✧ *If the game is going slowly, encourage the PCs to avoid the city and go straight for the port.*

Scenario 8: The Way to Freedom

There are various ways into the starport, some covert, some overt. Even if the PCs' ship just needs its jump drive repaired, it's easier to hijack an Imperial ship here than try to steal spares and then hike all the way back to their own ship.

✧ *If the PCs don't take the obvious opportunity of stealing the Scout ship being prepared for take-off, you can optionally have the S3 teams finally catch up with them, forcing them to flee aboard the* Far Horizons.

Scenario 9: Heading for Home

Even after escaping the port defences and interdiction satellites, the PCs have a long way to travel to reach a safe jump point.

✧ *Adjust the length of this section to build to a finale as the PCs jump out just in the nick of time.*

Data Formats

Data is generally presented from a Zhodani perspective, using Zhodani names and units, with the equivalent Imperial data given in square brackets, e.g. Tloql [Spinward Marches].

Psionics

Psionics may ease the PCs' way in some situations, but will also provoke a very hostile response from any Imperials who witness it.

Matching between T4 and GT psionic powers is inexact: in the former, knowledge of one of the five disciplines allows the use of any of the skills within it; whereas in GT each skill must be learned separately, though all skills in one discipline have the same potential power. Range, area and other measures of effect are calculated differently.

Depending upon the rule set used, you should adapt the capabilities of the characters to ensure a balanced game (if necessary, reduce abilities during the game due to wounds, fatigue or stress). You should review the psionics rules given in the T4 book pp.123-128 and Psionic Institutes; or GURPS rules pp.165-176, GT book pp.54,84-85 and GT Alien Races 1 pp.134-142.

Bibliography

For additional information about the Zhodani:

- *Alien Module 4: Zhodani*, GDW, 1985.
- "Zhodani Philosophies", *JTAS 23*, GDW, 1985, pp.42-44.
- *Alien Realms*, GDW, 1986, pp.10-17.
- *The Regency Sourcebook*, GDW, 1995, pp.22-25.
- *Marc Miller's Traveller*, Imperium Games, 1996, p.147.
- *Alien Races 1*, Steve Jackson Games, 1998.
- *GURPS Traveller*, (2nd edition), Steve Jackson Games, 1999, pp.78-80.
  For additional background data:
- *Supplement 3 The Spinward Marches*, GDW, 1979, pp.4-5, 12-13.
- *Fifth Frontier War*, GDW, 1981.
- *The Regency Sourcebook*, GDW, 1995, pp.36-37.
- *Behind the Claw*, Steve Jackson Games, 1998.

Roleplaying an alien race

This adventure is most fun if the players roleplay the Zhodani as more than just tall, moustachioed humans with turbans. Permission is given to photocopy pp.7-8 for distribution to the players to read before starting the adventure.

The **Driantia Zhdantia** [Zhodani Consulate] comprises over 6,500 star systems in 175 subsectors spinward of the Third Imperium.

The Consulate is remarkably stable, having retained a single form of government for the last 7,000 years. The Consulate is founded on two pillars: the acceptance of psionics and a belief in conforming for the good of society. This has resulted in a homogeneous culture across the Consulate, conforming to a norm first established on the homeworld Zhdant. Although the Consulate has fought five frontier wars with the Imperium over the last 600 years, it is not expansionist. Its borders have been stable for thousands of years, ever since the natural limits of communication were reached for the Zhodani style of government.

Physiology

The lower gravity of their homeworld Zhdant (0.85 Imperial 'standard' gravities) has led to the Zhodani being taller and more lithe than the Vilani and Solomani. Males average 2.1 metres (7 feet) in height and 90 kg (200 lbs) in weight. They have 28 teeth, four less than Imperials. Though their homeworld's K0 star is less bright than that of Sol, most Zhodani are quite dark-skinned or swarthy.

Time

The standard Zhodani zhdanstial [day; 27.02 Imperial hours] is divided into 20 zhdina ['hours']. The chten [year] is 244.44 zhdanstial [275.2 Imperial days]. Every three chten is one thequzdij [olympiad; 2.25 Imperial years]. Zhodani year zero marks the first Psionic Games (–6731 Imperial).

Government

The Consulate is governed by a hierarchy of councils, from the Qlomdlabr [Supreme Council] down to local community councils representing around 50,000 people. Councils typically contain nobles elected by their fellows every olympiad.

Populace

The Zhodani populace has a very strict social hierarchy with three classes.

Proles represent almost 80% of the population. Non-psionic and disenfranchised, they are the contented workers of the Consulate – the farmers, factory workers, scientists, technicians, supervisors, junior managers and enlisted members of the armed forces.

Intendants make up about 15% of the population and are the bureaucrats, professionals, military officers, teachers and medical specialists.

Admission to this class is through the demonstration of psionic aptitude in childhood tests, though some psionics develop latently, and are admitted later in life. Most Intendants aspire to nobility, which may be awarded to them through success in the Psionic Games, or (usually later in life) for exceptional deeds. Intendants try to excel at worthy activities while ensuring that their Noble receives the credit; through raising the Noble's status they raise their own by association.

Nobles represent about 5% of the Consulate population. They are the enfranchised voters who run the Councils governing the worlds of the Consulate. Each Noble has at least one Intendant as a personal aide; in return the Noble acts as their mentor and advisor. Nobles often have senior roles in the administration or in commercial ventures. Some serve on Councils but all are generally productive for the society – something which they see as their duty. First-borns inherit the family estates and businesses while subsequent children may take up a career in politics, business or the military.

To outsiders, Nobles may appear aloof and superior, but in reality they are required to work hard to earn the respect of their subordinates.

Culture

Duty is part of the underlying philosophy of Zhodani culture. The Consulate decries religion but the teaching of Tavrziansh [Morality's Path] in all schools is endorsed as "proper thought". The fundamentals of this philosophy, encapsulated in the Fevranzhtavr [Book of Morality] are that life is a matter of duty, and that duty comes from living, i.e. duty is required of all creatures, however unintelligent. The social hierarchy embodies these principles as well as the overall duty to the Zhodani race. The biggest priority in any Zhodani's life is to keep their various duties from

coming into conflict with each other, while harmonising their actions with the duties and responsibilities of others.

Honesty is a cornerstone of Zhodani society. When one's thoughts are open to being read by others, it becomes pointless lying, keeping secrets, or hiding one's true feelings. Trust is assumed, with doors commonly left unlocked (unless guarding against harm, e.g. to keep children away from dangerous machinery).

The Zhodani have effectively 'cured' greed and other such destructive urges so there is no need to steal. Citizens can be open and free with their opinions, while respecting and accepting those of others. The mere thought of lying or being lied to disgusts most Zhodani and is a major cause of their dislike of Imperial citizens.

Their inherent familiarity with mental processes gives them a comprehensive understanding, and acceptance, of emotions and how to deal with them; in stark contrast they see Imperials as bursting at the seams with guilt, secrets, hurts, fears and embarrassments.

Privacy is still important to the Zhodani in their private life; not to conceal secrets or emotions, but rather to respect the dignity of acts performed for their own sake rather than for society at large.

Respect for ones' social superiors is ingrained into society, but true respect must still be earned, even by Intendants and Nobles.

Violence and conflict are frowned upon. However, the Zhodani are not pacifists; war and even genocide are acceptable to protect other life. From the Zhodani perspective, the Frontier Wars were undertaken to protect the peaceful inhabitants of the Consulate from the lying, untrustworthy and expansionist Imperials.

As a society, the Zhodani realise that they are all much the same, so they feel comfortable wherever they are in the Consulate.

Conformity is key to Zhodani society and is championed by the Tavrchedl' [Guardians of Our Morality] who seek out the troubled minds of the mentally disturbed or criminally inclined. The paranoid Imperials refer to them as the "Thought Police" but the Zhodani regard them as a combination of health visitor and law enforcer.

The Tavrchedl' do not constantly monitor the thoughts of the populace; privacy is an important right. However, at some point in their life most proles will be subjected to one of the random scans conducted by the Tavrchedl'. Scans of Intendants are rare and a Noble would only be scanned under extreme circumstances.

The judicial system considers the offender's mental health as important as the offence itself.

Those who are mentally confused (e.g. by a major change in their circumstances or the loss of a loved one) are helped to adjust. Those who require punishment rarely suffer more than a fine, but repeated or severe offences may lead to enforced re-education.

Clothing is a visible manifestation of Zhodani conformity. All clothing styles are similar, with peculiarities for each caste: Nobles will often wear a turban and cloak, with males favouring a stylish beard; Intendants wear headbands, which often distinguish them from the non-psionic proles. However, the Zhodani should not be stereotyped – they have the same natural variation in the patterns and length of facial hair as Imperials; not all male nobles sport beards; they have just as great a degree of creativity, divergence of opinion and freedom of expression as the Imperials, though the Zhodani focus these abilities for the common good, whereas the Imperials...

Competition is acceptable, both in teams and as individuals, though primarily in physical sports. The Psionic Games are strongly competitive as they provide a means for the most promising Intendants to achieve Noble status.

Humour is found in puns and linguistic tricks. Zhodani do not take amusement from the misfortune of others; to do so is against the principles of Tavrziansh. Slapstick humour and practical jokes involving humiliation are not appreciated. Outsiders sometimes characterise the Zhodani as humourless but in reality they are usually a joyful people, often laughing in delight or pleasant surprise and they appreciate mildly self-deprecating humour. Those who are too despondent to appreciate humour are usually suffering from a mental illness and will be identified and treated by the Tavrchedl'.

Racism might seem surprising given their philosophy, but the Zhodani are very uncomfortable beyond the borders of the Consulate, perceiving such places to be "where liars and thieves are allowed to wander loose, untreated for their conditions". This discomfort is not merely disgust but also the realisation that the innate honesty of the Zhodani leaves them open to deceit, cons and charlatans.

There is little racial diversity within the Consulate, so even mild physiological variety in other humans may appear strange to the Zhodani. Their diplomats and traders require special training to allow them to interact comfortably with non-Zhodani. Intendants and Nobles are better at handling contact with outsiders, but often still prefer the security of a psionic scan to ensure the honest intents of their visitor.

Six pregenerated adventurers are provided with personalities and motivations. If less than six players are available, players can run multiple characters or some can be run as NPCs. The GM is permitted to copy these characters to distribute to the players (though it may be preferable to transcribe them on to separate character sheets). N.B. T4 UPPs have psionic strength appended.

Detspreflstebr

Vice-Admiral of the Cronor Fleet, Zhodani Consular Navy – Zhodani, Female, Age 50.

UPP 685ACC-8, 1.91 m, 75 kg.

Admin-2, Astrogation-2, Carousing-3, Communications-1, Computer-1, Cryptography-2, Environment Combat-1, First Aid-1, Fleet Tactics-4, Leadership-2, Liaison-1, Linguistics (Galanglic)-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-1, Sensors-1, Ship Tactics-3, Telepathy-3, Vacc Suit-2.

GT: ST 9, DX 11, IQ 14, HT 8, 6' 3", 166 lb.

Administration-13, Astrogation-13, Carousing-14, Computer Ops-11, Cryptography-13, Electronic Ops (Comms)-11, Electronic Ops (Sensors)-11, Free Fall-12, First Aid-11, Guns (Pistol)-12, Leadership-13, Linguistics (Galanglic)-11, Piloting (Contragrav)-13, Piloting (Spacecraft)-12, Savoir-Faire-12, Strategy (Space)-16, Tactics (Starship)-15, Telepathy Power 12 (Emotion Sense-15, Mind Shield-15, Telereceive-14, Telesend-14), Vacc Suit-13.

Advantages: Ally Group (Naval superiors and staff); Charisma +1; Combat Reflexes; Reputation (Hero Medal 6th Class, Consular Legion of Merit - CLoM), Status 4, Rank 7.

Disadvantages: Honesty (respect the law – it is for everyone's good); No sense of humour; Proud (of the Consulate and your culture); Truthfulness (telling lies is against your every principle).

Items: Auto Snub Pistol with 2 clips of 20 HEAP rounds; Diplomatic Armour (AV3, *GT: PD 6, DR 16 but PD3, DR6 against impaling weapons*, all END *(GT: HT)* based tasks at -1); DataPad (powerful handheld computer); Data Crystal (contains the full deployment plans for the Consular fleets along the Dietevriabr [Riverland] Wall); Comm Dot (compact throat microphone and radio with military encryption system); Admiral's Uniform (with medals and the gold sash of the CLoM).

Background: Of noble birth, you joined the Consular Navy after the Fourth Frontier War, to defend your society against the expansionist Imperials. You are a competent telepath but it is your years of experience and a creative mind which has made you one of the foremost strategists in the fleet, resulting in several decorations, your enrolment in the Consular Legion of Merit and your recent promotion to Vice-Admiral of the 67th Frontier Fleet. Unfortunately, your logistical and tactical expertise, combined with recent reports from the Tozjabr [Consular Intelligence] has led you to conclude that there is a fatal flaw in your own squadrons' dispositions, especially in the key "Dietevriabr Wall". Normally, you would have sent new orders through routine channels, but a sudden increase in tension along the border concerns you greatly. Under operations code Delta 3, you commandeered a fast ship from Cronor to carry you to your officers on Sachebr. Having briefed them, you are boarding the Courier *Priebr*, to get you to Chachtinch as quickly as possible. You are guarded night and day in shifts by Consular Guards Dliant and Shetlke.

Dliant is a prole Consular Guard assigned to your personal security several months ago. She has proven her competence but remains very formal while on duty and rarely talks much when off duty.

Shetlke is a prole Consular Guard, newly assigned to your security just before you left Cronor. He seems capable and alert but you've only known him a few days and he has the look of the Tvarchedl' Guardians. If so, given that he's a prole, he may have served in one of their non-psionic support units.

Quenzhlepr is your personal assistant – an attaché whom you are supposed to be grooming for future promotion. Sadly, this young man's knowledge of fleet tactics is deplorable, though he has proven adept at the administrative work which plagues you. However, you have sensed he is frustrated with such desk work, so recently you have let him help you with the more interesting intelligence reports.

Prenzh is the prole ship's engineer but is in nominal command of the *Priebr*, as the usual captain was taken ill just before departure. She seems competent and spends almost all her time in engineering.

Plevianats is the prole pilot and astrogator. He still has the enthusiasm and naivete of youth and you have had to reprimand him already for reckless manoeuvres while leaving the Sachebr docks.

Shetlke

Corporal, Consular Guard, Zhodani Consular Navy – Zhodani Prole, Male, Age 38.
UPP 79A877-B, 2.11 m, 90 kg.

Battledress-1, Disguise-2, Environment Combat-1, Intimidation-1, Intrusion-2, Law-1, Linguistics (Galanglic)-1, Medical-1, Perception-1, Recon-1, Rifle-2, Small Blade-1, Tactics-1, Telekinesis-1, Telepathy-2, Teleport-1.

GT: ST 10, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 13, 6' 11", 198 lb.

Battlesuit-12, Dagger-12, Disguise-13, Free Fall-12, Guns (Rifle)-13, Intimidation-12, Law-11, Linguistics (Galanglic)-12, Lockpicking-13, Medical (Diagnosis)-11, Psychokinesis Power 8 (Telekinesis-11), Telepathy Power 9 (Emotion Sense-12, Mental Blow-11, Mind Shield-14, Psi Sense-12, Telereceive-11, Telesend-12), Teleport Power 7 (Autoteleport-12, Exoteleport-11), Tactics-12, Tracking-13.

Advantages: Alertness +1; Ally Group (you can rely totally on your fellow Tvarchedl' to support whatever actions are required to fulfil your mission); Combat Reflexes; Rank 1 (actually Captain: Rank 4); Status 1 (actually Intendant: Status 2).

Disadvantages: Intolerance (of Imperials); Fanaticism (Patriotism); Paranoia (the Imperium has spies everywhere); Sense of Duty (the Consulate must be protected against the ruthless expansionist Imperials at all costs).

Items: Gauss Rifle with 6 clips of 100 rounds; Auto Snub Pistol with 2 clips of 20 HEAP rounds; Combat Armour (AV9, AV11 vs. lasers, *GT: PD 6, DR 54*) with built-in comms, heads-up display, light intensified vision and flash protection in the helmet; DataPad (powerful handheld computer); Commando Dagger (multi-purpose knife); Comm Dot (compact throat microphone and radio with military encryption system); Intrusion Kit (tools for defeating a range of mechanical and electronic locks and security systems); 2 Psi Booster shots (concealed in your belt).

Background: You were assigned to this mission by the Tvarchedl' officer in the Fleet Admiral's office at Cronor. Vice-Admiral Detspreflstebr is carrying a data crystal with vital fleet deployment information. Your primary mission is to protect the Vice-Admiral but you must ensure that neither she, nor the crystal fall into enemy hands; you are authorised to use lethal force if necessary (you and the crew are considered expendable). You must not reveal your mission, even to the Vice-Admiral. Your cover is as a prole Consular Guard but in reality you are an Intendant with psionic powers, which you must not reveal to the others. Your real name is Shetlkiepr.

Detsprefistebr is an extremely competent Noble naval officer, renowned for her daring fleet tactics.

Dliant is the Vice-Admiral's other bodyguard – a prole Consular Guard. She appears well qualified for her role and is very formal on duty. Off duty she seems a little more relaxed, but you rarely have time to talk to her as the two of you take it in shifts (usually of six hours) to guard the Vice-Admiral.

Quenzhiepr is the Vice-Admiral's attaché and personal assistant. He's young and ambitious, but only seems proficient in the safe environs of the office; you doubt his capability in a real combat situation.

Prenzh is the ship's engineer but is nominally in command of the *Priebr*, as the usual captain was taken ill just before departure. Her records indicate competence and stability.

Plevianats is already under survelliance by the Tvarchedl' -- he is a good pilot but his recklessness borders on being dangerous to society. You will have to keep an eye on this one.

Dliant

Sergeant, Consular Guard, Zhodani Consular Navy – Zhodani, Female, Age 27.
UPP 7C7A97-6, 2.03 m, 79 kg.

Battledress-1, Environment Combat-1, First Aid-1, Grav Craft-1, Ground Craft-1, Perception-2, Pistol-2, Recon-2, Rifle-3, Small Blade-1, Tactics-1.

GT: ST 10, DX 14, IQ 12, HT 10, 6' 8", 175 lb.

Battlesuit-14, Dagger-11, Driving (Ground Cars)-11, Free Fall-12, First Aid-12, Guns (Pistol)-14, Guns (Rifle)-16, Piloting (Contragrav)-11, Tactics-12, Tracking-13.

Advantages: Alertness +2; Combat Reflexes; Extra Hit Points; Rank 1; Status 1.

Disadvantages: Fanaticism (Patriotism); Intolerance (of Imperials); Sense of Duty (you follow your orders to the word); Workaholic.

Items: Gauss Rifle with 6 clips of 100 rounds; Auto Snub Pistol with 2 clips of 20 HEAP rounds; Combat Armour (AV9, AV11 vs. lasers, *GT: PD 6, DR 54*) with built-in comms, heads-up display, light

intensified vision and flash protection in the helmet; Map Box (digital holodisplay map unit); Commando Dagger (multi-purpose knife); Comm Dot (compact throat microphone and radio with military encryption).

Background: You are a Consular Guard, part of the elite forces of the Zhodani Consulate and part of the Consulate's first line of defence against the barbarian Imperials. You are "damn good" at your job and a few months ago were given the responsibility of guarding the Vice-Admiral. You take your work very seriously and are very formal while on duty but you like to relax and chill out when off duty.

Detspreflstebr is a famous Vice-Admiral, noted for her tactics, Commander of the subsector fleets and Vice-Commander of the sector fleets. You respect her greatly, even if she is a Noble Navy Officer.

Shetlke is a senior NCO, drafted in at short notice. He is a little relaxed for your liking, but seems professional. The two of you generally take it in shifts (usually of six hours) to guard the Vice-Admiral.

Quenzhiepr is the Vice-Admiral's assistant. He's a Noble and okay as a desk jockey but he doesn't seem to have much idea about fleet tactics (though you keep such thoughts to yourself).

Prenzh is the ship's engineer but is in command of the *Priebr* because the captain was taken sick just before departure. She takes her job very seriously and you appreciate her professionalism.

Plevianats is a creep who tried to hit on you as soon as you arrived on the ship. His immaturity and lack of professionalism is only barely compensated for by his natural ability to pilot starships.

Quenzhiepr

Lieutenant, Zhodani Consular Navy – Zhodani Intendant, Male, Age 34.
UPP 76B98A-A, 2.08 m, 87 kg.

Admin-2, Clairvoyance-1, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Engineering-1, Forward Observer-1, Investigation-1, Law-1, Liaison-1, Linguistics (Galanglic)-3, Perception-1, Pistol-1, Recuiting-1, Rifle-2, Robotics-1, Sensors-1, Ship Tactics-1, Ship's Lasers-1, Telepathy-0, Vacc Suit-1.

GT: ST 10, DX 9, IQ 12, HT 14, 6' 10", 191 lb.

Administration-13, Criminology-11, Electronic Ops (Computer)-12, Electronic Ops (Sensors)-11, Electronics (Computer)-12, Electronics (Robotics)-11, ESP Power 7 (Clairvoyance[1]-12), Fast Talk-12, Forward Observer-11, Gunner (Ship's Lasers)-12, Guns (Pistol)-12, Guns (Rifle)-13, Law-12, Linguistics (Galanglic)-15, Savoir-Faire-12, Tactics (Starship)-11, Telepathy Power 8 (Emotion Sense-12, Mind Shield-12, Telereceive-12, Telesend-12), Vacc Suit-12.

Advantages: Acute Vision; Absolute Direction; Common Sense; Rank 4; Status 2.

Disadvantages: Intolerance (of Imperials); Sense of Duty (to protect the Consulate and its people).

Items: Auto Snub Pistol with 2 clips of 20 HEAP rounds; Diplomatic Armour (AV3, *GT: PD 6, DR 16 but PD3, DR6 against impaling weapons,* all END *(GT: HT)* based tasks at -1); DataPad (powerful handheld computer, includes some secret reports on recent Imperial fleet movements that you've been working on for the Vice-Admiral); Comm Dot (compact throat microphone and radio with military encryption); Fevranzhtavr (the official book defining how one should follow the path of morality – the best source of inspiration should you or anyone else become confused as to their duty to the Consulate).

Background: You are an Intendant, and a reasonably strongly psionic, though with little training. Six months ago your mentor honoured you with an assignment to Vice-Admiral Detspreflstebr, to help develop your rather minimal tactical skills. Sadly, you became buried in the day-to-day problems of running the Vice-Admiral's office. You do your job very well, but wish you could get some direct experience of Naval operations. Thankfully of late the Vice-Admiral has begun involving you more in her tactical work, including recent discussions on secret intelligence papers.

Detspreflstebr is Commander of the subsector fleets, Vice-Commander of the sector and famed for her tactical skill. You respect her greatly and are relieved she has begun to trust your judgment.

Dliant has been one of the Vice-Admiral's bodyguards for some months. She is very competent and occasionally her ground-pounder professionalism cracks to reveal her more human side.

Shetlke is the new bodyguard for the Vice-Admiral and seems more easy-going than Dliant.

Prenzh is the *Priebr*'s acting commanding officer because the captain was taken ill just before departure. A competent prole engineer – not that you see her a lot as she's always in the engine room.

Plevianats is a young, hot-shot prole pilot. He seems too rash to be awarded any real responsibility, yet he is controlling the ship on this critical mission. Best to make sure he doesn't screw this up.

---

[1] As per GT's Alien Races 1, p.136, calculate range using the Telepathy table; the psi's view is not a given radius but is identical to the field of vision they would have if they were physically present at the viewing point.

Characters

Prenzh

Lieutenant, Zhodani Consular Navy – Zhodani Prole, Female, Age 30.

UPP 9A7C94-3, 1.98 m, 82 kg.

Computer-1, Electronics-1, Engineering-3, Environmental Combat-1, First Aid-1, Grav Craft-1, Gravitics-1, Instruction-1, Mechanics-1, Perception-0, Pistol-0, Robotics-1, Ship's Guns-1, Vacc Suit-1.

GT: ST 12, DX 13, IQ 13, HT 10, 6' 6", 180 lb.

Computer Ops-13, Electronics (Gravitics)-13, Electronics (Computers)-14, Engineer (Starship drives)-15, First Aid-11, Free Fall-11, Guns (Pistol)-8, Gunner (Lasers, Missiles)-13, Mechanic (Robotics)-13, Mechanic (Starship drives)-12, Piloting (Contragrav)-13, Teaching-11, Vacc Suit-13

Advantages: Ambidexterity; Danger Sense; Extra Hit Points; Rank 4; Status 1; Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Intolerance (of Imperials); Sense of Duty (to protect the Consulate and its people).

Items: Auto Snub Pistol with 2 clips of 20 HEAP rounds; Monkey Wrench; Ship's Overalls (AV1, *GT: PD 2, DR 8*); DataPad (powerful handheld computer); Comm Dot (compact throat microphone and encrypted radio); Engineering Multiscanner (can be linked to your DataPad); PRIS Binoculars.

Background: You're not particularly happy that your ship *Priebr* has been commandeered by Vice-Admiral Detspreflstebr for an urgent mission to the naval base at Chachtinch. Then your captain is taken ill just hours before departure, leaving you in command of the ship with that rash fool Plevianats for a pilot. You want to do your captain proud, while accepting that the Vice-Admiral and her aide outrank you – a mere prole Petty Officer. The rushed departure has required extra time checking the drives which conflicts with the feeling that you ought to be on the bridge, keeping control of Plevianats.

Detspreflstebr is an extremely competent Noble Vice-Admiral, renowned for her daring fleet tactics.

Shetlke is one of the Vice-Admiral's two bodyguards. You've noticed that he watches everyone and everything. Maybe he's just good at his job… or is he expecting some form of trouble?

Dliant is the other bodyguard. She is very formal on duty, but maybe she has a more human side?

Quenzhiepr is the Vice-Admiral's gopher: a young, supposedly promising, navy officer. Frankly, your impression is that he has spent his time in training simulations and has rarely seen the inside of a ship.

Plevianats is the pilot on this mission. He's immature and has narrowly avoided being on charges from the captain for his recklessness, but now he's piloting the Vice-Admiral!

Plevianats

SubLieutenant, Zhodani Consular Navy – Zhodani Prole, Male, Age 26.

UPP 9A7967-4, 2.08 m, 88 kg.

Astrogation-2, Grav Vehicle-1, Luck-1, Pilot-3, Pistol-1, Sensors-1, Vacc Suit-0.

GT: ST 12, DX 13, IQ 11, HT 10, 6' 10", 193 lb.

Astrogation-13, Guns (Pistol)-13, Piloting (Contragrav Craft)-11, Piloting (Large Spacecraft)-16, Sensors-12, Vacc Suit-10.

Advantages: Attractive; Extraordinary Luck; Rank 3; Status 0; Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Intolerance (of authority unless backed up by skill; you hate paper-pushers and "by-the-book" types); Sense of Duty (to protect the Consulate and its people against the Imperials).

Items: Auto Snub Pistol with 2 clips of 20 HEAP rounds; Ship's Overalls (AV1, *GT: PD 2, DR 8*); Comm Dot (compact throat microphone and encrypted radio); Good Luck Charm (you are never separated from this tiny carved stone which you wear on a thin chain around your neck).

Background: You are the best pilot in the subsector, possibly in the sector. You can pull tricks with ships that other pilots can't even contemplate. Things always seem to work out for the best and now, with the captain ill, you have your first chance to be in charge of the ship. Better still you've got a Vice-Admiral on board: this could be your opportunity for promotion! Technically, Prenzh the ship's engineer outranks you, but everyone knows that you're in the line command branch and she's only a stuffy engineer.

Detspreflstebr is a famous Vice-Admiral, noted for her tactics. She's also Commander of the subsector fleets and Vice-Commander of the sector fleets. She could be your route to promotion.

Shetlke is one of the Vice-Admiral's bodyguards but seems friendly when off duty.

Dliant is the second of the bodyguards. She's really attractive but is very formal and cuts you dead.

Quenzhiepr is the Vice-Admiral's assistant. An unimportant paper-pusher, but you want to keep in with him so he can put in a good word for you if you need it (maybe even get you some psionic training!)

Prenzh is your crewmate. She's very stuffy, does everything methodically and spends every waking hour in engineering, which is obviously why you should be in command of the *Priebr*.

Vehrsabl class Courier (Type ZC)

All the PCs have travelled on this type of starship before; permission is given to photocopy pp.13-14 for distribution to the players before starting the adventure.

Ship's Data

Hull: 200 dton, Streamlined Needle, Armour 40, Structure 12, TL14, MCr55.5. *(GT: 200 ton SL Hull, Total Compartmentalisation, PD 4, DR 600, EMass 499, LMass 562, HP 22,500, TL11.)*

Dimensions: 65.3 m (214') long, 45.1 m (147') wingspan, 9.8 m (32') high on landing pads. Size Rating 8 *(GT: Size Modifier +8).*

Drives: Jump 3, Manoeuvre 6g, Power Plant 8. *(GT: Airspeed 4,135 mph.)*

Weaponry: Fire Control Rating 6. Turret: two Lasers (4/4/3/2) *(GT: 405-MJ)*, one Sandcaster.

Crew/Cargo: 4 Crew (Captain/Pilot, Sensor/Comms/Navigator, Engineer, Gunner), 5 Passengers. 9 Staterooms. 1 Sickbay. 11 dton Cargo.

Electronics: Military Standard Controls. Sensor Rating A2 P3 J0. *(GT: Basic Bridge.)*

Fuel: Fuel scoops, purification (6 hours).

Sub-Craft: Air/raft.

Notes: A sleek aerodynamic design manufactured by the megacorporation Tliazhashal for transporting important military and government personnel. Note that many controls throughout the ship have psionic sensitive switches for use by officers and Nobles, as well as physical switches for prole crewmembers.

Key to Deckplans

A: Airlock. An extending airlock allows docking to other spacecraft or spacestations; an extending ramp is used to reach ground level when on a planetary surface.

AR: Air/raft. A hangar for a pressurised grav vehicle for ground, air and subspace travel. The air/raft is mounted on a lift platform which descends from the bottom of the ship.

B: Bridge. Central command chair, four multi-purpose terminals with dynamic configurable holodisplays (usually comms, sensors/navigation, engineering and gunnery).

BL: Bridge Locker. Accessible only by the ship's captain and high-ranking passengers. Contains the ship's armoury, a safe for highly classified documents, emergency equipment and secure access to the ship's computer.

CG: Cargo Hold. 11 dton of cargo space for special cargos.

CL: Crew Lounge. Officers, crew and passengers share a single lounge due to lack of space. Recreational facilities include entertainment consoles and fold-up fitness equipment.

EG: Engineering. Monitoring station for engineering systems.

F: Fresher. All staterooms are provided with washroom and shower facilities.

G: Galley. Contains both manual and automatic food preparation systems.

JD: Jump Drive. Piakldra [Hotbolt] 200 with Zhdianstahr Stirpr [super-fine mesh] jump grid.

L: Engineering Lockers. These contain spares, tool kits, emergency and survival equipment.

MB: Medical Bay. A compact military surgery bay with automed.

MD: Manoeuvre Drive. Piaklanhz [Hotburn] Y3 configured for dual thrust plates.

PP: Power Plant. Dual Brikiltsvla [Evolution] high efficiency plasma chamber plant with triple redundancy power multiplexers and coupling grids.

S1-9: Staterooms. Typically stateroom 7 is the captain's cabin. Crew use the other forward cabins with passengers towards the rear.

Lift Shafts:

a: Lift up to dorsal turret.

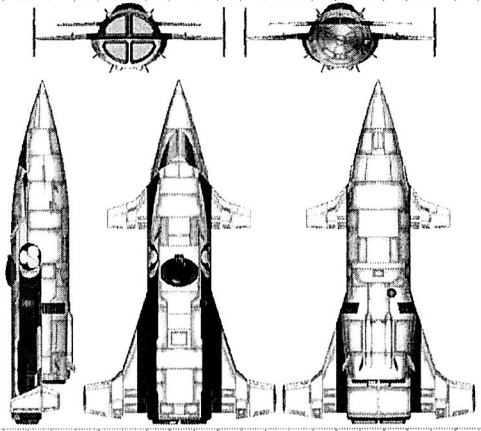**b:** Lift between crew deck and air/raft hangar.

c: Engineering/cargo lift, also capable of extending beneath the ship for loading/access when landed.

d: Cargo bay lift.

Vehrsabl class Courier

— — — ⊔	Wall, door, bulkhead, maintenance panel
⊻○◌ ◐	Iris valve (wall, floor, ceiling, both)
⊞⊕ ⊕ ⊕	Manual hatch (wall, floor, ceiling, both)
⊠ ⊠ ⊠	Lift (down only, up only, up and down)
▱ ◻ D	Couch (acceleration, normal)
★	Main computer terminal

UPPER DECK

B

BL

G

A

CL

F	S1	S7
F	S2	F
F	S3	F
F	S4	S8
F	S5	S9
F	S6	F

MB a b

★⊠ c

EG

JD

PP

JD

PP

JD

MD   MD

LOWER DECK

0 3 6
metres

AR

b

d c ⊠

CG   L

PP   PP

MD   MD
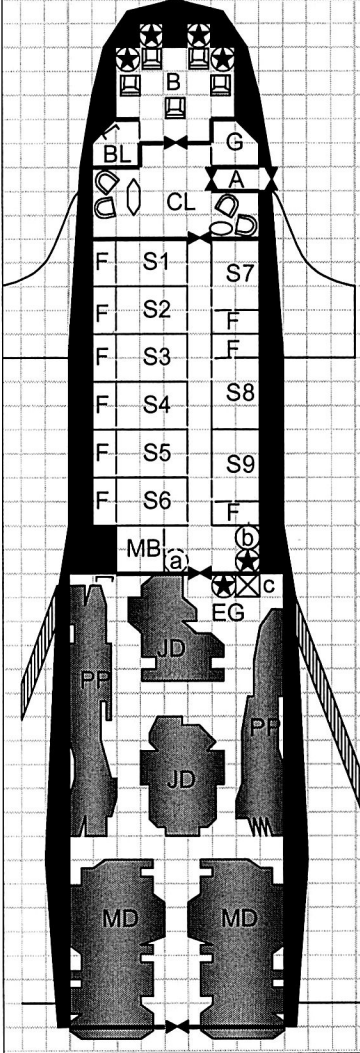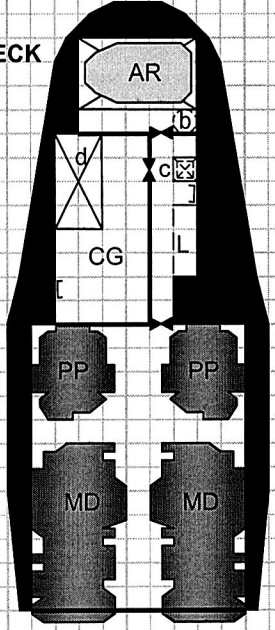
The PCs have an opportunity to introduce themselves to each other before beginning their journey. On entering jumpspace they become aware that the ship may have misjumped…

1. Introductions

To set the scene for the players, read the following to Prenzh and Plevianats:

> You are standing in a docking chamber outside the air-lock of your ship. A nearby portal shows the swirling, cloud-covered planet Sachebr, thousands of kilometres below you. Breaks in the clouds allow you to glimpse the green surface and occasionally sunlight glints off the oceans.
>
> Around you is the armoured bulk of orbital port Zchen. As one of several lines of defence for this strategic star system, it bristles with weapons, protecting the 'gateway' to the 'Dietevriabr Wall'. Merchant traffic passes continuously and you can see a Consular cruiser orbiting nearby.
>
> You often operate out of Sachebr, but you rarely have time to go down to the planet to breathe real atmosphere and feel natural gravity.
>
> A flashing light brings your attention back to the approaching tran-tube. The doors slide open and out steps the Vice-Admiral – an imposing figure, though a little shorter than you'd expected. Behind her are an aide and two Consular Guards in combat armour, carrying gauss rifles.

This is an opportunity for the players to get into their roles. Military rank should establish their pecking order, but there may be some competition between Prenzh and Plevianats.

It is customary for the senior officer to tour the ship before departure. Detspreflstebr is in a hurry and should make this very brief – the safety of many Consulate worlds depends upon reaching Chachtinch as quickly as possible. If one of the PCs is an Imperial agent (see "Sabotage" on p.5), this tour is critical: it allows the agent to plant their tiny explosive device in lower engineering.

2. Departure

An **Average Pilot** *(GT: Piloting Large Spacecraft)* task is needed to undock the *Priebr* and move safely away towards the jump point.

> Once the ship is under way:

> The navigation holodisplay springs into life, showing the surrounding star systems as well as a close-up of Sachebr and a projection of the Chachtinch system seven days ahead. Lines and arcs mark the gravitational fields, safe jump radii and jump shadowing areas.

If they have not already requested it, show the players the Area of Operations information (p.49).

> With the *Priebr* accelerating towards the jump point, beyond the masking of Sachebr's star, it is time to verify the jump nav parameters. Given the urgency of your mission, you will be making a running jump. There is a slightly increased risk of collision since you will retain your velocity vector on arrival in the Chachtinch system. However, it is a familiar, well-mapped system, so the risk is justified by the many hours saved by not having to decelerate to a stop before jump transition.

An **Average Astrogation** task is required to verify the jump parameters. It is key to the rest of the adventure that the ship exits jump with a high retained velocity. Detspreflstebr is most senior and therefore the final arbiter – if she decides not to perform a running jump then you'll just have to assume that the misjump they are about to suffer gives them a residual velocity anyway.

3. Jump

The characters have a few hours to interact before reaching the jump point. About 30 minutes before jump, a couple of **Average Engineering** *(GT: Engineer (Starship Drives))* tasks are needed to check the jump drive is powering up correctly and another **Average Astrogation** task is advisable to double-check the nav parameters.

The ship appears to enter jump safely. However, a few hours later each character must make an **Average Endurance** *(GT: Health)* roll. Any character failing the roll will begin suffering jump sickness. If all the characters succeed, pick the three who were closest to failing the roll – these characters will feel nauseous:

> There was the usual feeling of nausea as the jump field inflated. However you are still feeling sick several hours after jump entry.

In addition to the sickness, characters with psionics will have a painful headache. This is particularly unpleasant, as it disrupts their mental control; they may become aware of the pressing thoughts of the others around them, which are like

a muttering in the background which will not go away, yet cannot be heard clearly.

4. What's Happening?

No doubt the characters will want to discover what is wrong. The experienced crew may already have their suspicions, but only examination of the ship's systems will confirm their fears.

All the PCs know "The Basics of Jump" and can refer to the relevant sidebar (assuming they ask). In addition, characters with Pilot, Astrogation or Engineering skill will know the additional information about misjumps (see sidebar).

Careful inspection of the jump drive (as much as can be performed when the system is operational) will reveal the following:

To diagnose the jump drive status:
➤**Difficult Engineering *(GT: Engineer (Starship Drives))***
Spectacular Success: As Success, but power spikes are typically associated with a flawed or damaged zuchai crystal in the jump governor. If carefully inspected with an engineering multi-scanner, a hairline stress fracture is revealed in one of the crystals; the ship carries a spare crystal so it can be replaced once back in normal space.
Success: The jump grid appears to have had a few abnormal power spikes during jump transition. This may have lead to a mild misjump.
Spectacular Failure / Failure: There doesn't appear to be a problem with the drive; the sick characters may just be overly jump-sensitive. (Perhaps this should be added to their medical or psychiatric records?)

If the PCs realise they have misjumped, they may try to analyse the implications:

To determine the most likely type of misjump:
➤**Difficult Astrogation**
Spectacular Success: The jump entry vector was only mildly messed up – it's unlikely that you've misjumped more than a few parsecs, but this could still take you across the border.
Success: The effect of the erroneous jump entry vector could be minor or major. At best you'll arrive in the Chachtinch system some distance from your intended position. At worst, you'll be precipitated out of jumpspace tens of parsecs into Imperial space.
Spectacular Failure/Failure: You have suffered a misjump but it should just mean you may exit jumpspace later than expected. Hopefully you won't suffer too much jump sickness…

In truth the misjump is serious, as it will take the *Priebr* parsecs off course and into Imperial space. Although the misjump will not harm anyone, the power plant failure which caused it will have catastrophic effects for their starship.

The PCs have approximately one week in which to prepare for exit from the misjump. There is nothing they can do to affect the jump, so if they are sensible they will plan for the potential worst case, i.e. arriving with a dangerously high retained velocity in a hostile Imperial star system.

Break Out

The Courier emerges in the Emerald system, at the star's 100 diameter limit, with a perilously high retained velocity. As the characters engage the main drive to slow the ship, the fusion plant suffers an explosive catastrophic failure. The PCs must repair the damage in a race against time to bring the power plant back on line and regain control before crashing into the sun.

1. Emergence

Once a week has passed, the PCs should start preparations for emerging from jumpspace:

> For several hours, the jump drive monitoring systems have indicated that you are likely to break out into normal space so you have been at your watch stations.
>
> Finally, the ship exits from jump with a nausea-inducing wrench at your stomach.
>
> Almost immediately, it is obvious that something is wrong – the signals received by the comms console from the system navigation buoy use Imperial coding and units, not Zhodani.
>
> It is obvious that you have not arrived at the fleet base at Chachtinch as you had planned, but have misjumped across the frontier.

For a successful **Sensors** or **Astrogation** task roll by the PCs, tell them:

> You have emerged at the 100 diameter jump limit of the primary star, some 74.4 million kilometres out, above the plane of the ecliptic. To make things worse, you have exited jump with a velocity of nearly 379 kilometres per second, roughly in the direction of the sun.
>
> The autopilot begins sounding an alarm and flashing up several possible courses to avoid a dangerously close approach to the sun.

The ship has entered the Emerald system and has been precipitated out of jumpspace at the 100 diameter limit of the sun – which is significantly further out than the jump limit for the mainworld itself. However, the ship's retained velocity towards the star means that it is in danger of approaching rather too closely.

The characters need to work out where they are and how best to avoid interception by the Imperials – this is dealt with in Nuggets 2-6.

They will wish to use the *Priebr*'s thrusters to correct their vector. However, as soon as they engage the manoeuvre drive, go to Scenario 3.

Throughout their time in the system, you should roll to determine if the *Priebr* is detected by one of the Imperial navy ships, merchants, satellite or starport sensors in the system:

To detect the Zhodani ship:
➢**Staggering Sensors**
- Roll once per hour.
- The initial Imperial Sensors skill is 7 *(GT: 10)*.
- The effective Imperial sensors skill increases by 1 each hour.

Spectacular Success / Success: The *Priebr* has been detected by passive sensors on Emerald's highport or interdiction satellites or by a lurking patrol ship in the asteroid belt, which passes on the contact information to Emerald starport.

Spectacular Failure / Failure: The *Priebr* has not, as yet, been detected by the Imperial forces.

If the *Priebr* is detected, it will be hailed by Emerald highport – see Nugget 6.

Remember also that throughout this Scenario, some of the PCs will still be feeling the effects of jump sickness, so their task rolls should be penalised accordingly.

2. Where Are We?

The astrogator may assess where the ship has emerged from jump.

To assess the Zhodani ship's location:
➢**Formidable Astrogation**
- This task can be attempted every 5 minutes until successful.
- An **Average Computer** roll translates the local navigational buoy data into a useful format for the Zhodani computer and reduces the difficulty of the Astrogation task by 1 level.

Spectacular Success / Success: The ship is in the Imperial border system Emerald.

Spectacular Failure / Failure: The ship is in one of the star systems known by the Imperium as the Jewell cluster, but as yet more precise details cannot be determined.

Once the adventurers have determined their location, they can access further information on the Emerald system:

- The ship's navigation systems will automatically display the Emerald system map (p.50). The Zhodani ship has arrived in the top left corner of the map at about the 0.5 AU line, beyond (and above the plane of) the Gashinraa asteroid belt.
- The ship's computer contains detailed information on Emerald (p.51), including the world map (p.52) – all the PCs have to do is ask the computer to display this.
- PCs who have travelled frequently (particularly veterans such as the pilot, engineer and Vice-Admiral) may make a **Difficult Education** *(GT: Intelligence)* roll to recall information about Emerald (pick randomly from p.51).
- Detsprefistebr has a recent intelligence report on Emerald on his datapad (see p.53). If no-one thinks to ask for military data on Emerald, let the Vice-Admiral make an **Average Intelligence** roll to 'remember' this, once every 10 minutes.

If any characters wish to download some of this information to their datapads, this is a simple task, though the Vice-Admiral's Tozjabr report is encrypted and can only be copied with a code known to Detsprefistebr.

3. What Is Our Situation?

Any PC with Diplomacy, Liaison *(GT: Savoir-Faire)*, Administration or Legal *(GT: Law)* will know the following:

> Your ship has crossed the Imperial frontier. The Imperials are all unstable, secretive and paranoid so they are liable to assume the worst – that you are spies, contacts for the anti-Imperial resistance or perhaps even the precursor to an invasion fleet.
>
> At best, your ship will be seized and boarded, and your group expelled from the Imperium. This would be an enormous embarrassment to all of you, particularly the Vice-Admiral, and to the Consulate as a whole. At worst, the Imperials may view you as spies and cause you to 'disappear'.
>
> It is imperative that none of you, particularly the Vice-Admiral, nor any of the military data carried in the ship's computers, should fall into Imperial hands. In addition to normal interrogation and torture techniques, it is believed that the Imperium has recently developed psychotronic technology which allows brain patterns to be read and analysed even shortly after death...

Naturally, this is flavoured by the Zhodani perspective, as they do not trust the Imperials, who are all "liars and mentally disturbed".

However, it *is* crucial that the Imperials do not gain access to the intelligence information carried by Detsprefistebr and Quenzhiepr.

4. Who's Out There?

If the characters are concerned about being detected by other craft in the system, anyone with Sensors *(GT: Electronic Ops (Sensors))* will know the following and can relate this to the others:

> Detection by Imperial sensors is unlikely for a short period of time, as you are approaching from far above the plane of the star system and are some distance from the nearest gas giants where Imperial patrol ships might lie in wait.
>
> However, there may be ships lurking in the asteroid belt below you, and you are rapidly moving closer to the mainworld.
>
> At this distance, it will take about two and a half minutes for signals to travel from your vessel to the mainworld, so you would not expect any response for at least five minutes. You can only hope that anyone nearby who does detect you will not immediately assume that you are hostile.

The PCs can use the ship's sensors to determine if there are any spacecraft in their vicinity. They must choose between using active, passive or both types of sensor:

> **To detect nearby spacecraft:**
> ➤**Formidable Sensors** *(GT: Electronic Ops (Sensors))*, **or**
> ➤**Staggering Computer** *(GT: Computer Ops)*
> - -1 Difficulty if active sensors used.
> - +1 DM for each hour spent in system.
> - Can be repeated every 15 minutes.
> **Spectacular Success**: All space elements on the following list are located and identified.
> **Success:** Detects the location and approximate type of one space element on the following list.
> **Failure:** Detects one item on the following list, but in a slightly wrong location or with incorrect details (e.g. mistaking an interdiction satellite for a scout/courier or somesuch). If using active scan, nearby Imperial spacecraft will detect the *Priebr's* sensor emissions on the second such failure.
> **Spectacular Failure:** No ships are detected but use of active sensors is detected by the Imperials.

The following Imperial space elements may be detected by the *Priebr*:
- Interdiction Satellites (300 dton SMU-4D, 8 in high orbit around Emerald).
- Communications Satellites (10 dton, 12 in geostationary orbit around Emerald).

- Highport (converted 20,000 dton bulk freighter in medium orbit above the downport).
- Subsidised Merchant (400 dton *Akkigish* class trader, heading out to a jump point on the far side of Emerald).
- Systems Defence Boat (400 dton *Dragon* class SDB, inert in the Gashinraa Belt).
- Cruiser (10,000 dton *Terminus* class, on patrol around one of the outer gas giants).
- Fighters (2 *Rampart* RF-128's, patrolling Emerald's outer atmosphere).

There are other craft in the Emerald system, e.g. SDBs hiding in the gas giants, but these cannot generally be detected unless the *Priebr* actually approaches close to the relevant gas giant… this would not be a wise move!

If the *Priebr* is detected, it will be hailed by Emerald highport – see Nugget 6.

5. Where Can We Go?

On leaving jumpspace, the *Priebr* is heading at 379 kilometres per second directly towards the sun. The characters should have several aims:
- Avoid collision with the sun!
- Avoid interception by Imperial ships.
- Refuel (as all their fuel was consumed by the misjump).
- Get to a safe distance from the sun and jump back to a Zhodani system.

Refuelling is possible from Emerald's seas or from one of the gas giants but both sources of fuel may have Imperial ships defending them.

The time to reach Emerald at their current velocity is 32.6 hours. To land on Emerald, the latest they must begin decelerating depends on the degree of deceleration they wish to use:

Decel	Time	Decel	Time
6g	10.8 hours	3g	15.3 hours
5g	11.8 hours	2g	18.7 hours
4g	13.2 hours	1g	26.5 hours

i.e. 1g deceleration will take 26.5 hours to slow them sufficiently to avoid passing too close to the sun, or landing on Emerald. They must therefore begin decelerating within 6.1 hours (32.6 – 26.5) of entering the system.

Allow the PCs to discuss the options, e.g. sling-shotting around the sun to head for a gas giant, or applying heavy braking to arrive at Emerald. However, don't let them spend too long thinking, because activating the manoeuvre drive will cause further problems – see Scenario 3.

6. Identify Yourself

If the party try to contact Emerald or an Imperial ship, their communications protocols will reveal their Zhodani origins. The PCs may turn off their transponder and try to keep energy emissions to a minimum, but if detected by an Imperial ship or the mainworld, their ship's configuration will still reveal its Zhodani origins (the Imperial Navy is quite familiar with the *Vehrsabl* class courier).

In either case, they will receive a message about 10 minutes after detection:

> Your comms suite indicates you have an incoming transmission. You flick in the translation mode and hear an Imperial voice, saying:
> "Unidentified Zhodani vessel, you have entered Imperial space in the Emerald system restricted zone. Confirm identification and follow flight path now being transmitted into geosynchronous orbit, where you will be boarded by Imperial Customs agents. Your ship is subject to seizure should you be proven to be in this system without appropriate clearance. Failure to comply will result in the use of deadly force." The message loops…

Should the characters respond, there is a lag in communications of about 15 seconds per hour's travel from the mainworld (so around five minutes round-trip delay initially).

The Imperials are suspicious, and are likely to suspect the worst, as the Emerald system has been hit heavily in previous frontier conflicts. Any character talking to the Imperials will have to undertake a task to get their point across:

To convey an important point in Galanglic:
➤**Difficult Linguistics (Galanglic) or**
➤**Staggering Intelligence**
- This task can be attempted more than once.
- The unskilled task assumes reliance on the ship's computer to perform translation.

Spectacular Success: The point is conveyed perfectly, in language a linguistics professor would be proud of.
Success: Basic understanding is achieved.
Failure: The message is only partially understood or a key aspect is misunderstood due to lack of clarity or mistranslation.
Spectacular Failure: Not only does the speaker misunderstand the other person, he also insults the Imperial listener's family and/or beliefs!

The degree to which each group understands each other will not be readily obvious as both sides will be suspicious and rather nervous.

Once the PCs start a course correction to slow the ship they will discover that the power spike which caused the misjump has had other, unforeseen effects: it has damaged the power plant feeds to the manoeuvre drive, which will cause an explosion in engineering.

1. Explosion!

1D x 10 minutes after the manoeuvre drives are powered up, the power routing to the manoeuvre drive fails, causing a small explosion in lower engineering. This also damages key power components within the jump drive and causes the failure of some other internal systems, e.g. artificial gravity.

You should confirm each character's location and task at the time of the explosion (try to do this without arousing their suspicions).

Anyone in lower engineering will see the explosion and resulting fire – see Nugget 3.

Assuming Prenzh was at watch stations when the manoeuvre drive engaged, she should be in upper engineering. Thankfully, this area suffered only minor damage, but you might opt only to tell Prenzh's player the following until the other PCs find out what has happened:

> Monitoring the thruster vectors and power feeds shows the *Priebr* is lined up correctly and beginning to decelerate smoothly.
>
> Suddenly the power feed displays show a series of short, sharp power spikes; sparks spit from a nearby power conduit junction; the power plant indicators flash red; there is a resounding "whump" from the deck below, then blackness for a moment and a stomach-wrenching feeling as you lose artificial gravity.

The rest of the crew should be told:

> The ship's manoeuvre thrusters have rotated the *Priebr* to point tail-first along your path and the drives have powered up to slow your dangerously fast approach to the sun.
>
> The ship's inertial dampers are at full power to isolate you from the effects of the deceleration, so you feel nothing other than the usual artificial gravity which keeps your feet on the deck.
>
> Suddenly there is a rumble in the bowels of the ship and you feel a vibration through the deck. There is a momentary lurch, the ship is thrown into darkness, and there is a gut-wrenching feeling as you lose artificial gravity. A fraction of a second later, the emergency lighting cuts in and the "take hold" sirens begin wailing.

The explosion tripped out the power plant, causing loss of power to the manoeuvre drive and other key systems such as artificial gravity. The ship's back-up batteries bring back lighting and emergency life support functions immediately, but even using this power frugally, the batteries will not last more than 7 days.

Thankfully, the loss of the inertial compensators is roughly simultaneous with the loss of thrust, otherwise PCs not firmly strapped into an acceleration couch would end up being flattened against a wall by 6g of thrust. Unsecured characters must still make a **Formidable Dexterity** roll to avoid being thrown around due to the loss of gravity; if they fail, they take 1D damage and lose consciousness. They may make a **Difficult Endurance** *(GT: Health)* roll every 5 minutes to come round. An **Average First Aid or Medical** task by a colleague reduces the Difficulty of this recovery roll by one level.

The PCs should get into vacc suits as quickly as possible; these are located in lockers on the bridge and lower deck. Consular Guard armour can also be sealed up to act as a vacc suit.

Moving around safely in zero-g may be problematic even for space veterans if they've not had recent practice:

To maintain or regain stability in zero-g:
➤**Average Environment Combat** *(GT: Free Fall)*
➤**Difficult Vacc Suit***, or
➤**Difficult Battle Dress*** *(GT: Battle Suit*)*
*Requires the appropriate garment to be worn.
• -1 Difficulty if using handholds.
Spectacular Success: As Success but the PC has achieved good stability and gains −1 Difficulty on their subsequent roll.
Success: The action was carried out properly without causing any disorientation. If previously disoriented, reorientation has been achieved.
Failure: Character loses (or fails to regain) their hand-hold or orientation.
Spectacular Failure: Character begins to tumble; all reorientation tasks are at +1 Difficulty and character can perform no other task but this one until reoriented.

Characters who are still suffering jump sickness may find their nausea exacerbated by zero-g; the exact results are left to the discretion (i.e. malevolence) of the GM.

2. Ship Status

A first damage report will reveal:

> Those bridge computer systems supported by emergency power are showing the manoeuvre drive has lost all power and the fusion power plant has entered emergency shut-down mode. Fire sensors have been activated on both engineering decks but the surveillance cameras in lower engineering are inoperative.

Consumption of emergency battery power can be used to limit the PCs and challenge them, for example requiring them to open iris valves using the laborious emergency manual winch which is integral to each door rather than using the power opener from the bridge locker.

The damage sustained by each area of the ship is described in more detail below:

Upper Deck

Emergency lighting and life support are operational but only the ship's reserve computer is currently on-line and it is only processing critical requests (i.e. in-room video and entertainments functions are disabled!). An **Average Computer (GT: Computer Ops or Electronics (Computers))** roll will indicate that the two normal computers have suffered some data corruption and are undergoing internal integrity checks; they will be on-line in 1D+2 minutes.

Gravity and inertial compensation are currently inoperative due to minor faults (and to conserve emergency power). A computer check of the emergency batteries shows sufficient energy to maintain minimal life support for about 7 days.

Upper Engineering

Surge protection systems have tripped out but two power conduits overheated at junction points, emitting a few sparks. Resetting the protection systems requires 10 minutes and an **Average Engineering (GT: Engineer (Starship drives))** task. Checking the integrity of the power conduits requires the same task roll but takes 20 minutes; this will reveal no significant damage.

Lower Engineering

The iris valves into this area are seized and will require the iris valve opener from the bridge locker or cutting gear from the engineering lockers (see p.54). The surveillance cameras have failed, so the only way to investigate the

---

> ### Fire in Zero-Gravity
>
> Due to the lack of gravity, flames which are not being fed by a jetting fuel source will tend to be approximately spherical in shape, and will be struggling to keep alight; they are only sustained by slight air turbulence and diffusion of oxygen. If such a flame is extinguished, a sphere of smoke will continue to hang there.
>
> If gravity is restored without the flame being treated, it will flare (or re-ignite if merely smouldering) as the hot air rises and creates its own air flow, feeding oxygen to the fire.
>
> In space a "backdraft" is even worse than on Earth. The fire in a compartment may seem to be out; however, the fire will have slightly lowered the pressure in the cabin (assuming the ventilation system shuts off as soon as the fire is detected) and as a result opening the entrance to the compartment is likely to draw in oxygen. The resulting fire blast could be lethal to anyone standing near the opened door.
>
> Cutting gravity is a standard fire-fighting technique in areas which cannot be evacuated and/or which contain personnel with no access to vacc suits. The reduced flames can be dealt with more systematically and quickly.
>
> Evacuating the air from a sealed area is a relatively efficient means of extinguishing fire, but is only feasible if victims within the area are wearing vacc suits. In addition, the ignition sources within the area must still be allowed to cool (or cooled artificially) to prevent re-ignition when the chamber is re-pressurised.

damage is to enter the compartment. Inside, there are a number of small fires – see Nugget 3.

Cargo Hold

The iris valve motor has fused due to the power spike but the iris can be opened manually. The cargo (supplies, mainly foodstuffs, for the naval base) is safely secured by restraining straps and has suffered no damage.

Air/raft Bay

The power spike caused the air/raft mountings to unlock. The hydraulic motors for the lift platform on which the air/raft sits have also been damaged, though this is not obvious – if activated, the lift will only descend to about 50 cm clear of the ship's hull before failing totally, preventing the air/raft from being launched. At the same time, strong air movement (or manoeuvring the ship) may cause the air/raft to begin sliding about in the compartment, damaging itself and injuring or crushing anyone within the bay.

3. Fire Down Below

The ship's crew will know the majority of the dangers of fire in zero-g and need only make an **Average Education** *(GT: Intelligence)* roll to recall everything given in the sidebar. Anyone else onboard can recall the same information but rolling at −1 Difficulty; these people will only appreciate the dangers of backdraft if they make a second successful roll.

Depending upon the care with which they gain access to lower engineering, you may opt to inflict a backdraft effect on the PCs. Otherwise, on opening the iris valve, they can see:

> Lower engineering is on fire − globes of smoke and slow, smouldering, deep red flames hover over electrical connections and panels.

If anyone enters the room while the fires are still burning:

> As you float into the room, the flame globes momentarily flare up as you pass near them. Presumably turbulence in the air from your movements feeds a little extra oxygen into the fire, which extends snaking tendrils of flame with the breeze. The whole effect is very surreal, and a little disorientating.

The fire poses little real danger provided the PCs are careful and use respirators, vacc suits or combat armour. Recklessness leading to failed zero-g task rolls may land a PC in one of the globes of fire or cause them to touch an exposed power conduit which may give them a nasty electric shock or even kill them.

It is possible to evacuate lower engineering to extinguish the fires, but this will use up precious emergency battery power to pump out the air, which itself must be replaced from the ship's limited air supply. A more reckless plan might involve opening the forward cargo or air/raft hatches slightly and then opening the intervening iris valves to suck the air out of engineering. This conserves some power (though even opening the iris valves uses power) but loses valuable air. See Nugget 2 for damage to these areas.

The foam spray fire-fighting equipment carried aboard this ship can be used to extinguish the fires but will require a zero-g roll to avoid being pushed about by the thrust of the spray coming out of the nozzle.

4. Damage Assessment

Once the fire is out, the engineer will be able to assess the damage and begin the repairs. There are multiple areas of damage − the engineer must roll the following task for each area:

To diagnose damage to engineering:
➢**Difficult Engineering** *(GT: Engineer (Starship drives))*
- Checking each damaged area takes about 30 minutes.

Spectacular Success: As Success, but two areas of damage are analysed successfully.
Success: One area of damage from the list below is analysed successfully.
Failure: As Success, but inaccurate diagnosis will increase the difficulty of the repair task by 1 level.
Spectacular Failure: The PC hasn't a clue how to fix this but can attempt this roll again after an hour of pondering over the damage. Any repair work attempted on this area of damage during this time is at +2 Difficulty.

If the power plant fault was caused by sabotage, a Spectacular Success, or perhaps a very good Success roll, indicates that the engineer has noticed something suspicious − secretly pass a note to the appropriate player that they have found a tiny part of a device which does not appear to belong to the power plant. Further examination will reveal that this part was subject to extreme heat (i.e. it was close to the source of the fire) and it is part of a small timer circuit...

Damage areas are listed below, with the parts (all stored in the engineering lockers, unless otherwise noted) and time required for repairs.

(a) Power Plant Distribution Grid

This has burned out; since it provides power distribution to all the ship's systems, it must be replaced before the power plant can be re-started. It requires total replacement of the distribution grid and 5 hours of work.

(b) Manoeuvre Drive Power Couplings

The power couplings are all damaged to some degree, but the drive can be used at 1g once the power plant is re-started. Each coupling replaced or repaired takes 1 hour and improves the drive rating by 1g. If the drives are taken beyond their current rating, the remaining damaged couplings will burn out totally and some of the intact couplings may fail again.

(c) Jump Drive Crystals

One of the zuchai crystals in the jump governor was damaged by the power spike on entering jump; two more were damaged by the surges when the manoeuvre drive was turned on. Each crystal takes 30 minutes to remove and check using an engineering multiscanner then another 10 minutes to insert a new crystal. However, the

ship only carries one spare crystal, so the jump drive cannot safely be operated until replacement crystals are obtained.

(d) System Power Conduits

Junction points for a few minor power conduits have failed due to the power surge. These must be repaired to return power to the artificial gravity generators and to the ship's turret. The junctions and cabling can be patched or replaced in 1 hour.

The task for all repairs is the same:

To repair damaged areas in lower engineering:
➤**Difficult Engineering** *(GT: Engineer (Starship drives))*
- If additional skilled engineers help in this task, reduce the time by one quarter, but make only one task roll (by the most skillful engineer).
Spectacular Success: As Success but the time is reduced by one quarter. If the power plant fault was caused by sabotage, the engineer notices something suspicious (see p.22).
Success: Repairs are successful.
Failure: The repairs are not yet completed; a further roll can be made after 1D x 10 minutes.
Spectacular Failure: As Failure, but the next roll is at +1 Difficulty.

The power plant can be re-started once the distribution grid is repaired. It requires 30 minutes to ensure any damaged areas as yet unrepaired are isolated (to avoid further damage), then 10 minutes to re-start the plant. Ideally a further 20 minutes testing should be performed before switching on the power to the ship's systems, i.e. a total time of one hour before power returns.

5. What Now?

The group's aims are still as discussed in Scenario 2, Nugget 5 but their options must be reconsidered in light of the failure of their power plant and drives. The following summary of their status can be compiled from the ship's computer and their own engineering experiences so far:
- The *Priebr* still has a high retained velocity and is still on a trajectory which will bring it dangerously close to the sun.
- They are still without fuel for a jump.
- The jump drive has several damaged zuchai crystals, all of which must be replaced before the jump drive can be operated.
- If any Imperial craft have detected them (quite likely given the hours of repair time) then there may now be ships moving to intercept them.

- They have patched up the power plant but the repairs may fail if they put too much strain on the system, e.g. repeatedly firing the ship's lasers or long periods of high-g manoeuvres.

If they need some guidance, they can make appropriate task rolls, e.g. **Ship or Fleet Tactics** *(GT: Strategy (Space) or Tactics (Starship))*. The PCs should reach the following conclusions, though of course there's always the chance they'll think up something totally different:

Jumping Out

The *Priebr* cannot stay in this system for any length of time or it will be picked up by the Imperials. In its current state the ship can be out-run and out-gunned by most Imperial Navy ships.

Sling-shotting around the sun to get to the cover of a gas giant, asteroid belt or to simply disappear out into the blackness of space is pointless: the ship's supplies will only last for another three weeks (assuming the life support doesn't fail earlier) and even at light speed, it will take years for the ship, or its distress signals, to reach the nearest Zhodani system. Even once the *Priebr*'s disappearance is noted, it's very unlikely that Zhodani ships will chance a major incident by searching the Emerald system.

Repairing the Jump Drive

Assuming the PCs have realised that they have several damaged zuchai crystals, they will know they need to find replacements. If they try to use the jump drive in its current state, a misjump is guaranteed and the ship might be destroyed. The most likely place to find replacement crystals is at a starport, i.e. on Emerald.

Refuelling

Fuel can be obtained from a gas giant, from the seas of Emerald or from the highport or downport, but all of these will have Imperial Navy ships defending them.

Manoeuvring

The deceleration time limits given in Nugget 5 of Scenario 2 still apply – if the PCs no longer have sufficient time or thrust to land on Emerald their only hope is to swing in close to the planet and use the atmosphere for aerobraking.

If the PCs opt to head for Emerald, go to Scenario 4. If they head almost anywhere else, they will either die in a few weeks time when their life support runs out, or be discovered by an Imperial ship, captured and taken to the Scout base on Emerald as prisoners – see Scenario 8.

Crash and Burn

Approaching Emerald in a Zhodani ship is hazardous – even if the ship is reasonably airworthy on approach, it may be fired at by the orbital interdiction satellites, the starport defences or even Imperial fighters. In the worst case (or in a tournament situation), the ship will be in a ballistic re-entry path, ending up crashing into Emerald's forests.

1. Approaching Emerald

Whether the characters are trying to land, aerobrake or sling-shot around Emerald, they will come within range of the interdiction satellites which surround the world:

> As you approach Emerald, your sensors start to build a picture of the planet and its surrounds.
>
> The highport is a 20,000 displacement ton Imperial bulk freighter which has been modified to serve as a docking port for transferring cargo to the planetary interface shuttles. It's not clear what defences might be mounted on the port.
>
> Planetary orbit is seeded with a number of smaller satellites (most likely weather monitoring and communications). Your threat-warning sensors have also picked out eight SMU-4D Interdiction Satellites, each about 300 tons and typically armed with missiles and lasers. Currently, the nearest satellites appear to be in passive mode and are not tracking you.
>
> Emerald itself is a ball of thick, green-tinged clouds, broken in places by patches of deeper green vegetation, the glint of sea-green waters and iridescent ice caps.

Depending upon the state of their ship and their intentions, the manner in which the party arrive on Emerald can vary dramatically:

A Covert Approach

Reaching Emerald covertly is impossible even if the PCs have so far avoided detection by the starport or Imperial ships. The *Priebr* is not a stealth vessel and the interdiction satellites survey every direction. The best option is to approach the world from the side opposite the highport, evade any fire from the interdiction satellites and get beneath the cloud cover as quickly as possible.

A Badly Damaged Ship

A damaged ship will handle badly in the atmosphere and will undoubtedly crash on the planet. Proceed to Nugget 2 but ensure that the fire from the interdiction satellites either misses or causes only minor further damage – the PCs are in enough trouble already!

An Undamaged Ship

Their chance of landing safely on Emerald is dependent on the damage they suffer from the interdiction satellites, so you can adjust this as appropriate or let the dice decide.

Interception by Imperial Ships

The threat of interception can be used to 'herd' the *Priebr* and/or cause more damage to the PCs' ship – the Imperials will try to disable rather than destroy the Zhodani ship. Imperial starships will not pursue the *Priebr* into the atmosphere, but if fighters from the highport or downport will do so.

2. Interdiction

Whatever tactics the PCs are using to avoid notice, they will inevitably be detected:

> As you approach within 20,000 kilometres of the planet, your threat warning alarms sound. Your sensors tell you that the nearest interdiction satellites are directing active sensor scans at your ship. After a few seconds you begin receiving an automated message: "You have entered a restricted flight zone. Failure to leave this zone immediately will result in the use of deadly force."
>
> Your sensors confirm that the satellites are powering up their weapons systems.

Sensible PCs will try to find the largest gap in the satellite constellation through which to fly. Even so, the *Priebr* cannot avoid coming within weapons range of the satellites, so the PCs may wish to open fire first and try to knock out the weaponry on one or more of the satellites.

Interdiction Satellite SMU-4D
Hull: 300 dton, Unstreamlined, Size Rating 8, Armour 15, Structure 15, TL13, MCr14.5 *(GT: 300-ton USL Hull, TL11, PD4, DR 120, EMass 320, LMass 340, HP 33,600, Size Mod +8)*
Drives: 0.25g attitude / orbit positioning thrusters.
Weaponry: Turret 1: Triple missile racks. Turrets 2 and 3: Triple lasers (4/4/3/2) *(GT: 405-MJ).*
Sensors: Medium power planetary survey array.
Fuel: Solar cells with 30 day battery back-up.
(See *IISS Ships Files*, Games Workshop, 1981)

3. Like a Meteor

Whether their ship has taken serious damage, their manoeuvre drives are malfunctioning, or they're being pursued by Imperial ships, the PCs will almost certainly end up diving into the atmosphere at high speed:

> As the ship plunges into the outer atmosphere there are a series of gut-wrenching shocks and alarms sound as the hull temperature climbs rapidly. The ship shudders as it dives deeper into the atmosphere and winds rip into the damaged hull, causing a low howling noise.

To build up suspense, the pilot should make a **Formidable Pilot** *(GT: Piloting (Spacecraft))* task roll. Whatever the result, tell them:

> The ship crashes down through the atmosphere, flames roaring across its underside, turning you into a flaming meteor. The ship vibrates as one of the antenna fins cracks and shears off the hull. You're not quite sure how the ship is managing to hold together as it makes its meteoric dive towards the planet.

The pilot should make another **Formidable Pilot** *(GT: Piloting (Spacecraft))* task roll, before you tell them:

> As you drop into the thick green-tinged clouds, visibility is suddenly dramatically reduced. Despite occasional flashes of light from above, your sensors tell you little about what is in front of you. For a moment a collision alarm sounds but then the sensors confirm nothing more than a very dense rain burst ahead.

If the PCs make a **Difficult Sensors** *(GT: Electronic Ops (Sensors))* roll, they realise that the combination of dense clouds, atmospheric contaminants and rapidly varying water vapour density (with sudden bursts of rain) will have the same debilitating effect on the Imperial sensors; if they can slow the ship down, it will be quite difficult to track them accurately, especially once they are on the ground or underwater.

Currently, their ship is very hot and therefore has a huge infrared signature, but if they can slow down, the 'wet' clouds will help cool the ship's surface. In addition, while they are performing vigorous manoeuvres, the power plant and thrusters are strong power sources which can also be detected – cutting power usage to a minimum and reducing thrust will aid in obscuring the ship. However, the ship can only glide on low thrust if it is still aerodynamic, i.e. if the ship's wings and hull are largely intact.

Determine where on the planet map (p.52) the PCs' ship entered the atmosphere and decide the current day/night divides, i.e. which half of the planet is currently in darkness, and adjust the descriptions in subsequent Nuggets accordingly.

The remaining Nuggets in this scenario depend upon the state of the PCs' ship. If the Zhodani ship is relatively undamaged then they will be able to make a controlled landing – go to Nugget 4. If the ship is damaged, or the pilot dramatically failed the piloting task rolls, then the ship will crash – go to Nugget 5.

4. Controlled Landing

The PCs may opt to stay in the clouds for a while to hide from Imperial sensors and to throw off any pursuing ships or fighters. Track their flight over the planet using the map on p. 52. Once they choose to drop below the cloud layer…

Sea

> Your sensors tell you the cloud base here is low – just a few hundred metres. As you descend, the clouds suddenly clear around you, revealing a relatively calm area of sea below. Your first impression is of a steaming, green soup with tiny islands of fibrous 'matting' bobbing about. In the distance are brighter patches where rogue shafts of sunlight have penetrated the cloud layer.

Landing in the sea is feasible provided the ship has no hull damage; any leakage of water into the craft is likely to find its way into the electronics which, although somewhat protected against vacuum, will still suffer damage. Major hull damage may cause areas of the ship to flood!

While the sea is full of algae of various shades of green, the 'mats' are groups of floating plants, some large enough to carry their own colonies of insects. Within the sea are a wide variety of algae feeders, from microscopic scale up to medium-size whale-like filter-feeders. There are a range of predatory creatures resembling large eels, some of which hunt smaller feeders, while others are parasitic, attaching themselves to the larger filter-feeders and feeding off their blood.

Mountains

> As you descend through the clouds, your terrain-following sensors pick out the rocky peaks of mountains. Visibility is minimal and the screens seem to show that the cloud layer stretches down into the foothills – without your sensors, you would almost certainly end up flying into a mountainside.

Emerald's mountain ranges are often snow-capped, while their higher slopes abound with small-leaved plants which have adapted to the low temperatures and thrive on the increased sunlight.

There is little fauna at these heights, though some hardy worm-like creatures and insect life survive.

Midway down the slopes, the sunlight is insufficient to compensate for the cold and there is very little vegetation. As it becomes warmer lower down, broad-leaved plant life becomes increasingly common, supporting a variety of insects, bat-like birds and quadrupedal animals.

Forest/Jungle

> As you descend through the clouds, your terrain-following sensors pick up dense vegetation to a height of 20 to 30 metres above the ground. Dropping further reveals the clouds begin thinning less than a kilometre from the ground. Below, you can see the dense weave of broad-leaved tree-top foliage, shading from green almost to black. Occasional breaks reveal the forest floor, also thick with plant life.

The forests and jungles are dominated by high, canopied trees. Smaller trees and shrubs cluster beneath breaks in the canopy, and large sprawling plants and vines cover the rest of the light-starved ground beneath the trees.

The canopy and ground level form two almost independent eco-systems with their own species of insects, small herbivores and occasional carnivores. A number of ground plants have evolved predatory tendencies to compensate for the meagre sunlight and poor quality soil.

See Scenario 6 for more detail.

5. The Crash

The ship can crash anywhere on the planet (see the preceding Nugget for descriptions of various terrain types) but the following Nuggets assume (for tournament purposes) a crash in the forests south of the starport, after a nerve-wracking manoeuvre to avoid the mountains to the south-west (see the enlarged map on p.52).

> With your sensors fading in and out, it's difficult to determine your exact position as the ship veers downwards through the clouds. The collision alarm sounds again! Your forward radar screen is suddenly filled with a wall of solid rock just a couple of kilometres ahead of you. Since you're still travelling faster than the speed of sound, you've only seconds to avoid crashing into it!

Ask the pilot to make a **Formidable Pilot *(GT: Piloting (Spacecraft))*** task roll. Whatever the result, it should appear that this was only *just* sufficient to prevent impending doom (if it was a particularly bad roll, scrape more bits off the ship):

> At the last instant the sensor sweeps show a gap in the rock wall – rolling the ship on its side

and applying maximum thrust you just manage to avert a devastating crash. The rocky gully side claws at the ship's underside and you hear the tearing of metal; at the same instant, part of the terrain-following radar display goes blank.

The tense situation and faults in the navigation systems mean that the ship is in a slightly different position and at a lower altitude than expected; specifically, it is in the mountain range south-west of the starport.

Another piloting roll can be used to to increase the tension further.

If, at any point, the PCs try to leave the ship, it should be noted that the air/raft is probably damaged and its launch ramp will not open correctly (see Scenario 3, Nugget 2).

> The ship shoots out from between the rocky mountain peaks and the forward-looking sensors begin to show rolling hills rather than mountains ahead. However, the ship is becoming increasingly unresponsive, veering downwards.
>
> Plunging below a thousand metres altitude suddenly brings you out below the dense cloud cover. Below are green plains but the ship is rapidly approaching dark green forests ahead. The ground reaches up for your ship as you plummet with the aerodynamic grace of a housebrick. Tree branches reach up to snag at the remaining wing surfaces. Your ship is snatched from the air, tears a swathe through the tree canopy and tumbles downwards, smashing into the ground. Everything goes black and the world becomes a confused jumble of flying projectiles as you completely loose your orientation in the chaos of the crash-landing.

This crash should not kill anyone but each character should make the following task roll. Any character who would take enough damage to die should instead be knocked unconsious and gain a broken limb (allowing them to remain in the game, while making them a burden to their colleagues).

To avoid injury in the crash landing:
➤**Average Dexterity**
- +2 Difficulty if the character was not strapped into an acceleration couch.

Spectacular Success: No damage, apart from a few bruises.
Success: Minor damage (1 point).
Failure: 1D damage.
Spectacular Failure: 2D damage.

> The darkness is dissipated by the red glow of the emergency lights, which illuminate the wrecked ship. An alarm siren sounds briefly then

peters out. A computer voice begins to repeat a warning: "Danger! Hydrogen fuel tank integrity breached. Power plant radiation breach. Evacuate to safe distance immediately".

Adjust the ship's damage according to the severity of crash you wish to inflict upon the PCs. Typically the ship's wings will have been torn off and much of the nose and lower deck crushed (though these areas are still accessible with some difficulty).

In the worst case, leaking hydrogen fuel, combined with electrical sparks and a cracked power plant containment chamber are an explosive combination so the PCs' aim at this point should be to get out of the ship as quickly as possible. This is an important test of roleplaying – the juniors should aid their superiors but remember that for all the PCs, helping their compatriots is the duty of every Zhodani.

The characters have only a few minutes to decide what they wish to take with them (this may be personal items or equipment from the ship's lockers – see p.54) and get it out of the ship before it explodes. This can be roleplayed or each character can have one or two attempts at the following task:

To salvage an item of equipment:
➢**Difficult Environmental Combat** *(GT: Free fall)*, **or**
➢**Difficult Athletics**
- -1 Difficulty if the PC accepts a random item from those available in the area that they are searching.

Spectacular Success: As Success, plus they can choose one additional item to grab.
Success: Chosen item is salvaged successfully (any weapon includes several clips of ammo).
Failure: The item could not be found (or was dropped) on the way out.
Spectacular Failure: As Failure and take 1 point of damage from burns or cuts.

Any equipment retrieved may be damaged and require repair (roll of 1-2 on 1D). The air/raft is trapped under the ship and cannot be removed.

6. Out of the Frying Pan

As soon as the characters have a chance to look outside the ship (the following assumes a crash in a forested area):

The countryside around is dominated by high, canopied trees through which faint shafts of sunlight are visible, casting an almost surreal etheral glow. Smaller trees and shrubs, all with huge leaves, provide plenty of cover at ground level, but the area behind your ship is open to the rolling green clouds above, where your descent has toppled trees and ploughed a deep furrow through the landscape and ground scrub.

The air is filled with strong smells from the damp vegetation and you can hear strange hooting calls and sharp cries of disturbed wildlife.

Now you are clear of the ship, you can see the damage which has been inflicted is fatal. Holes are torn in the superstructure, with signficant damage to the engineering sections. Debris is strewn across the crash site, with small fires and smoke rising from the super-heated metalwork and from nearby foliage. The flickering pools of light emphasise the shadowy depths of the forest around you.

The lower hull is crushed and half buried in the trench which it created as it tore into the ground.

IR vision (e.g. PRIS binoculars) will show up the super-cold leaking fuel and the proximity of the growing hydrogen clouds to ignition sources; if the PCs monitor this, they can judge the explosion risk and give some warning to anyone in the ship.

If you're feeling generous, allow the PCs a further short period of time to gather items from the ship (survival equipment would be a good idea), again by roleplaying or using the preceding task. During this time the ship interior is getting increasingly dangerous – there is a strong burning smell, small electrical fires, increasing smoke, gradual collapse of internal structure, etc.

If the Imperials tracked the ship to its crash site, consult Scenario 5 to see whether Marines appear on the scene prior to the ship exploding.

As time runs out, the PCs should run for cover as far from the ship as possible; the rapidly expanding hydrogen cloud and oxygen in the atmosphere have created a very volatile mixture.

A near-transparent, blue-tinged flame starts to boil up out of one of the ruptured fuel tanks – the leaking hydrogen fuel has mixed with the air and found a convenient spark to ignite it.

Last chance for the PCs to run for cover!

There is a thunderous "whoommpp" and the entire ship is engulfed in a massive billowing fireball which sends out a scorching wave of heat.

The explosion will throw debris around like shrapnel and set light to more surrounding foliage. In addition to endangering the PCs, the explosion and subsequent fire will act as a beacon for Imperial pursuers (see Scenario 5).

Wherever the party crashed, their only route off this planet is via the starport. It's likely to be a long walk...

It is practically impossible for the PCs to reach Emerald's surface without being tracked by the Imperials. Almost any sensor lock or sighting of their ship will identify it as a Zhodani vessel, so whether it lands, crashes or simply disappears when it reaches Emerald, the local military will despatch whatever forces necessary to find it, recover its crew and determine its purpose. Use these Imperial pursuers during the following Scenarios to add tension, to speed up a party who are dragging their feet or slow down characters who are finding it too easy.

1. Into the Fire

If the Imperials tracked the ship down to its crash site they will immediately despatch a Marine G-Carrier to investigate, from an orbiting navy ship, or the highport or downport.

Locating The Crash Site

Emerald's dense, homogeneous cloud cover is loaded with water vapour and other contaminants such that ground surveillance is difficult from orbiting ships and satellites for the majority of typical sensor systems (radar, ladar, visual, infra-red, etc.).

However, the Zhodani ship probably entered Emerald's atmosphere as a fiery meteor and caused significant damage when it ploughed into the ground, making it easier to locate the crash site. If the ship's power plant is still operational, its signature can be detected by neutrino sensors, even through the clouds.

If the ship managed a controlled landing and was then concealed (e.g. underwater), it will be far more difficult to locate.

The Marines

A Marine G-Carrier may arrive in as little as 20 minutes if despatched from a ship in orbit over the crash site. Any PCs who are still close to their ship will get little warning of the G-Carrier's arrival due to Emerald's thick clouds, dense tree canopy, etc. If a character is watching the skies with augmented vision or hearing, give them 30 seconds warning of the approaching G-Carrier, otherwise they will hear its engines just 10 seconds before it appears overhead.

The carrier's forward-looking sensors include infra-red, so the PCs are likely to be detected if they are not well concealed and come into its field of view.

As the G-Carrier circles, several well-armed and armoured Imperial Marines can be seen aiming weapons from its half-open side hatch.

The G-Carrier discharges four marines; the driver and another marine remain in the carrier. The marines are tasked with securing the Zhodani ship and capturing its crew. Border tension, the party's dramatic arrival and any hostile actions by the Zhodani in space, mean that the marines may be a little trigger-happy.

The PCs' best option is to leave before they are noticed. If they choose to fight, it will get messy, though the marines won't use the plasma gun rashly as it may

ignite any remaining fuel around the starship or even start a forest fire.

Imperial Marines 9/12 *(12/15)*
• All wear combat armour; three have gauss rifles, one is armed with a plasma gun.
Combat Armour AV 9 Rigid, AV 11 vs lasers *(GT: PD6 DR54, PD4 DR40 on limbs).*
Gauss Rifle 6D dmg, Medium range, 100 shots, 5.2kg, reloads 2.0kg *(GT: Cr 8D+1 dmg, SS 12, Acc 12, ½dmg 900, Max 4500, ROF 20, 6.2 lb, 40 shots, ST 9, Rcl -1)*
PGMP 19D dmg (4D explosive), Medium range, 20 shots, 28.9 kg, reloads 16.6 kg *(GT: Exp. 6Dx8, SS 12, Acc 14, ½dmg 460, Max 920, 7.2/6 ROF 1, 46 shots, ST 12, Rcl -3)*
Anyone looking at the plasma gun when it fires is blinded for 1D hours unless they are wearing suitable eye protection or can make an **Average Endurance** *(GT:HT)* roll. The plasma bolt creates a swathe of destruction either side of the beam.

If the PCs gain the upper hand on the ground troops, the G-Carrier can provide airborne fire support or air evacuation. If the marines are all killed, the carrier will circle at a safe distance to await reinforcements.

The G-Carrier is in continuous radio contact with the Scout base (and its mother ship if it came from a navy vessel) so the Imperials will get a blow-by-blow report of the combat situation.

Should the PCs manage to shoot down the G-Carrier, it will probably be damaged irreparably. If the carrier is sufficiently intact to be comandeered, the PCs should realise that it may have some form of tracking device onboard (it does) and its transponder will allow it to be identified by almost any Imperial vehicle (it will). Each of these items requires several hours and a **Formidable Electronics** roll just to locate the devices and a similar period and task to disable each of them. It is unlikely that the PCs can afford to spend much time waiting around near the ship, but undertaking this work while the G-Carrier is in flight is at +1 Difficulty.

If the PCs overcome some or all of the marines they may salvage some of their armour, weapons, ammunition, equipment and identity papers.

Optionally, the marines may arrive *before* the Zhodani ship explodes, or sufficient fuel may be left in the ship to cause a second explosion; this can be used

to kill the marines and/or destroy the G-Carrier if things are going badly for the party.

2. Search Parties

Initially, the Imperials have limited ground forces so they must try to locate the Zhodani as quickly as possible to determine where best to deploy their troops.

If the search becomes protracted, the search parties can be swelled by assembling the significant Marine assets (hundreds of troops, G-Carriers, etc.) from the Imperial Navy vessels deployed throughout the system.

Orbital Surveillance

In a clear atmosphere, the interdiction satellite sensors could resolve and track individuals in real time on the planet's surface. However, Emerald's cloud cover makes this far more difficult:

To detect the PCs from an orbiting platform:
➤**Formidable Sensors**
- Roll this task once every 3 hours.
- Use an Imperial Sensor skill of 12 if using the interdiction satellites alone, +1 for each starship which joins the search.
- +1 Difficulty if the party are obscured from the sky, e.g. beneath the forest canopy or deep underwater.
- +1 Difficulty if the PCs are camouflaged or under-water and have reduced their heat signature.
- -1 Difficulty if the group lights a fire or uses radios, energy weapons or explosives.

Spectacular Success: Exact location pin-pointed.
Success: Location detected to within 250 metres.
Failure: The PCs were not detected.
Spectacular Failure: Local fauna are mistakenly identified as the Zhodani, causing Imperial ground teams to be misdirected and waste several hours.

Search Parties

Once the Imperials have a rough idea of the location of the ship or the crew, they will send out Scout search teams in air/rafts to perform low altitude sensor sweeps, using the same task above.

For best sensor performance, the air/rafts have to fly below the cloud layer, which means they can only scan an area about 500m square, directly below the craft; this means they are only useful once directed to a specific area by an orbiting platform, but the short range does reduce the task difficulty by one level.

Scout Search Team 7/9 *(10/12)*
- Each team has a driver, a sensors operator and a security officer.
- All wear combat environment suits and carry auto snub pistols and medium range communicators.

Combat Environment Suit AV 5 Flexible, sealable suit with heat management capability, *(GT: PD2 DR24).*
Auto Snub Pistol HEAP 5D (1E) or Tranq 1D stun/rnd, V.Short, 20 Shots, 0.6kg, reloads 0.6 kg *(GT: HEAP Exp 2D or Chem Tranq, SS 9, Acc 2, ½dmg 80, Max 1100, 1 lb, ROF 3~, 20 shots, ST 8, Rcl –1).*

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3. Trackers

Once the Imperials determine the location of the Zhodani, they will send in two S3 teams to track them.

The S3 teams will be carried to within several kilometres of the Zhodani by a G-Carrier. One team will remain in the vehicle as back-up, while the other team will set off using their grav belts. They will track the Zhodani stealthily and observe them covertly until they are sufficiently certain of their location and strength to effect a capture themselves or call in other Scout teams for a strike or ambush.

The S3 teams use highly encrypted 'stealth' radio systems but will tend to maintain radio silence anyway. They are equipped with psi-shielded helmets but judicious use of psi powers by the adventurers may allow them to detect (and eventually pinpoint) these mysterious followers.

S3 (Special Security Service) Team
10/14 *(13/16)*
- An elite Scout unit trained in commando tactics and a variety of combat environments, used for deniable, covert operations such as recovering downed Scouts from hostile worlds. They pack lethal fire-power but are tasked with capturing the Zhodani alive if possible.
- Two are armed with laser rifles, two with gauss rifles. Each of them also carries an auto snub pistol, 3 flash grenades, a CE Suit with built-in grav belt and psi-shielded helmet, a dagger and a secure long range communicator.

Psionic Shield Helmet Shields the wearer's mind from detection or influence by psionic powers. Includes night vision, flash suppression and heads-up display.
Combat Environment Suit AV 5 Flexible, sealable suit with chameleon skin and heat management capability, *(GT: PD2 DR24).* Built-in grav belt allows airborne travel for up to 100 km/h for up to 24 hours
Laser Rifle 6D dmg, Long range, 100 shots, 4.5 kg, reload 2.1kg *(GT: imp 4D, SS 12, Acc 20, ½dmg 4900, Max 9200, 10 lb, reload 5lb, ROF4~, 100 shots, ST 8, Rcl 0)*
Gauss Rifle 6D dmg, Medium range, 100 shots, 5.2kg, reloads 2.0kg *(GT: Cr 8D+1 dmg, SS 12, Acc 12, ½dmg 900, Max 4500, ROF 20, 6.2 lb, 40 shots, ST 9, Rcl -1)*
Auto Snub Pistol HEAP 5D (1E) or Tranq 1D stun/rnd, V.Short, 20 Shots, 0.6kg, reloads 0.6 kg *(GT: HEAP Exp 2D or Chem Tranq, SS 9, Acc 2, ½dmg 80, Max 1100, 1 lb, ROF 3~, 20 shots, ST 8, Rcl –1).*
Commando Dagger 1D, 0.2 kg *(GT: 1D-1, 0.5 lb)*
Flash Grenade Anyone without flash suppression visors within 10 metres of the explosion requires an **Average Endurance *(GT: HT)*** roll to avoid being blinded for 2D rounds.
Communicator Highly encrypted broadband 'stealth' communicator requiring thumb-print and passcode identification for use. Can communicate between S3 teams, or with the Scout base at Port Emerald, or can be switched to lower encryption modes for talking to Scout Search Teams and other Scout units.

The Long Walk

Wherever the PCs landed, their ultimate goal is probably to get to Emerald's starport. This scenario contains a series of nuggets covering their journey: Nugget 1 covers travelling on Emerald, Nuggets 2 to 5 describe potential encounters, Nugget 6 describes Emerald's cultivated areas and Nuggets 7 and 8 cover the dangers of nomadic bandits.

1. Travelling

Fortunately, the PCs' original destination, Chachtinch, has a similar gravity and atmosphere to Emerald, so the characters will not require any significant time to acclimatise. Emerald's days (23.9 Zhdina or 32.2 Imperial hours) are longer than Zhodani standard by about 4 Zhdina (5.4 hours) which may confuse PC time-keeping.

Emerald's seasons pass rapidly due to its short (50 zhdanstial [56 days]) year. Despite the moderating effects of the persistent cloud cover, the climate can vary considerably depending upon where on the planet the characters landed and the season (you can choose the season or determine it randomly).

Emerald's star is cooler, smaller and redder than Terra's Sol but appears about three times bigger than Sol in the sky. Daylight will seem nearly as bright, as a result of the flexibility of the Zhodani eye, but the star gives off less ultraviolet radiation, so there is little chance of sunburn should the party want to stop for a rest! The star will also appear dim compared to Sol, partly due to the larger angle it takes in the sky. As a result, features such as sunspots are more obvious, and looking at the star would be less painful (although not recommended for long periods).

Emerald's various terrain types were described in Nugget 4 of Scenario 4; the following additional detail covers travel in these areas.

Example flora and fauna are given in Nuggets 2 and 4; additional creatures can be generated using the tables in the Traveller rulebooks or selected from a source such as *101 Lifeforms*.

Sea

If the characters have an air/raft, they can travel relatively safely over the sea. There are few flying creatures any distance from the coast and the air/raft's sensors should warn them of the sudden storms which can develop over the ocean.

Travelling on the surface (e.g. using a dinghy from the ship's locker) is more hazardous, as one of the sea predators might mistake them for prey or one of the big filter-feeders might engulf them or turn their boat over by accident. The water surface can feel quite thick due to the algae and some of the floating plant mats are thick enough to support a lightweight human, though the insect life might show an unhealthy interest in anything new venturing on to 'their' island…

Using a fully enclosed vehicle, the PCs can travel more stealthily, but far more slowly, beneath the water. This will further expose them to the dangers of the sea fauna but does protect them against the worst of the storms.

Mountains

The primary hazards on the bare upper slopes of Emerald's mountains are: reduced oxygen levels; low temperatures, compounded by the constant dampness from the surrounding clouds; rapid variation in cloud density, often reducing visibility to just a few metres. Rifts and chasms may be hidden in the mists, with loose scree and slippery, wet, algae-covered rocks adding to the dangers of tripping or falling.

The scrub which appears lower down the slopes supports only small fauna, which pose no threat. In the foothills, the terrain and wildlife are similar to that in the forests and jungles.

Flying an air/raft through the mountains is relatively safe provided the craft has terrain-following radar and moves at slow speed. Driving at ground level is very dangerous given the limited visibility, chasms, etc. – it is safer to navigate the mountainside on foot.

Forest/Jungle

Visibility is generally poor in the denser areas of forest, with little light filtering down to the ground. Travelling on foot exposes the party to predatory flora and fauna (see Nuggets 2 and 4) but is fairly rapid given the thin ground vegetation and provides excellent cover against Imperial surveillance. The varying density of the tree trunks and dangling creepers make flying an air/raft below the tree canopy quite dangerous and slow; flying above the canopy is relatively safe unless they fly into one of the small bat-winged creatures which flit about the tree-tops.

2. The Research Station

The research station is an IISS funded building, used as a base for Scouts out on training exercises or testing new field equipment. It is currently deserted, as the researchers are spending the day out in the field (see Nugget 3).

This is a good source of equipment, including an air/truck, plus an automed station, which can treat their injuries. The PCs can obtain uniforms to aid in disguising themselves as Imperials and perhaps aid in infiltrating the starport. They may also be able to steal some of the Imperial research data for the new sensor being tested here.

Ground floor

Upper floor

≡ Stairs (up) ⌷ Window
≡ Stairs (down) ■ Door

0 3 6 9
metres

Research Station Buildings

Approach

> Ahead of you the ground dips down into a low valley. The foliage around is starting to thin out, turning from the tall, canopied alien trees, to low-lying scrub. A stream runs through the valley, and some goat-sized quadrupeds are grazing the grass in the meadow, their iridescent coats catching the sunlight. Beyond the meadow are a number of low farm-type buildings, over which flutters a flag bearing the red Imperial Sunburst.
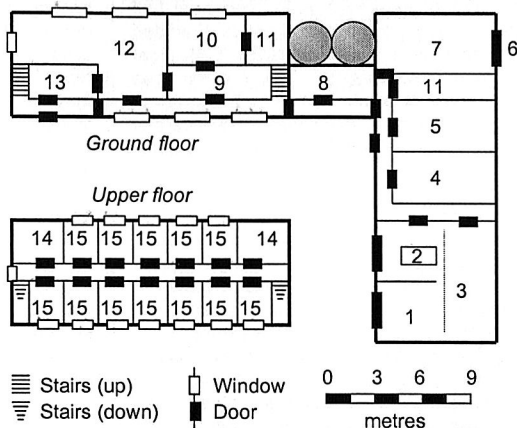
The grazers are Groats (see p.33).

If the characters observe the buildings for a few minutes, they will conclude that there does not appear to be anyone around. A psionic scan will confirm the lack of people in the building. An **Average Education** *(GT: IQ)* check indicates that the red sunburst is usually associated with the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service (IISS).

A sign (in Galanglic) near the bridge identifies the site as "Danyne Valley Farm Research Centre. Property of the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. Visitors report to farm reception."

The Buildings

All external doors are locked, but the locks can be picked or the doors forced open; they are only intended to keep inquisitive wildlife out.

These Imperial buildings will feel slightly claustrophobic to the Zhodani, as the ceilings and (in particular) doorways are lower, Vilani being about 15cm shorter than the PCs. This will be mildly un-nerving, although the characters might not realise why; simply tell them that they feel slightly ill at ease and, quite unconsciously, are ducking or cowering occasionally.

Buildings

1. Garage. Empty, spares for an air/raft.

2. Garage. An air/truck is parked here; its key card is in the reception (13). It has camouflage markings and red Imperial sunburst insignia.

Air/truck
• Sealed driver area with 4 seats.
• 8 cubic metres of covered cargo space.
• 4m long x 2m high x 2.5m wide.
• 2000 hour fusion power source.
• 200 km range communicator.
• Maximum air/ground speed 100 km/h.

3. Workshop. A variety of air/truck spares are stacked on racking and mechanical tools are strewn about on workbenches.

4. Electronics Lab. Contains lab testing equipment for the latest neural sensor prototypes being tested by the field team (see Nugget 3). The computers here do not contain full technical details of the sensor design but describe the lab and field testing, which is of almost as much value to the Zhodani in evaluating the military value of the new sensor.

5. Life Sciences Lab. Contains the latest in automed technology and some furry rabbit analogs which are being used for short range scanning experiments.

Injured PCs can be treated here – Vilani and Zhodani physiologies are sufficiently similar that the automed will diagnose and treat most injuries.

After an hour of treatment, a PC can heal half their wounds, to a maximum of 5 points. If adided by a character who makes a **Difficult Medical (GT: Medical Diagnosis)** roll, they can increase the total number of points healed by 2. However, significant injuries such as broken bones cannot be repaired – the automed can only apply hard-setting foam as a splint, inject flesh or bone rejuvenation drugs and cover serious wounds with protective synthskin.

6. Rear door. This door has an alarm on it, but only because a predator tried breaking in some weeks back. The alarm simply sounds a buzzer in the reception (13), but it will be noticed (and thus might concern) a character who is breaking in.

7. Equipment Store. Boxes of electronics, medical spares, etc. including a low berth, which could be loaded on to the air/truck and powered from its power plant if one of the PCs is critically injured and needs to be put into cold sleep.

8. Generator. A self-contained, high reliability fusion plant which powers the station and is fed from the two puncture-resistant fuel tanks outside.

9. Common Room. Low, comfortable seats with a refridgerated drinks cabinet, a range of magazines and a holovid entertainment system.

10. Mess. An automated food preparation facility with tables and chairs.

11. Washrooms. Including showers.

12. Office. An open plan office with a few tall screens to form a secluded meeting room in the corner. Most desks have holostations and there are several planetary maps on the walls.

The computers are locked and breaking into them would take 6+1D hours and a **Staggering Computer (GT:Computer Ops or Computer Programming)** task. However, any files that are obtained could provide a lot of valuable data about the current status of Imperial research into the life sciences and neural sensors.

The wall maps have little information of military use but one does have notes stuck to it showing the locations at which the field tests are being carried out by the five resident Scouts (see Nugget 3). Examining the dates on the notes and comparing them to the wall clock (to get Imperial dates!) reveals that the Scouts are in the middle of several weeks of testing. However, since the sites are within 10-20 km of the station, it's not clear whether they return here each evening…

13. Reception. The desk has a computer (locked as per 12) and simple stationery.

The desk drawers contain key cards for all external doors and the air/truck, and a written desk log, which shows the station's use as a training and testing facility going back many months. The entries for each of the last seven days are marked simply "Trials" and "Status report" (combined with the map in 12, the PCs may conclude that this log is updated each day, so the researchers will return later today).

If the Zhodani have already encountered the field researchers and prevented them from making their daily report to Scout HQ at Emerald starport, then at some point while the PCs are in the base, a call will come through and be picked up by the computer's auto-answer system:

> Suddenly the computer holodisplay springs to life, and a Galanglic phrase flashes up under an Imperial sunburst. A small picture of a man in Imperial Scout uniform appears, and starts to speak in Galanglic:

The initial Galanglic phrase on the screen is "Incoming message, auto recording". Check the PCs correctly translate this, and the ensuing message, using the task on p.19:

> "Hi, it's Jens back at base. Just checking if you guys headed back early from the sensor trials. We missed your status report and Pikan is fussing. So get in touch ASAP. If we don't hear back from you by midnight we'll send someone out to check on you, okay?"
>
> The picture collapses back to a sunburst, then the display flicks off.

If the party try to return the call they must either disguise themselves or turn off the camera at their end. If they use their best Galanglic (see the task on p. 19) and are good at bluffing, they may fool the HQ staff into believing they are the researchers. However, if they are unlucky and the HQ comms officer happens to know the researchers well, they may quickly become suspicious and send a Scout Search Unit and/or an S3 squad (see p.29) to investigate. If the HQ hasn't received a response by midnight, someone will be despatched anyway to make sure the researchers haven't suffered an accident.

14. Washrooms. Including showers.

15. Bedrooms. Basic, functional fittings for the Scouts based here. Personal effects, clothing and uniforms can be found but there are no weapons or armour. There are two identity cards left here by Scout researchers, but each includes a picture of its owner which cannot easily be modified without damaging the cards.

Disguises

Using Imperial magazines, holovid newscasts or recordings from the common room (9), and some disguise skill, the adventurers can try to turn themselves into convincing Imperial Scouts:

To disguise a Zhodani as an Imperial:
➢Formidable Disguise

- +1 Difficulty if the disguise is required to hold up in a close-up, face-to-face situation.
- +1 Difficulty if not using the magazines or holovids to give a 'local' feel to the disguise.

Spectacular Success: The PC will not be questioned unless they act in a particularly strange or stupid manner.

Success: The outfit will pass a short, initial inspection, but not a longer, detailed examination.

Failure: The outfit does not look sufficiently Imperial in style, or the character is just too obviously Zhodani (if willing to undertake a particularly humiliating change, such as shaving off their moustache and all head hair, then a second attempt at this task is allowed).

Spectacular Failure: The outfit looks ridiculous, but the PCs are convinced it looks perfect!

Encounters

If the group stays at the station for more than a few hours (especially if over-night) they are likely to encounter one or more of the following:

- The returning researchers (see Nugget 3).
- A Scout Search Unit or S3 squad (see p.29) searching for the Zhodani or checking up if the researchers have failed to report in.
- A native predator.

The predator is a Fyirian Lazek, hunting the local Groats. After a period of scared bleating from the Groat herd, the Lazek will kill one of the beasts noisily just outside the station buildings.

If anyone ventures outside the Lazek may turn its attention on them.

Groat
Grazer, 100kg, Hits 12/6, AV 1 Flexible, Hooves & Bite 2D, Speed 3.
(GT: ST10, DX14, IQ5, HT15, PD1 DR2, Hooves & Bite 1D+1 cr, Speed 8).
Flee on 7- on 2D, otherwise Attack on 6- on 2D.

- Initially native to the mountains of Fulacin in the Tloql [Spinward Marches], now widespread in agricultural systems in this region. Relatively innocuous as individuals, these animals are hazardous in herds as they will attack any perceived danger or threat in their midst with their teeth and hooves.
- They have another weapon – a noxious spray from the scent gland under their tail, which has a similar effect to tear gas on humans.
- Their shaggy hair is valuable; once cleaned and prepared it has a softness and silkiness that rivals the finest synthetic.

Fyirian Lazek
Killer, 100 kg, Hits 17/12, AV 2 Flexible, Bite 2D, Claws 2D, Speed 1.
(GT: ST30, DX 16, IQ4, HT12/25, Bite 2D-2, Claws 1D+1, Speed 10).
Attack on 11- on 2D, otherwise Flee 8- on 2D

- Often first noticed by the clicking noise from its mandibles, this creature looks insect-like, but instead of a chitinous layer it has matted long grey/black hair, into which plant materials are mixed to aid its camouflage.
- The creature has an insectoid head, thorax and abdomen. The head is topped by two large, multifaceted eyes which are irridescent. Under the eyes are a pair of mandibles which move constantly. The thorax has two long limbs with sharp chitinous claws, and four more legs emerge from the large, bloated abdomen. The creature's movements are strangely unnatural and unnerving.

(For more details see *101 Lifeforms*, BITS, 1997)

3. The Researchers

The Scout team from the research station (Nugget 2) are field-testing a new, long range neural activity sensor at various locations up to 20 km from their base. They will most likely be encountered set up on a low ridge, scanning the ground for several kilometres in front of them.

The prototype neural sensor is sufficiently sensitive to pick up strong (e.g. human) mental activity in a 45 degree arc up to 5 km from the sensor, so it may pick up the Zhodani even if they are flying above the trees or in the low clouds. If the PCs are on foot, they are very likely to be detected but may initially be mistaken for a previously unrecorded type of local fauna.

Approach from the Air

Whatever the level at which the party are flying, their passive sensors will be able to detect the emissions from the researchers' air/truck from several kilometres away. If the PCs are detected by the neural sensor or if their vehicle is spotted visually by the Scouts, the research team will attempt to contact the vehicle by radio to warn it out of the trials area.

The active sensors on any air vehicle the PCs may have comandeered will be able to pin-point the air/truck and identify it as such, with a large secondary power plant and active emissions from antennas near it on the ridge. The exact purpose of the emissions cannot be determined as they do not resemble any sensor signature known to the Zhodani, but the PCs can take a guess:

To determine the emission type and purpose:
➤**Difficult Sensors** *(GT: Electronic Ops (Sensors))*, or
➤**Formidable Computer** *(GT: Computer Ops)*
Spectacular Success: As Success, plus the emissions are at frequencies that you believe are associated with psi-shields.
Success: The emissions are from a military grade sensor system; some of the frequencies correspond to those used by some IISS systems.
Failure: The emissions are from some form of communications system.
Spectacular Failure: The emissions are just an artefact of an atmospheric inversion layer.

If the party act suspiciously, the Scouts may challenge them or report their presence back to HQ at the starport. However, if the Zhodani pretend to be locals or other Scouts they should be able to get close enough to catch the Scouts by surprise before they can get off a warning message (remembering that at 100 km/h it takes only 3 minutes to get to the ridge even if detected at extreme sensor range).

The party may decide to land and approach on foot or use a two-pronged air and ground attack.

Approach from the Ground

The Scouts are testing the equipment to assess its ability to detect both ground and airborne lifeforms, including plant-like life.

For added flavour, you may opt to have the PCs encounter one or more Trilliaps (see Nugget 4) or a Fyirian Lazek (see Nugget 2) either just before they detect the Scout team, or while approaching it (openly or covertly). In any of these situations the Scouts may detect any resulting scuffle or gunfire and be forewarned, or come to the PCs' aid, depending on their perception of the situation.

> You're moving cautiously through the undergrowth when you spot movement on a low ridge about a kilometre ahead of you. There appears to be an air/truck parked just beyond the ridge with some antennas deployed on the ridge line and several figures moving around it.

Binoculars or similar vision enhancement will identify the figures as Imperials in Scout uniforms. If the PCs approach the ridge from the direction the Imperials are scanning, then they will be detected 2-3 kilometres from the ridge, though the Scouts may not be certain that they are humans until they get within a few hundred metres of the ridge. The neural sensor will not detect whether the PCs are carrying weapons, so the Scouts may

conclude that they are locals or nomads (see Nuggets 7 and 8).

The Scouts have PRIS binoculars but the dense vegetation up to the ridge will make it difficult to identify the PCs until they reach the tree line about 100 metres from the ridge. If the Scouts see they are Zhodani or mistake them for nomads, they will arm themselves and send an emergency message to their HQ. However, if the PCs are disguised as locals they may be able to bluff their way to within 50 metres, at which point the Scouts will warn them to leave the trials area.

The Scout Team

The Scouts have set up the neural sensor array on the top of the ridge. Parked 10 metres away on the ridge is an air/truck (see p.31) with camouflage markings and red Imperial Sunburst insignia. It contains a second power plant to power the array and several racks of computer equipment which performs the signal processing, sensor displays and trials recording.

Scout Team
Gani Shashiig (Team Leader) 8/10 *(11/13)*
ACR and grenade
Miles Andelbarra 7/8 *(10/11)*
Pump-action Shotgun
Sandra Kigerra 7/8 *(10/11)*
Pump-action Shotgun
Eneri Lishun 7/8 *(10/11)*
Pump-action Shotgun
Dzofin Kfaegher (Vargr) 6/7 *(9/10)*
Vargr Staple Gun
• Dzofin has Linguistics (Zhodani-1) and a fear of Zhodani psi powers!
• The team carries a selection of survival equipment including inertial navigation units, maps, communicators, a datapad, PRIS binoculars, food, and a basic medkit.
ACR 5D, Medium, 100 shots *(GT: 6D+1, SS 12, Acc 10, ½dmg 740, Max 4000, ROF 10, 20 shots, ST 10, Rcl −2)*
Grenade 6D *(GT: Exp 5D)*
Pump-action Shotgun 4D, V.Short, 10 shots *(GT: 4D, SS 12, Acc 6, ½dmg 27, Max 160, ROF 3~, 10 shots, ST 12, Rcl −2)*
Vargr Staple Gun 2D, V.Short, 25 shots *(GT: 2D, SS 9, Acc 2, ½dmg 25, Max 100, ROF 3~, 25 shots, ST 8, Rcl −1)*

Typically two of the Scouts are inside the truck and two outside at any time. Their weaponry is intended to fend off hostile fauna or rogue nomads, so they will defend the equipment but will surrender if significantly out-gunned. If it appears

the Zhodani may over-run them, the team leader will throw a grenade into the rear of the truck to prevent the equipment falling into Zhodani hands. However, some data can still be retrieved from the damaged computers, given a few hours work by a skilled computer operator.

If the party over-power the Scouts without spilling too much blood, they may steal uniforms and identities and try to disguise themselves as Imperials (see the task in Nugget 2). The Zhodani should remember to deal with prisoners in an honorable manner, while balancing this with the danger they pose to their mission.

If the PCs pass by without direct contact but having made the Scouts suspicious, tasks relating to entering the starport (Scenario 8) will be at +1 Difficulty. If the Scouts are attacked but manage to get off a message to their HQ then multiple armed response groups (see Scenario 5) will be despatched immediately from the starport. Further, all tasks concerning entering or evading detection in Port Emerald will be at +1 Difficulty and entry to the starport will be at +2 Difficulty.

4. Hostile Flora

Some of Emerald's flora have turned predatory, to supplement the infertile soil and lack of light beneath the forest canopy. The Trilliap is one of Emerald's largest carnivorous plants, which the PCs may stumble into in their travels. Any resulting struggle or combat (e.g. gun shots) may alert Imperials in their vicinity.

Trilliap

Plant Trapper, 400kg, AV 0, Hits 28/9, Spines 2D. *(GT: ST20, DX2, IQ0, HT30, Spines 2D-1, Speed 0)*

- A tall, canopied plant which blends into the undergrowth and creates a shaded resting place. Its wide, brown, bark-covered trunk rises 3m, ending abruptly in a crown of dense blue-green vegetation. Entwined around the base of the trunk are many vines and roots which run outwards across the ground to a distance of about 3m.
- Should a creature stand close to the trunk, the root structure will suddenly lift up, caging the victim and gradually lifting them up over the edge of the crowning vegetation to drop into the funnel-like trunk. This is lined with sharp spines projecting down to prevent escape (any attempt to do so incurs damage). The victim drowns in digestive juices and dissolves over a number of weeks...

(See BITS *101 Lifeforms* for more details.)

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5. The Groat Farmer

The aim of this encounter is to introduce the Zhodani to the native Imperials, with their 'sick' minds and prejudices.

A blown tyre on his ATV has stranded a Groat farmer and some of his flock at the roadside. He is an old man, who has seen the Fourth Frontier War, and regards the Zhodani as evil psionic murderers. He is not the brightest of people and should be relatively easy to fool, but the psionic characters will be disturbed by the crude and hateful thoughts which leak from his mind whenever he talks about their people.

The farmer has already used his vehicle radio to call a friend for help, but it will be several hours before his colleague arrives. However, it is a legal requirement on frontier worlds such as Emerald to aid anyone in distress. An **Average Intelligence** check will remind any of the Zhodani of this fact; giving aid is also what a good Zhodani would do.

Approach from the Air

> As you pass over the farmlands which surround Port Emerald, you also begin to cross the road grids. These roads are usually deserted, but then you see a wheeled all-terrain vehicle at the side of the road. The driver is waving frantically to you. It looks like he has a problem.

If the party ignore the blatant call for help the farmer will be annoyed and use his radio to report their actions to the police at Port Emerald. If the PCs' vehicle is distinctive (e.g. has military camouflage markings) this will increase the difficulty of all tasks concerning entering Port Emerald as the police will be looking for the PCs' vehicle to serve a warning notice on the driver.

Approach from the Ground

> As you enter the farmlands which surround Port Emerald, you come across a small number of roads. These are generally deserted and allow you to move more quickly, but then you see ahead of you a wheeled all-terrain vehicle at the side of the road. The driver is an elderly civilian, who is cursing and kicking the vehicle.

As noted above, a good Zhodani would offer help, especially since the old man seems harmless enough. However, the PCs may opt to hide or bypass the scene to avoid detection. If they openly pass by without aiding him, he will report them to the authorities (see above).

From air or ground, if they decide to help:

> As you approach closer, you get a good look at the ATV. It has had a wheel blow out, and the

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driver, an elderly man, appears to be struggling to change the wheel for a spare. A smile breaks across his weather-beaten face as he realises that help is at hand.

He isn't too bright, and is not expecting trouble, although he will recognise a Zhodani if the PCs have made no attempt to disguise themselves.

Groat Farmer

Si-John Hulme 7/8 *(10/11)*
Ex-Navy, Fast Talk, Bribery, Freeloading.

- He wears high green boots, a dirty jumpsuit, a waxed jacket, and has a walking stick. He carries an identity card, long range radio and hunting rifle. In the back of his ATV he has a small number of smelly Groats which he knows by name.
- He knows a variety of war stories about the "dirty mind-raping Joes" and the "good old days" from when he fought the Zhodani back in the 1080's.

Interaction with the man requires the linguistics task from p.19. Linguistic failures or dubious acts will arouse his suspicions that they are nomads, off-worlders or even Zhodani! Naturally he will report such suspicions to the authorities as soon as he has the opportunity. He can tell them:

- He is a Groat farmer who is heading for the daily market in Port Emerald.
- The news from Port Emerald is that the stinking Zhodani have been trying to land spies. If he was in the system defence force he'd not have let them anywhere near the planet, he'd have blown them out of the sky like he did back in the Fourth Frontier War.
- Use of psionics will show massive prejudice against the Zhodani – he views them as mind-raping thugs who all deserve to die.
- He is trying to get as much free help off the party as possible, in particular if he is fooled into thinking they are Scouts.
- He smells almost bad as the Groats in the back of the ATV, which the characters will have to move to get the new wheel out.

Replacing the wheel on the ATV is an **Average Mechanic** *(GT: Mechanic (Any))* task, but a Spectacular Failure results in the wheel slipping off and injuring one of the PCs for 1-3 damage. The PC must make a **Formidable Intelligence** check to avoid cursing or crying out in Zhodani!

If the characters can bear traveling with Si-John he can give them a lift right into Port

Emerald (see Scenario 7), making tasks related to entering the city and avoiding police attention one level easier.

6. Civilisation

It is likely that the Zhodani will try to avoid contact with Imperials except where absolutely necessary, so they may well avoid all habitations (farmsteads, mines and villages) until they reach Port Emerald. However, the PCs may also decide that the potential rewards (food, equipment, local clothing, etc.) which can be gained from inhabited areas out-weigh the risks of being captured.

Farms

The majority of Emerald's farms consist of small-holdings of 10-20 square kilometres, growing dense, genetically engineered crops of grain and fruit, making best use of the fertile plains soils and the greater amount of sunlight in the equatorial regions. A smaller number of holdings are Groat ranches while a few farms raise other livestock or grow specialist plants such as herbs and vines for wine-making.

Each farm usually consists of a house and a few out-buildings, inhabited by a family group of two to ten individuals. Few farms are co-operatively run, though there is a strong community spirit between farming families, maintained through social events and by the radio network which links every farm.

Farmers are generally wary of anyone they do not recognise and are defensive of their land and possessions. Some may harbour anti-Imperial sentiments, but almost all will readily report the PCs to the authorities if they suspect them of being Zhodani.

Each holding has equipment and ground vehicles of TL8-10 *(GT: 8-9)* depending upon the owners' wealth. Generally only farmers in outlying areas carry weapons, to defend against predators and bandits, though every farm will have at least one shotgun or rifle for emergencies.

A **Formidable Intrusion or Electronics** task will allow a PC to hot-wire a farm vehicle. Food, clothing and equipment is only found inside the farmhouse, requiring covert entry or a more forthright approach. However, characters who use subtle psionic influence, or who can bluff their way as city officials or lost off-worlders may convince a farmer to give them food, temporary shelter or perhaps a lift to a nearby town.

If the PCs act suspiciously or are overtly hostile, the able-bodied of the farm will defend their holding with whatever weapons they can find and use their radio to call for help.

Mines

Scattered among the farms are a small number of mines, similar to farmsteads but usually covering about a square kilometre, owned by one family (who live on site) and manned by labourers from surrounding farms or a nearby village.

Most of the mines produce metal ores for shipment to the processing plants in Port Emerald, but two mines yield valuable multi-hued crystals which are turned into tableware, jewelry and artworks. There is also a new diamond mining outpost 300 km east of the Juntu River Valley, which is well defended to discourage attacks by Chukniang (see sidebar, p.38).

Villages

The only large conurbation on Emerald is the city which grew up around the starport. However, there are many small villages throughout the farmlands, each acting as a social, economic and medical centre for the surrounding farms. These villages contain a range of farming suppliers and sell or barter basic electrical goods, building materials and a few vehicles. They stock little in the way of leisure or entertainments goods.

Some villages also host the private estate of the local landowner, perhaps a relative of the ruling Ecannis family (see Scenario 7, Nugget 2). Such high status individuals tend to own many of the nearby farms and hold a key position in the local authorities, such as mayor. Their estates may include their own farmlands or orchards, with a central walled enclosure containing the main house and servants quarters.

7. The Wanderers

Many small farmsteads, owned by "Chukniang" (see sidebar, p.38) can be found outside the main farmlands. At one extreme these are no more than shabby shacks stocked with the bare essentials, in the middle of a muddy paddy field, owned by a couple or small family, supplementing their meagre crop by hunting and trapping animals. Such farms will have little of use to the Zhodani but their owners may fire their ancient hunting rifles first and ask questions later.

Some Chukniang farms may be even larger than their regular counterparts, with up to 20 people (one or more families) managing both crops and cattle. These farms are stocked with TL6-7 equipment and may have several ground vehicles, but their owners are well armed and used to repelling raiders (including other Chukniang). In other respects they will act in a similar manner to their 'civilised' counterparts.

8. Raiders!

The PCs may encounter openly hostile Chukniang in the Outback, ranging from small hunting groups to the more organised raiders of the Juntu River Valley.

Hunters

Small groups of one to six hunters may be encountered almost anywhere in the Outback. They may be on a hunting trip from a nearby farm or may be raiders, intending either stealthy theft or open attack on another farmstead.

If the party is fit and well armed, the raiders may simply track them for a few kilometres to determine their purpose. If the party appears weak or badly armed, the Chukniang may try to pick off a straggler, snipe at the group to wear them down, or mount an all-out ambush. If the party do not obviously have night vision equipment, the raiders may wait for darkness, relying on their familiarity with the environment to give them a tactical advantage.

PCs who make a **Difficult Perception or Tactics** task or who use appropriate psionic sensing skills will notice the watchers:

> For a few minutes you've had a vague feeling of unease, then, as you're moving across a relatively open area of undergrowth you catch a movement out of the corner of your eye – someone or something is tracking you.

These small raider groups cannot afford to take many casualties – they have relatively few medical supplies and typically are not welcome in the village hospitals. If beaten off they will return to their homestead by a roundabout route, to throw off potential pursuit by the PCs.

If the raiders manage to force the party to surrender, they will tie up the characters, remove all their valuables (particularly weapons and armour) and then discuss their next step. Depending upon how isolated the raiders have been of late, they might not recognise the PCs as Zhodani, perhaps believing them to be Imperial forces, hunters, fellow raiders, lost travellers or off-worlders.

The PCs may just be left in the wilderness to survive without their equipment or, if the party seem to have some interest or value, they will be taken to the Chukniang homestead. In the latter case they will be kept tied up until their captors can establish their value to the authorities or to Tsun-Sunni's rebels (see below). During this time the PCs should have the opportunity to attempt an ecape.

The Chukniang

The term "Chukniang" (from the Solomani word for "Wanderers" or "Raiders") is used on Emerald to describe a range of 'nomads' found in Emerald's Outback, i.e. almost anywhere outside the cultivated farmlands, beyond the usual scope of law and order.

Many of these nomads are no more than individuals or small groups who prefer the solitude of farming or mining in the Outback. These people are mostly self-sufficient but occasionally trade with each other and, very rarely, visit outlying villages to barter for high tech essentials. Some were honest folk who simply valued their independence or isolation, others were criminals, outcasts, anti-Imperialists or even descendents of the Ecannis family or their sympathisers who escaped internment in 591 and who refused to return to the community after the war.

However, "Chukniang" is used most commonly by locals to describe large groups of nomads found in the dense forests of the Juntu River Valley. Numbering several hundred, these rebels claimed to be the original colonists from before Emerald's official settlement. They were once notorious for ferocious horse-back raids on outlying farms and settlements. Though this image persists in popular myth, many of these people are now settled in small Outback agricultural communities and only one group, led by the charismatic 'Tsun-Sunni', continue to supplement their meagre fare by raids, usually to rustle cattle, steal food and equipment or, occasionally, to kidnap a village dignitary who is then ransomed for whatever items or luxuries Tsun-Sunni is having trouble obtaining through normal raiding.

These raiders are equipped only with kit they make or steal and service themselves, typically TL6-7. They are mostly foot-soldiers, with a few skilled horsemen; vehicles are of limited use in the dense forests of the Juntu River Valley.

Though many Chukniang have anti-Imperium tendencies, most also have the usual Imperial prejudices about Zhodani. In particular, those in the Juntu River Valley have bad memories of a bloody conflict with a stranded Zhodani patrol at the end of the Fifth Frontier War.

Tsun-Sunni's Rebels

The forests of the Juntu River Valley are inhabited by a conglomerate of hundreds of 'rebels' (see sidebar). Many of these Chukniang actually run small farms at the edges of the woodland, supplying those rebels who live deeper within the forest. Locals believe a large group of rebels are based in the ruined Temple of Rhamm but in reality the Chukniang use it only as a rendezvous point, preferring to live in small groups within the forest.

The temple is about 200 km east of the starport (marked 'X' on the map on p.52). In local folklore these ruins are rumoured to be an Ancient site but they are actually the remains of a Darrian research base abandoned after the Maghiz solar event destroyed the Darrian Pocket Empire of the time. It is set amongst a grove of tall trees, and the buildings look very exotic and different from those in normal Zhodani and Imperial culture.

Throughout this area, the PCs may encounter raiding or hunting parties of up to 30 rebels, mostly armed with TL6-7 weapons and armour but with some leaders sporting higher tech kit stolen or smuggled from Port Emerald. These raiders will be far bolder than the small groups described in the preceding section but will still avoid taking casualties if at all possible. Given the confidence of superior numbers, these Chukniang will be more willing to parley with the PCs to determine their origins, purpose and potential value to Tsun-Sunni.

Tsun-Sunni

If the party find their way deep into the forests close to the temple, they have a good chance of meeting the 'legendary' Tsun-Sunni himself. He is best described as a large, dirty, gruff fellow who has no comprehension of chivalry nor manners yet who expects total obedience from everyone around him.

To the PCs he might appear as nothing more than an arrogant barbarian, but he is very adept at forest warfare and tactical negotiation, e.g. "How much will you give me in ransom money so that I don't decide to decapitate the village leader whom we captured last week?"

If pressed, Tsun-Sunni can pull together up to 50 reasonably competent 'troops' in just a few hours. These will be armed as noted above, mounted on local steeds and riding groats.

Tsun-Sunni himself often accompanies his raiders and his bravery and cunning give his troops confidence and motivation.

He has a relatively small forest home which would be innocuous were it not for the armed guards outside and the luxurious furs, wines and other stolen pleasures which he stores inside.

He also has a stolen air/raft concealed in the forest between his house and the temple but this is only for use as a last ditch escape route.

Emerald's capital city adjoins the starport and may provide shelter or a source of additional information or equipment before entering the downport itself.

1. Open Ground

The best approach to Port Emerald is over the hills to the south as this provides a good view of the city and its surrounds:

> Ahead of you lies the urban sprawl that is the capital city of this Imperial world. Surrounding it are spacious ranches.
>
> Three primary roads spread out from what appears to be the city's central business district. To the west is an industrial area which stretches north to the edge of a broad, green-tinted lake. The remainder of the city appears to be mostly residential, composed of solid grey brickwork, with wooden fascias, mostly well kept with intricate decoration and bright paintwork.
>
> The starport to the east of the city has several starship parking bays protected by blast-bunds. There is a blast-protected take-off and landing zone towards the northern edge of the port and a conventional runway extending to the east for both starport and local non-grav traffic. There are port buildings and warehouses inside the perimeter and a separate parking bay which might be for the Scout base.

Further information can be obtained if the area is surveyed remotely using binoculars or equivalent vision enhancement equipment:

To observe Port Emerald or the downport:
➤**Difficult Recon *(GT: Vision)*, or**
➤**Formidable Perception**
- -1 Difficulty if the character has Tactics or Forward Observer skill.
- Task takes 1 hour of observation.

Spectacular Success: As Success plus they detect the fighter bunker.
Success: The PC observes one or two of the points from the list below.
Failure: The PC observes a slightly erroneous version of one of the items on the list.
Spectacular Failure: Try adjusting the focus on the binoculars...

Key items which can be observed are listed below for the downport and city, with GM notes in italics:

Downport
- There are 3 cargo shuttles and 5 civilian ships in the parking bays – private scout/couriers, far traders and subsidised merchants. *Larger ships are required to offload cargo at the highport to be transferred down using the shuttles. There's a 1 in 6 chance that one of these ships will take off, or another ship land, during any given hour.*
- There are two ships in the Scout parking bay: a scout/courier and a larger extended duration survey ship. During the day, the former ship has engineers visible repairing damage to its hull.
- There is a fuel refinery on the north side of the starport which extracts water from the lake.
- There is a fortified checkpoint at the entrance to the downport.
- There is no perimeter patrol. *The perimeter fence has proximity and infrared sensors.*
- There is a very well camouflaged bunker just to the east of the Scout parking bay. *This is visible only on a Spectacular Success; it houses four Rampart class fighters. There's a 1 in 6 chance every two hours that one of the fighters will enter or leave the bunker for a patrol flight.*

Port Emerald
- The ranches outside the town are walled compounds containing high status buildings. *These are the private estates of the Ecannis families and other high ranking persons.*
- Occasionally grav vehicles can be seen over the city, or flying in or out of one of the ranches. Otherwise, the vast majority of the traffic is wheeled vehicles with a few air cushion craft.
- The city population must be well over 100,000. *It's actually 130,000.*
- There are checkpoints where the primary roads enter the city.
- The city perimeter has a 3 metre high wall but this does not appear to be guarded. *The wall was originally to guard against predators and bandits – it has been rebuilt multiple times as the city boundaries have expanded.*
- There are docks at the lakeside with several large container ships drawn up. *These carry supplies around the 25 km-long Lake Aeryia and some distance down the Juntu river.*
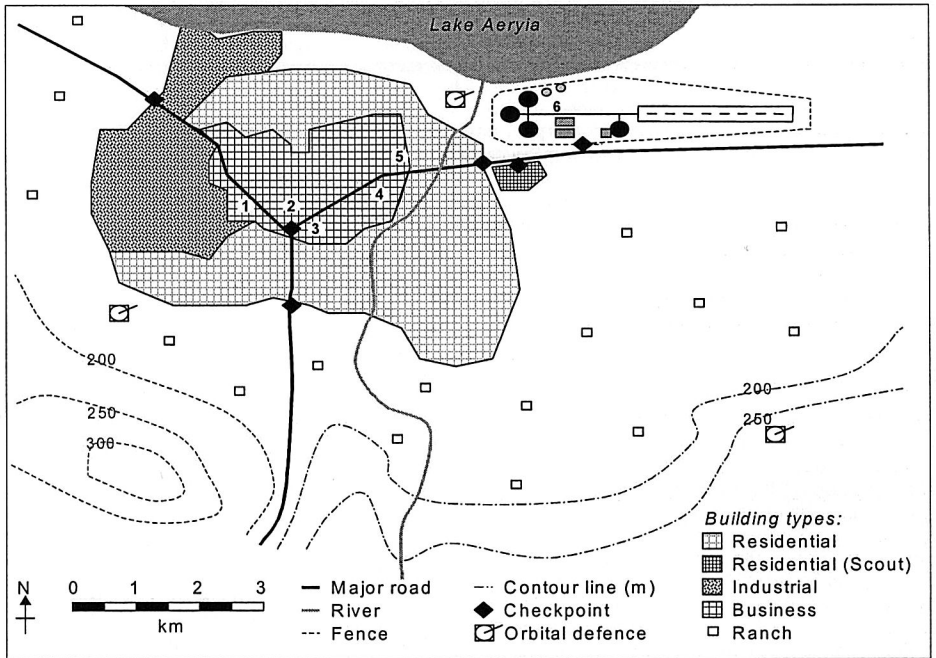
Port Emerald

2. Noble Estates

The estates are well defended, originally against wildlife but later against bandits, rebels and even Imperial aggression. The high external walls have razor wire, cameras, proximity sensors and walkways with firing positions. A single entry point is protected by solid gates, pop-up anti-ramming barriers and armed guards.

Inside each compound is a large villa with outbuildings for servants, finely manicured gardens and perhaps a small orchard, swimming pool, flat-ball arena or even private zoo. Some of these local nobles own yachts on Lake Aeryia.

These estates are off-limits to visitors except by invitation. They may offer the party a good source of vehicles, equipment and paperwork, but trespassers will be arrested or shot. The families are aware that there are dissidents who wish them harm or who might kidnap a family member as leverage for their extremist cause or simply for ransom. Any break-in or similar event will draw the attention of the local police and probably the Scouts as well if it is suspected that the Zhodani may be in the area.

3. The City

Entering the City

The party can enter the city via the main roads, though this requires them to pass a checkpoint (see Nugget 4). The perimeter wall has been rebuilt so frequently that large stretches no longer have security monitors and it can easily be climbed over.

Entering by air is easy provided the local police are not watching for the transponder on the party's vehicle; if this is the case, or if the transponder is falsified or turned off, the Fast Response Unit (see Nugget 4) will be sent up to arrest the miscreants.

Covert entry is feasible via the river, which runs under the wall with only a thin wire mesh under the water to keep out undesirable aquatic creatures.

Key Locations

1: Imperial Consul's residence. An imposing collonaded building (guarded by two police patrols) on one side of Carpaty Plaza. Embassies for neighbouring worlds are on other sides of the plaza, in the centre of which is a dramatic statue of the first Ecannis settlers.

2: Town Hall. Administration building and meeting place for Emerald's high status citizens.

3: Market. Every day this is full of livestock and produce being traded and bartered.

4: Police/Fire Station. A large complex used jointly by the law and emergency services. Staffed by 350 personnel, from administrators to investigators, patrol officers to fire-fighters. Most of the staff also have paramedic training.

An underground garage contains a range of staff cars, patrol vehicles and fire engines. There are a few grav vehicles for senior staff and the Fast Response Units. Patrols enter and leave the building frequently, day and night.

5: Hospital. An extensive medical facility which caters for the majority of serious ailments for the planet's entire population.

6: Starport / Scout Base. See Scenario 8.

Reactions to Zhodani

The commonfolk of Emerald are polite, if somewhat reticent. Contact and conversation with offworlders is not encouraged among the general population. However, the average citizen is still quite capable of identifying a Zhodani if the latter has not done a reasonable job of disguising themselves. How an Imperial reacts to the Zhodani depends on their personal views and past experience.

Roll 1D for each individual or group and adjust as follows:
+1 for each criminal act by the party reported by the local news or witnessed directly,
-1 for each good act performed by the Zhodani in the presence of the individual/group,
+3 if the Zhodani have drawn weapons or used psionics,
+1 if the individual fought the Zhodani in a previous war,
-1 if the individual is a police officer or other member of the emergency services.

Result / Reaction	
-1	Zhodani are misunderstood; they deserve the same respect as an Imperial citizen.
2-3	Zhodani are bad guys, but the law's the law; arrest them and take them down the station for the senior officers to deal with.
4-5	Zhodani are scum; the law's the law, but no one's going to notice if they get rather bruised when they're arrested.
6	Zhodani are mind-suckers. Get the lynch mob before they take over your mind!
7+	Zhodani are mind-suckers. Shoot them now before they take over your mind!

4. Law Enforcement

Emerald's laws are not extreme, but the threat of the Chukniang and an embedded cultural paranoia about off-worlders means that entry to Port Emerald is closely monitored. In addition, since the Zhodani arrived on the planet, security has been increased throughout the city.

Checkpoints

Checkpoints comprise squads of four police officers with a four-wheel-drive ground car parked beside the road, using traffic barriers to halt traffic or funnel off vehicle into a side 'lane' for checking. Generally, two members of the team are visible at the checkpoint, examining the identities of anyone passing and, currently, asking if they have seen any "suspicious looking turban heads". The other two officers stay in their vehicle, ready to block the road, chase miscreants or call for backup.

The local populace know that there may be Zhodani on-planet from news broadcasts, but know that the checks are to prevent further trouble from the Chukniang rebels.

Patrol Squad 7/8 *(10/11)*
- All wearing cloth armour, helmets, with ACRs, short range communicators and flashlights.

Cloth Armour AV 1 *(GT: PD2 DR 16; PD 1, DR2 vs impaling)*.
Helmet Night vision and flash suppression.
Communicator for police frequencies only.
Flashlight 36 hour battery.
ACR 5D dmg, Medium range, 100 shots, 4.3kg, reload 0.6 kg *(GT: Cr 6D+1, SS 12, Acc 10, ½dmg 740, Max 4000, 8.9 lb, ROF 10, 20 shots, ST 10, Rcl –2)*

Patrols

At any time there are 10-12 squads (identical to those at the checkpoints) patrolling the city in their brightly marked police vehicles.

A patrol may be encountered driving along the city roads or parked near a major road junction. The patrols are unlikely to challenge the PCs provided they are somewhat disguised, keep their distance from the patrol car and do not act in a suspicious manner. However, the police will challenge and probably arrest anyone who does not follow the city ordinances, i.e. from bad driving to carrying unlicensed firearms.

Fast Response Unit

A Fast Response Unit is based at the police station. In their air/rafts they can reach any point in the city within 1D+3 minutes of receiving an emergency call (e.g. from a patrol or checkpoint).

5. Heroes or Cowards?

This optional encounter gives the Zhodani a chance to heroically rescue a small child. They may consider taking the child with them as she has just been orphaned and is obviously psionic.

As the group is passing along a street, approaching a junction:

There is a sudden squeal of brakes from a ground car around the corner, then a heavy impact and the sound of splintering glass.

Psionic characters with Telepathy skills hear a scream for help. An **Average Telepathy** *(GT: Emotion Sense or Telereceive)* task will determine the cry is from the untrained mind of a child. A further task roll will establish that the child is in fear for her life and is scared that her parents are dead. She is clearly a latent psi.

If the characters look around the corner:

Just around the corner you can see the reason for the disturbance. A farmer's pickup truck has lost control and crashed through the front of a pharmacy. The driver, a male Imperial, has been thrown through the windscreen into the shop and lies sprawled across the counter. There are two passengers, both covered in blood: a female Imperial, slumped motionless in her seat and a small girl, struggling to free herself from her safety belt.

The front of the pickup is smoking and there is a smell of hydrocarbon fuel.

To get to the child and woman, the PCs must succeed at the following task:

To open the vehicle door:
➢**Difficult Strength, or**
➢**Average Mechanic**
Spectacular Success: The door opens first try.
Success: With some effort, the door can be opened sufficiently to get at the passengers.
Failure: After a minute of prying at the door it is still stuck. (Another attempt can be made.)
Spectacular Failure: The door is totally jammed and the character is cut by shards of metal or glass for 1D3 damage.

While the Zhodani are trying to open the door the shop's fire and burglar alarms start sounding and the telepathic characters continue to hear mental screams of panic from the child.

The driver can be examined where he lies within the shop; the passengers can be checked while still in the pickup:

To establish the condition of the victims:
➢**Average Medical** *(GT: Medical (Diagnosis))*
Spectacular Success / Success: The correct diagnosis is given (see below).
Failure / Spectacular Failure: The diagnosis is uncertain and any treatment will not be beneficial.

The correct diagnoses are:
- The driver is bleeding to death and will die within minutes whether help is given or not.
- The female passenger (the mother) is dead with a broken neck and head injuries.
- The young girl is covered in blood from her mother and in severe shock but otherwise okay.

There is a rapidly growing crowd of people around the accident scene, some of whom are moving forward to try to help. The shop alarms are bound to attract a police patrol or fire engine within just a few minutes.

The pickup is on fire, and will explode after 5 minutes, causing 5D explosive damage to anyone within 5 metres, and 2D fragmentation damage to anyone within 10 metres. A fire extinguisher can be used to douse the smouldering engine early on or, once the fire is established, to delay the explosion.

The PCs have a dilemma – the child is obviously a potentially powerful psionic, who could be better looked after in the Consulate where they would hold the rank of Intendent, perhaps even Noble.

Anyeri the Young Psion
UPP 574763 *(GT: ST 7, DX 10, IQ 10 HT 7)*
Age 10, Female.
Latent Psi: Strength 10, Telepathy-2 *(GT: Telepathy-13)*
- Carries toy feline pouncer ("Snowcat Plushtoy").

If the PCs run from the scene, leaving the girl in the car (or they do not investigate the event at all) the psionics among them will suffer the consequences: the terrible screams of an untrained psionic trapped in a car burning to death. The attendant guilt will distress them so greatly that you may opt to increase the difficulty of any mental tasks by one level for some hours or even days.

The Way to Freedom

If the Zhodani ship is inoperative, the only way off Emerald is via one of the starships at the downport. If their ship can be repaired, they may try to steal spares here but there are a number of ships already parked in the downport and one looks particularly inviting...

1. The Downport

As the Zhodani get closer to the starport, they can make out more detail (see map below):

1: Passenger lounges and Administration.

2: Customs.

3: Control tower.

4: Parking bays. All civilian starships are parked in these blast- protected areas.

5: 'S' class scout/courier. Undergoing replacement of damaged hull sections.

6: *Lintula* class scout ship. Being refuelled and stocked ready for take off.

7: Hardened Bunker. Contains 4 *Rampart*

class fighters. An armed guard is always stationed in a concealed fire position at its entrance.

8: Fuel refinery. Pipes draw water from the lake to be filtered and cracked to produce hydrogen fuel.

9: Armoured fuel bunkers. Designed to direct the blast of any explosion out towards the lake.

10: Maintenance hangar.

11: Vertical take-off and landing area. Has a protective blast bund around it.

12: Brokerages.

13: Trade warehouses.

14: Customs bonded warehouses.

15: Security checkpoint.

16: Vehicle parking area.

17: Main road. Leads into the city.
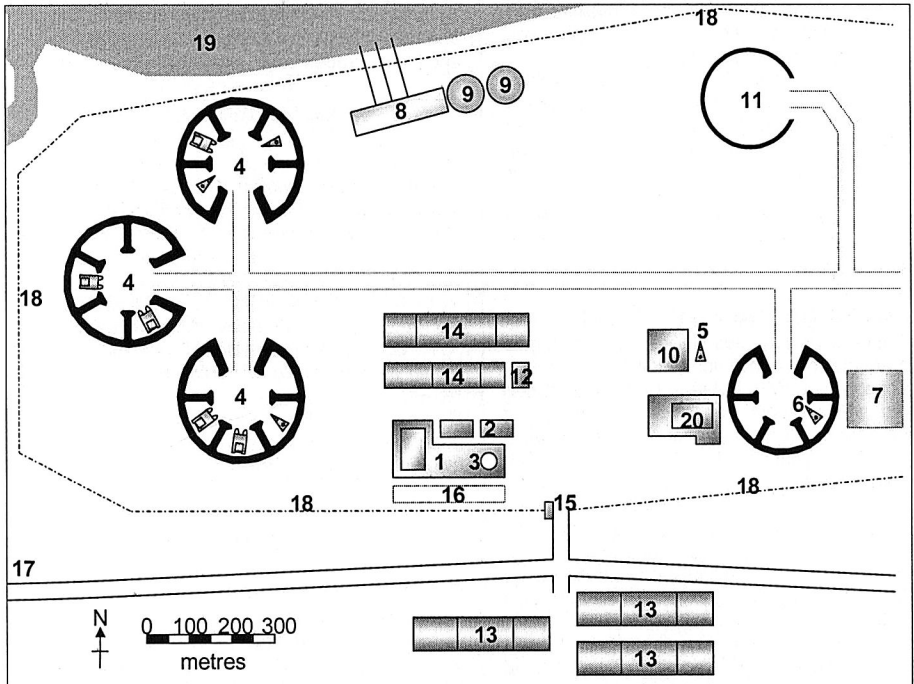
The Downport

18: Security fence. See Nugget 4.

19: Lake Aeryia.

20: Scout HQ. Communications and data centre. Basement has stores, holding cells and an interrogation centre from the Frontier Wars.

The PCs may enter by air (Nugget 2), through the front gate (Nugget 3), over the fence (Nugget 4) or via the fuel refinery (Nugget 5). Conveniently, there is already a Scout ship being readied for departure (Nugget 6).

2. A Flying Visit

If the PCs have a grav vehicle they may try to fly into the downport but if they approach within 500 metres of the port perimeter, they will be warned off by a radio message from the control tower and the orbital defence lasers (just west of the port) will begin tracking them.

If they act suspiciously, e.g. repeatedly flying close to the perimeter, the city's Fast Response Unit (p.42) will be called in to arrest them.

If the PCs ignore the warning and fly into the port, the the control tower will give another warning and the lasers will fire a warning shot, which will ionise the air close to the vehicle with a deafening crack and bright flash.

The second shot will destroy the grav vehicle and the PCs unless they jump out or dive it towards the ground (the lasers cannot be depressed sufficiently to fire at ground targets in the port or the city). Naturally, the local port security guards and any resident S3 teams (p.29) will come out to 'meet and greet' them.

If the characters manage to make it to the ground, proceed to Nugget 6.

3. Through the Front Door

There are two guards visible at the front gate and another two concealed in the bunker beside the checkpoint. With the road barrier down, one guard will approach to check the identity of those entering, while the other guard watches.

The PCs might pass the checkpoint by: hiding aboard a supply truck (from the city or the warehouses across the road); distracting the guard so they can slip past in the dark (the checkpoint is lit at night but there are shadowy areas); or bluffing their way past disguised as Imperials.

The PCs may have acquired IISS uniforms and IDs, but only some of them can speak Galanglic and they may have the girl Anyeri with them from Nugget 5 of Scenario 7. The following task can be used but should be heavily modified according to how well the players roleplay this:

To bluff one's way past the gate checkpoint:
➤**Difficult Persuasion** *(GT: Fast Talk)*, **Liaison or Diplomacy,**
➤**Formidable Intimidation**
- The guards are wearing psi-shielded helmets.
- Any attempt at bribery will cause the task to fail automatically (these are IISS and well paid).
- -1 Difficulty if a distraction is arranged.
- -1 Difficulty if not all the group are visible (e.g. some are hidden in a vehicle).
- +1 Difficulty if one of the Zhodani who can't speak Galanglic gets involved.
- +1 Difficulty if the starport is on alert because of incidents involving the party during their travels to the downport (in Scenario 6 or 7).
- +1 Difficulty if the port is on alert because of a previous, failed attempt to break in.

Spectacular Success: The guard does not question their credentials and lets them through.
Success: The guard studies them for a few moments (to build tension), then lets them through.
Failure: The guard covertly signals to his colleague that there's a problem. The PCs may notice the second guard calling to the other bunker guards.
Spectacular Failure: The guard draws his weapon and tells the Zhodani to surrender. If they resist, he and his comrades begin shooting!

Port Security Guard 8/11 *(11/13)*
- CE Suit including psi-shielded helmet, auto snub pistol, secure communicator.

Psionic Shield Helmet Blocks all psi powers. Includes night vision and flash suppression.
Combat Environment Suit AV 5 Flexible, sealable suit with chameleon skin and heat management capability, *(GT: PD2 DR24).*
Auto Snub Pistol HEAP 5D (1E) or Tranq 1D stun/rnd, V.Short, 20 Shots, 0.6kg, reloads 0.6 kg *(GT: HEAP Exp 2D or Chem Tranq, SS 9, Acc 2, ½dmg 80, Max 1100, 1 lb, ROF 3~, 20 shots, ST 8, Rcl −1).*
Communicator Secure comms link between port guards with panic button which raises an alarm in the security room in the administration building.

Any alarm at the gate will bring more guards. If the PCs get past, proceed to Nugget 6.

4. Over the Fence

The perimeter fence is 3 metres high with signs warning that it is electrified – touching it inflicts 1D3 stun damage per round, although this is primarily to keep out wild animals. It has a 'grill' of infra-red 'trip wires' running between the posts on the inner side

of the fence to detect anything large passing through or if the fence is deformed by someone climbing it or pushing against it. Proximity sensors are buried 5 metres inside the fence and will trigger if anything heavier than 25 kg comes within 5 metres of them. If one alarm is triggered, two guards in a ground vehicle will arrive in 1D3+2 minutes. Multiple alarms will bring four guards and put the entire port on alert.

The characters can easily locate the IR 'trip-wires' provided they are actively looking for alarms and have IR vision equipment. They can then try to disarm the sensors:

To disable the fence electrical system:
➤**Difficult Intrusion** *(GT: Lockpicking)*, **or**
➤**Formidable Electronics**
• -1 Difficulty if using an electronic toolkit.
Spectacular Success / Success: Power to a small section of fence has been disabled.
Failure: The PC receives a 1D3 shock.
Spectacular Failure: The PC receives a 2D shock, half of which is burns, half stun damage.

To bypass the fence IR sensors:
➤**Formidable Intrusion** *(GT: Lockpicking)*, **or**
➤**Staggering Electronics**
• -1 Difficulty if using an electronic toolkit.
Spectacular Success / Success: The alarm is bypassed; the fence can be cut or climbed without setting off the alarm.
Failure: The alarm is triggered.
Spectacular Failure: The alarm is triggered; the guards arrive in only 1D3 minutes.

To detect the proximity sensors:
➤**Formidable Intrusion** *(GT: Lockpicking)*, **or**
➤**Staggering Electronics**
• -1 Difficulty if using a metal detector or radio emissions sensor (from an electronic toolkit).
Spectacular Success / Success: A single proximity sensor has been detected.
Failure: The sensors were not detected.
Spectacular Failure: A sensor was triggered!

To disarm a proximity sensor:
➤**Formidable Intrusion** *(GT: Lockpicking)*, **or**
➤**Staggering Electronics**
• -1 Difficulty if using an electronic toolkit.
Spectacular Success / Success: A single sensor has been disarmed, giving a 5 metre wide 'safe' path into the port.
Spectacular Failure / Failure: The sensor is triggered and alerts the port guards.

If the PCs manage to avoid all these alarms, proceed to Nugget 6. Walking Around.

5. Through the Water

The characters may attempt to gain access to the port through the fuel refinery's water abstraction system from the lake. Three one-metre diameter pipes descend gradually from the lake edge into the basement of the refinery using gravity to draw water into a holding tank. The pipes are not guarded but have a locked grill at each end with an alarm on each. The pipes are unlit and completely flooded, so any intruders will need breathing equipment and must protect their equipment and weapons from the water.

To detect or bypass the grill alarm:
➤**Staggering Intrusion** *(GT: Lockpicking)*, **or**
➤**Impossible Electronics** *(GT: Electronics (Any))*
• -1 Difficulty if using an electronic toolkit.
• -1 Difficulty if using a bright light source or night vision system (e.g. LIF goggles).
• -1 Difficulty if assisted by breathing equipment.
Spectacular Success / Success: The alarm is detected (or bypassed).
Failure: The alarm is triggered; port security guards will arrive in 2D minutes. If they find obvious signs of entry at either end of the pipes, they will call for backup, otherwise they will leave after 2D minutes on the assumption it was a technical fault.
Spectacular Failure: As Failure but the guards arrive after 1D minutes and will check the grill alarms in minute detail for up to 2D+20 minutes.

The impact of any firefight in the refinery is left to your imagination. Once the characters have climbed out of the basement water tank, and have clambered up the ladders through the refinery equipment to ground level, proceed to Nugget 6.

6. Walking Around

Assuming the PCs have managed to covertly enter the downport, they can decide whether they wish to obtain spares for their own ship or steal an Imperial craft. If the PCs already have the security services after them, they won't have time to look for spares, so they had better head straight for the *Far Horizons* and hot-foot it out of the port!

Provided they appear to be starship crew, port technicians, security, etc. with a valid purpose, the PCs can move reasonably freely around the starport grounds for short periods during the day or night. However, if they are not well disguised, or start acting suspiciously they may be challenged.

Finding Spares

If the PCs are aiming to grab spares for their own ship, they'll find it difficult to get into the maintenance hangar; it's run by a small team who all know each other. If the party have good IDs, are well disguised, have false or stolen paperwork and can bluff well, they can get away with minor parts but they may have to steal zuchai crystals and the Imperials will be able to tell if they ask for parts that don't tie up with their declared purpose (e.g. heavy duty power grids supposedly for a small scout/courier).

Picking a Ship

The majority of the ships in the downport are small civilian traders (private scout/couriers, far traders and subsidised merchants). There are also three cargo shuttles and the two Scout ships. Larger ships only berth at the highport.

The civilian ships are kept locked, usually with anti-hijack systems and/or a standing crew while their colleagues are carousing or trading in the city. Taking such a ship by force would be difficult – any gunfire or distress signal from the merchants will alert port security of the problem.

Some of the ships will be taking on cargo and passengers, but obtaining passage for six Zhodani is very problematic; even if they could find a 'sympathetic' merchant and pull together a sufficiently large bribe, they might well find the trader still turned them over to the police, or that the authorities detected them boarding the ship without paperwork or using falsified papers.

The interface shuttles are locked down while not in use but don't have any crew aboard so the PCs could (with a lot of difficulty) break into a shuttle and crack its computer security (see example tasks later). If the crew are loading or unloading cargo, a shuttle could be hijacked. However, all this effort would only provide the party with a fairly slow spaceship which can reach the highport – by the time they reach the atmosphere, the Imperials will be on their trail and they won't be able to escape all the fighters, cruisers and systems defence boats!

The one ship that's pretty much ready to leave and has minimal security is, ironically, a Scout – the *Far Horizons*. If they need any added incentive as they're moving around the downport, tell them:

> As you watch, the larger Scout ship is wheeled out of its parking bay. It grinds to a halt just outside the bay and drops its cargo lift door. A cargo hauler pulls out of the maintenance hangar and stops beside the ship. Three Scouts get off and begin loading crates into the ship.

7. The *Far Horizons*

At some point when the PCs are close enough to consider entering the *Far Horizons*:

> Two of the Scouts disappear inside the ship, leaving one outside who begins wandering around it checking the hull and landing gear.

The characters should be able to approach the loading area, and get into the ship. The supervisor is outside doing a final integrity check, one of his team is stacking boxes in the hold and the other is in the galley. The party may not realise that two crew have been onboard for some time: the engineer is in the engine room running through power plant tests and the captain is in his cabin.

Unless the starport is at full alert status, the Zhodani should be able to seize control of the ship without too much bloodshed.

Far Horizons Crew 7/8 *(10/11)*
- Auto snub pistol (if alerted to hijack attempt).

Auto Snub Pistol HEAP 5D (1E), V.Short, 20 Shots, 0.6kg, reloads 0.6 kg *(GT: HEAP Exp 2D or Chem Tranq, SS 9, Acc 2, ½dmg 80, Max 1100, 1 lb, ROF 3~, 20 shots, ST 8, Rcl –1)*.

Ground Crew 7/8 *(10/11)*
- Monkey wrench or bare-hands.

Wrench 1D *(GT: 1D-2)*.

Once the party have control of the ship, they have to convince the computer to accept them as crew. If alive, the captain or engineer can be made to authorise their acceptance, otherwise the computer needs to be hacked:

To add one or more Zhodani to the crew list:
➤**Formidable Computing** *(GT: Computer Ops)*, or
➤**Staggering Intrusion** *(GT: Lockpicking)*
Spectacular Success / Success: The Zhodani are now formally IISS crew members!
Failure: This attempt failed but the task can be tried again. However, failure at the third attempt will lock the system for an hour, during which time someone will start to wonder why the ship's loading is taking so long…
Spectacular Failure: Oops. The ship's anti-hijack program is activated. All airlocks and bulkhead doors seal. The computer can still be hacked but at +2 Difficulty, unless the captain or engineer can be 'persuaded' to override the anti-hijack system.

Once the ship is secured, the characters will need to prepare it for take off and escape...

The characters blast off and head for jump but are likely to be pursued by Imperial fighters!

1. Powering Up

Whichever ship the PCs have obtained, a number of tasks are required to bring the ship's systems on-line and ready for jump:

To prepare the manoeuvre drive for take-off:
➢**Average Engineering** *(GT: Engineering (Starship Drives))*
- Takes 5 minutes (15 minutes if the power plant is not already on-line).

Spectacular Success / Success: System ready with no problems.
Failure: Minor alarm sounded during power-up causing drive shut-down; try again.
Spectacular Failure: Lack of familiarity with the Imperial systems has caused an overload which shuts down the drive for 1D x 10 minutes, after which the task can be attempted again.

The jump co-ordinates can be programmed and the jump drive prepared while on the ground or *en route* to the jump point. Ideally, the jump should be to their original destination of Chachtinch [Chwistyoch]:

To compute jump co-ordinates:
➢**Average Astrogation**
- Takes 20 minutes.

Spectacular Success / Success: Co-ordinates plotted correctly.
Failure: The Imperial co-ordinate system is introducing errors into the calculations; a further 1D x 5 minutes are required to double-check the calculations (the PCs can't afford to chance another misjump).
Spectacular Failure: The co-ordinates appear correct but will cause a minor misjump; they will arrive at their intended destination but later than expected and with nausea and headaches as per the original misjump in Scenario 1.

If necessary, remind the PCs that in the Emerald system, they can only jump safely once beyond the *star*'s 100 diameter limit.

Preparing the jump drive is an **Average Engineering** *(GT: Engineering (Starship Drives))* task, with the same outcomes as for the manoeuvre drive task, but taking 20 minutes.

2. Blast Off

Once the ship is ready to take-off, the PCs need to bluff the control tower into clearing them to leave, or they can just go for it. If they decide to bluff their way out, roleplay the interchange with the tower crew; if you also wish to exercise their characters' skills, use the same task as for getting past the starport checkpoint on p.44.

If they run for orbit, all the fighters will be scrambled from the camouflaged bunker. The Zhodani could use their ship's weapons to fire into the bunker while still on the ground, which may knock out all the Ramparts if they are lucky.

If the ship's take-off raises the suspicions of the control tower, the *Ramparts* will still be launched, but only after a delay of 1D+5 minutes. As their flight time to orbit is 15 minutes they will catch up with the PCs' ship fairly quickly.

If the Zhodani ship uses its weapons on take-off or if it is clear that the ship has been hijacked then the ground defence positions will open fire on it – resolve this using normal space combat rules. There will be plenty of opportunities to blow them up once they're in space so at this point they should escape with minimal damage.

To pilot from surface to orbit:
➢**Routine Pilot** *(GT: Piloting (Large Spacecraft))*
Spectacular Success: Time to orbit is 18 minutes thanks to skillful flying.
Success: Time to orbit is 25 minutes.
Failure: Time to orbit is 32 minutes.
Spectacular Failure: As Failure, plus the ship suffers a minor fault in a random part of the ship other than the drives – just to add tension!

3. Running to Jump

The gravity well around Emerald is dominated by its star, so the safe jump distance is the star's 100 diameter limit: 44,500,000 kilometres out from Emerald. The *Far Horizons* at 2g acceleration will take 26.5 hours to reach this limit at minimal velocity for an optimally safe, standing jump. If they are willing to take the risk of having a very high retained velocity on exiting jump, they can

accelerate all the way, reducing the time to 18.7 hours – still a long time period in system during which they may be shot at or intercepted.

In an emergency, they may choose to engage the jump drive any time after reaching the planet's 10 diameter limit; this is outside the star's 10 diameter limit and takes just 80 minutes to reach for a 'standing' jump or 56 minutes flat-out for a 'running' jump. In either case, there is a significant chance of a misjump, but this may be preferable to being disabled and boarded, or even destroyed.

Pursuit

If the Zhodani have succesfully fooled the downport into believing they are operating legitimately, there will be no immediate pursuit, though as the minutes, then hours pass, there is an increasing likelihood that some evidence of the party's actions will be noticed and the Imperials will work out what is going on.

If the Zhodani left under suspicious circumstances, they may already have *Rampart* fighters on their tail and they will be commanded to heave to for boarding (by a shuttle of marines from the highport). If they fail to comply, the Zhodani will come under fire from the interdiction satellites, the fighters and the highport (if within range). The Imperials may also be able to divert a nearby naval ship towards them (e.g. a 400 dton *Dragon* class SDB from the Gashinraa Belt) or request a civilian ship (far trader or subsidised merchant) to chase or fire upon the fleeing Zhodani ship.

If the party had been wandering around on the planet for some days, the Imperials may have had time to bring in a 10,000 dton *Terminus* class cruiser from an outer gas giant – the PCs will have a real challenge evading such a fast, heavily-armed ship.

Ideally, this should be the dramatic climax to the adventure, with Imperial ships closing in on the PCs, requiring them to balance the increasing threat (or actual damage) to their ship against the dangers of trying to jump before reaching the safe limit. Resolve this using the standard starship combat rules but, ideally, the PCs should jump out before they are destroyed.

Jump

Engaging the jump drive should be a routine task, but by this point the ship is probably damaged and may have been forced away from their intended jump point – this may require the jump co-ordinates to be recalculated using the task in Nugget 1.

To engage the jump drive:
➤**Routine Engineering (GT: Engineering (Starship Drives))**
- +1 Difficulty if performing a 'running' jump.
- +1 Difficulty if still inside the star's 100 diameter limit.
- +1 Difficulty if the jump drives or power plant have suffered damage.

Spectacular Success: As Success, plus the jump time is a mere 156 hours.
Success: Jump is entered successfully and transit time is the standard 168 hours (7 days).
Failure: The jump drive failed to power up correctly; another attempt can be made after 1D x 5 minutes. If they fail this task again, you may opt to allow them to enter jumpspace but inflict a long jump (184 hours) resulting in jump sickness, etc. as per Scenario 1.
Spectacular Failure: The ship misjumps: determine its direction and jump distance using the normal misjump rules.

4. Homecoming

Assuming the PCs jump successfully to Chachtinch, you can spend time concluding the adventurers' triumphant return to Zhodani space, or wrap up the adventure quickly as follows:

After a week of subsisting on the dire Imperial foods, your ship's astrogation computer indicates you are about to exit jumpspace. As you transition into normal space and the brilliant flash of released energy fades from your jump grid, stars appear around you.

There are a few worrying moments, but then you realise that the system buoy is confirming that before you lies the Chachtinch system: frontier world, major Naval base, and hub of the Zhodani defenses of the Dietevriabr wall.

Those of you who had never left the Consulate have seen why these defences are here now – to protect you from the unstable and unsafe Imperials. Now you can finally relax...

...but then the communicator chirps: "Imperial ship *Far Horizons*, you have violated Consulate space in the Chachtinch system restricted zone.

"Confirm identification and follow flight path now being transmitted into geosynchronus orbit, where you will be boarded by Consular Guards and Tvarchedl' Officers. You are subject to arrest should you be proven to be spying. Failure to comply will result in the use of deadly force."

The message loops...

Cronor/Jewell subsector border worlds
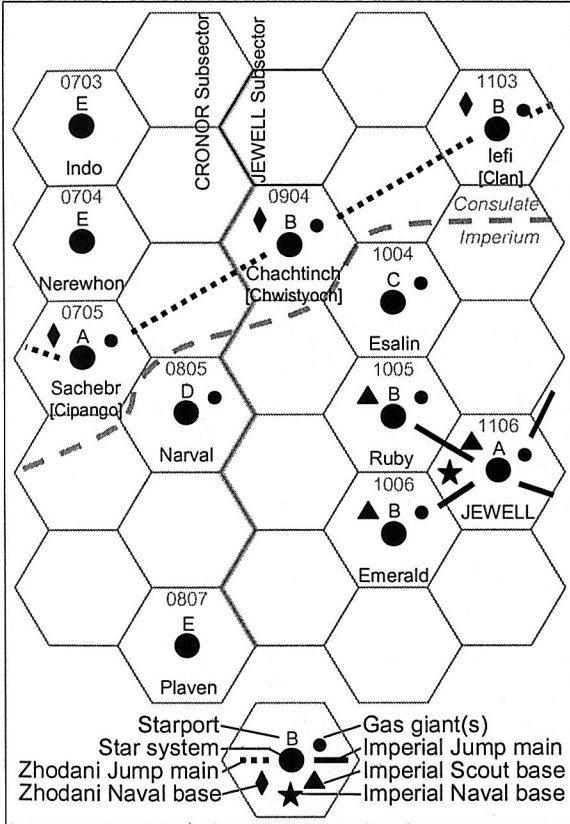
Sachebr, **Chachtinch** and **Iefi** have a heavy Zhodani naval presence, being key worlds in the Dietevriabr [Riverland] Wall, protecting the Dietevriabr cluster (and Zhodani subsector capital) to coreward of Iefi. These worlds also support a significant trade route.

Indo and **Nerewhon** are non-aligned, the former colonised using generation ships from the latter.

Narval and **Plaven** are also non-aligned, the latter being a hostile, volcanic, tidally locked world.

Esalin is Imperial but considered 'neutral' ground for Zhodani and Imperial diplomats and traders.

Ruby is a primary Imperial Scout base with a large civilian support population. **Emerald** has a smaller IISS training base.

The Imperial subsector capital is ruled by the Marquis of **Jewell**.

Key: Imperial names for Zhodani worlds are shown in [ ].
Base: Z=Zhodani navy; S=Imperial Scout; N=Imperial Navy. Notes: Ag=Agricultural; Cp=Capital;. Hi=High population; In=Industrial; Lo=Low population; Ni=Nonindustrial; Ri=Rich; Va=Vacuum. PBG: Population digit, planetoid belts, gas giants. Alg=Allegiance: Im=Imperial; Na=Non-aligned; Zh=Zhodani. *GT*: Pt=Port. Dia=Diameter (miles). Atm: Oxygen-nitrogen unless otherwise noted; D=Dense; E=Exotic; N=None; P=Polluted; S=Standard; T=Thin; Tr=Trace; VT=Very Thin. Wat=Surface water. Ctrl=Control. TL=Tech level.

Loc	Name	Statistics		Base/Notes	PBG	Alg	Star	Pt	Dia	Atm	Wat	Ctrl	TL
0703	Indo	E334662	5	Ni	320	Na	F6 V	I	2521	VT	37%	1	6
0704	Nerewhon	E738475	7	Lo Ni	820	Na	K5 V	I	6429	VT	78%	3	7
0705	Sachebr	A886865	C	Z Ri	121	Zh	G2 V	V	7670	D	64%	3	10
0805	Narval	D525688	6	Ni	603	Na	G4 V, M6 V	II	4537	VTP	45%	5	6
0807	Plaven	E845300	3	Lo Ni	910	Na	G8 V, M7 D	I	7528	TP	48%	0	5
0904	Chachtinch	B766766	A	Z Ag Ri	424	Zh	M2 V	IV	7396	S	57%	4	9
1004	Esalin	C565673	8	Ag Ni Ri	223	Im	F3 V, M5 D	III	4723	S	40%	2	8
1005	Ruby	B400445	B	S Lo Ni Va	201	Im	M1 V, M3 D	IV	4351	N	0%	3	9
1006	Emerald	B766555	B	S Ag Ni	534	Im	M1 V	IV	7025	S	61%	3	9
1103	Iefi	B672899	A	Z	901	Zh	K8 V	IV	6464	SP	15%	6	9
1106	Jewell	A777999	C	SN Hi In Cp	623	Im	G7 V	V	6588	SP	66%	6	10

Emerald Star System

Navigation Display of Orbital Bodies
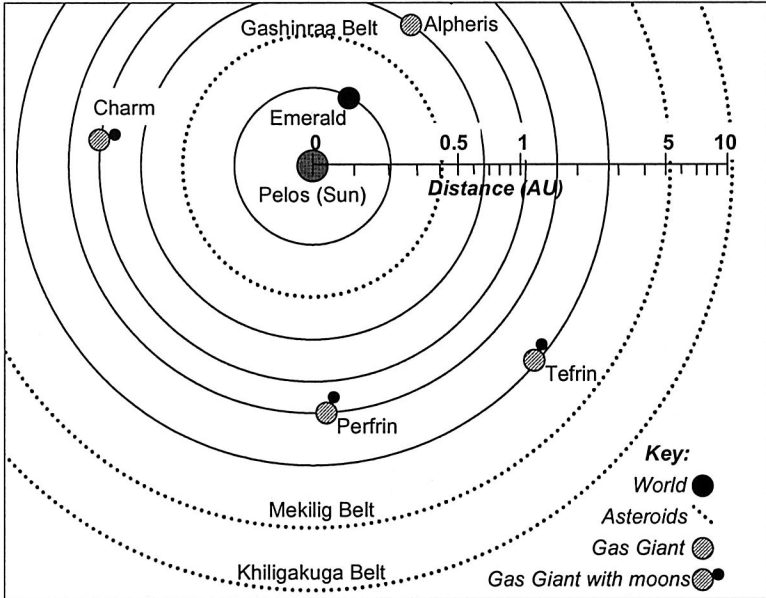
Orb/Sub-orb	Name	Statistics	Notes	Pt	Dia	Atm	Wat	Ctrl	TL
0	Emerald	B766555-B	Ag, Ni	IV	7025	S	61%	3	9
1	Gashinraa Belt	Y000000-0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
2	Alpheris	Small Gas Giant		0	33070	E	0%	0	0
3	Charm	Large Gas Giant		0	99250	E	0%	0	0
8	Betabor	Y510000-0		0	4786	Tr	0%	0	0
25	Betadin	Y200000-0		0	2352	N	0%	0	0
50	Betaxil	Y500000-0		0	4845	N	0%	0	0
225	Gakii	H862233-A	Re	I	8103	S	19%	2	9
4	Perfrin	Small Gas Giant		0	48620	E	0%	0	0
6	Epsilar	Y530000-0		0	5474	VT	0%	0	0
9	Aagika	H436127-A	Re	I	4267	VT	62%	4	9
20	Epsilid	Y530000-0		0	4867	VT	0%	0	0
40	Ka	GS00200-A		II	748	N	0%	0	9
65	Paku	HS00163-A	Re	I	565	N	0%	2	9
5	Tefrin	Large Gas Giant		0	85630	E	0%	-	0
6	Zetabor	Y330000-0		0	3452	VT	0%	0	0
8	Zetadin	Y100000-0		0	1174	N	0%	0	0
10	Kaskhaimark	H521100-A	Re	I	4967	VTP	8%	0	9
20	Zetamek	Y330000-0		0	3446	VT	0%	0	0
45	Zetaxil	Y300000-0		0	3073	N	0%	0	0
6	Mekilig Belt	Y000000-0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
7	Khiligakuga Belt	Y000000-0		0	-	N	0%	0	0

Key: As per the "Area of Operations" display, p.49.

Emerald

B766555-B   S Ag Ni 534   Imp   M1 V

A strategic world on our border with the Imperium in the Tloql [Spinward Marches] sector of the Iadr Nsobl [Rimward Province], one parsec from the subsector Imperial capital Jewell.

Data is given in both Zhdant Standard (ZS) and Imperial Standard (IS) units.

Orbit: Emerald circles its sun every 49.7 zhdanstial [56 days IS] at a distance of 29.800,067 km with an orbital eccentricity of 0.002. This brings Emerald some 44,500,000 km within the jump limit of the star (approximately 0.5 AU) which imposes significant in-system travel times between the world and safe jump points.

World: With a diameter of 11,304 km (7,025 mi) and a standard density molten core, Emerald has a mass of 1.05 ZS and a surface gravity of 1.06 ZS [0.9g IS]. The planet has an axial tilt of 26.9° and rotates once every 23.9 Zhdina [32.2 hours IS].

Atmosphere: A standard nitrogen/oxygen mix at a sea-level pressure of 1.3 ZS [0.9 IS], making it breathable without assistance.

Surface: Green, algae-tinged seas cover 61% of the surface, with small polar ice caps. The majority of the world is swathed in thick clouds, green-tinged like the sea. Average daytime temperatures range from 31°C in summer to 3°C in winter in the temperate inhabited regions, but rarely rise above -30°C at the poles.

Population: Imperial census details indicate a population of 530,673, governed by the "Emerald Development Council", a body largely composed of members of the Ecannis family, who retain the rights to the majority of the cultivated lands and who also control importation of technology and exportation of goods through the starport. The council is authoritarian but efficient and fair so the general populace, who form the lower tier of this feudal arrangement, are fairly happy with their lot and enjoy a good standard of living. Those who excel may be rewarded with council placements or even marriage into the Ecannis family.

Port Emerald is the primary urban area and contains a relatively small B class starport *(GT: class IV)* which includes an Imperial Interstellar Scout Service (IISS) training base. The remaining developed areas of this world are covered in farmsteads, mines and small manufacturing sites.

Locals, even recent colonists, are conservative and may appear aloof or indifferent to outsiders.

Law: The open display or use of weapons is prohibited in urban areas but rifles are commonly used by farmers for pest control and hunting.

Economy: A small industrial base provides consumer and business goods but scientific, military and other specialist goods are imported. The populace make their living from agriculture and livestock, in particular the ubiquitous Groat. Surplus produce is mostly exported to Ruby and Jewell, in addition to smaller quantities of ores, crystals, metals and compact farming equipment and fertilisers for Ruby's hydroponics labs.

History: Emerald was settled in 308, by exiled followers of Duke Aklas Ecannis of Ecan (Core 2316) who was executed for cowardice in 306. As its neighbour Jewell grew, it began exporting its agricultural surplus, though the Ecannis remained isolationist, proscribing further settlement.

With the onset of the First Frontier War, the Emerald system was occupied by Imperial Navy fleet elements. In 540, fearing anti-Imperial sympathies among the Ecannis, the Imperium appointed a legate to monitor the settlement. During the Zhodani offensive of 591, martial law was declared and many of the Ecannis family were interred on Jewell shortly before the Zhodani occupied both worlds. The liberation of these worlds allowed the Ecannis to return in 606.

After Sar Valain Ecannis distinguished himself in the Second Frontier War and subsequent Civil War, he was appointed legate of Emerald in 626. Over the following centuries Emerald built up its export economy, cultivating large tracts of land and upgrading the starport, despite occupation by the Zhodani in the Third and Fifth Frontier Wars. Since the Third Frontier War finished in 986, there has been a substantial influx of colonists, more than trebling the population growth.

There are still huge areas of the outback to be colonised as the investment and resources become available, though nomadic renegades do roam these areas. Claiming to be the original colonists, displaced by the Ecannis, these *Chukniang* dislike Imperials and Zhodani alike. However, most regard them as little more than bandits, preying on outlying farms and mines.

Flora/Fauna: Emerald's cloud cover creates an ongoing battle for light and sustenance among its broad-leaved plants. Fauna are generally small with some predators, an extensive insect population and a few carnivorous plants.
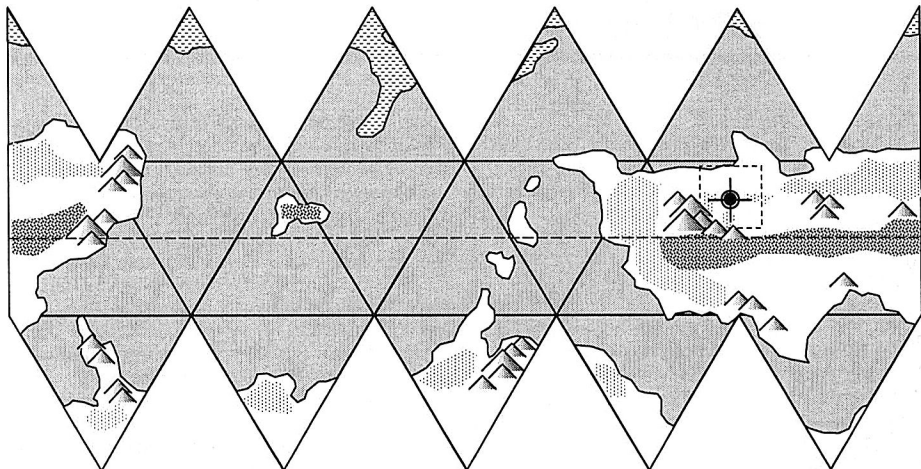
Plains   Forest   Water   Starport

Mountains   Jungle   Ice   See map below

| 0 | 1000 | 2000 | 3000 |

km

R. Poz

R. Hyak

R. Juntu

X

R. Verdir

N

| 0 | 50 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 |

km
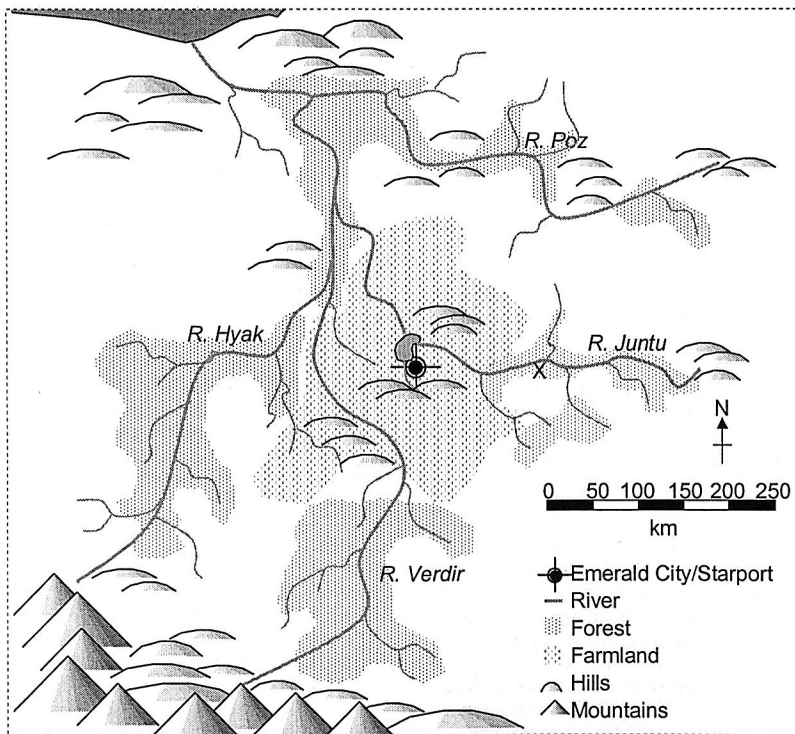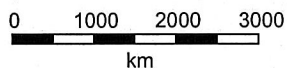
Emerald City/Starport

River

Forest

Farmland

Hills

Mountains

Emerald Military Assessment

System

The Emerald system is right on the Imperial border but contains only a small defensive force. This is in accordance with the Imperial Navy's revised defence strategy after their significant defeats in the Fourth Frontier War (3457.2-3458.1). The change from a forward defensive 'crust' to an 'elastic defence' meant concentrating the major fleets at 'islands of resistance' – the high population, high technology worlds behind the frontier. The Imperial 214th Fleet is based at Jewell, the Imperial subsector capital. Units of this force often pass through other systems in the Jewell cluster, including Emerald, on patrols and exercises. As the stellar jump limit for Emerald's star is around 0.5 AU, fleet movements are concentrated around the outer system gas giants, rather than Emerald itself, which orbits well within the star's jump limit.

Emerald is an ideal location for refuelling prior to assaulting Jewell so the four gas giants are heavily defended by system defence boats (probably ranging from 400 dton *Dragon* class ships which also perform anti-piracy and customs roles, up to 20,000 dton *Perseus* riders for repelling invading fleets). SDBs may also lurk in the asteroid belts.

The system is within range of the 65th and 67th fleets and the 2nd and 3rd Assault Groups.

Mainworld

The mainworld is now of little strategic value as it is no longer a major Imperial base. During the Fourth Frontier War, both its downport and highport were severely damaged in the planetary assault. The highport is now a part-converted 20,000 dton bulk freighter, presumably because the Imperium does not wish to invest in a new highport in a potential future war zone. The highport has few facilities and is primarily used for transferring bulk cargo between traders and the planetary interface shuttles.

The downport is mostly functional, has three orbital defence laser emplacements and up to 10 *Rampart* RF-128 fighters to undertake Close Orbit and Aerospace Control Command (COACC) operations. Other than the laser and missile batteries aboard the highport, the approach to Emerald is protected by a constellation of eight SMU-4D Interdiction/Surveillance satellites. These 300 dton automated vessels mount space sensors and three laser/missile turrets and have a secondary role for ground surveillance, though they cover only a limited area of the planet's surface at any time. There is also a small network of communications and weather satellites in geostationary orbit around the world.

Ground Forces

There are no Imperial army forces currently on Emerald, though the highport is protected by two platoons of Imperial Marines and the IISS base is thought to maintain several S3 armed response teams. The local government maintains an armed police force, but this is mainly effective in the city and is thinly spread across the farmlands. It is planned that this would form the core of a local defence force, though they are only equipped with small-arms.

The Tozjabr have made several attempts to contact potential sympathetic groups on Emerald and a few operatives have been recruited. Despite the original anti-Imperial tendencies of the Ecannis family and early settlers, the Frontier Wars have also aroused anti-Zhodani sentiment. Early indications were that the outback nomads calling themselves the "Chukniang" might be formed into an anti-Imperial guerilla unit. In reality the Chukniang are several disorganised collections of disparate bandits, poorly led and subject to frequent in-fighting. They were deemed too untrustworthy to consider recruiting.

Contents of the Priebr's Lockers

Qty	Item	Description	kg/lb
		Bridge Locker (upper deck, area BL on deckplans)	
1	Atmosphere Tester	*Determines atmosphere composition.*	1.5 / 3
2	Breaching Charge	*Self-adhesive charge makes a man-sized hold in a wall. Timer range 5 to 60 seconds.*	2 / 4
5	Flare	*Emits bright light and thick coloured smoke for 15 minutes.*	0.3 / 0.7
1	Flare Gun	*Fires signal flares (each lasting about 30 seconds).*	0.5 / 1.1
6	Flashlight	*It's a flashlight. What more do you need to know?*	0.1 / 0.2
1	Inertial Locator	*Gives precise X, Y, Z position relative to a given starting point.*	0.3 / 0.7
1	Iris Valve Opener	*Motorised door-opener. Requires external mains power.*	10 / 22
1	Magnetic Compass	*Yup, a magnetic compass.*	negligible
1	Multiscanner	*Generic scanning/sensor unit. Currently programmed for detecting toxic gases.*	0.8 / 1.8
6	Nightlight Glasses	*Light intensifiers allow normal vision in almost total darkness.*	0.1 / 0.2
6	Sleeping Bag	*You can sleep in this.*	1 / 2.2
1	Translator	*Keyboard-controlled translator for simple sentences. Currently programmed for Vargr and Galanglic.*	0.1 / 0.2
2	Wall Patch	*Self-adhesive flexible material for sealing hull breaches up to 15cm diameter.*	2 / 4.4
6	Water-Dye	*High visibility water dye, covers 10 sq. metres for 15 minutes.*	0.1 / 0.2
2	Inflatable Dinghy	*Self-inflating dinghy, 4 paddles, mini-motor (24 hour battery).*	0.1 / 0.2
3	Survival Kit	*Each kit contains:*	60 / 130
4	• Respirator Mask	*Face mask and oxygen cylinder (1 hour air supply).*	1 / 2.2
4	• Water Bag	*Resealable 4 litre water bags, full.*	4 / 8.8
1	• Water Filter Kit	*Water Filter kit (100 litres max).*	0.8 / 1.8
30	• Food Bar	*30 person-days of concentrated food.*	negligible
30	• Light Stick	*Chemical LightSticks (5 hr duration ea)*	0.1 / 0.2
1	• Survival Tent	*Large canister which expands into a 17 cu. metre hemisphere tent with a simple airlock, emergency beacon and air filters.*	20 / 44
1	• First Aid Kit	*Drugs, surgical supplies and diagnosis kits for minor wounds.*	8 / 18
1	• Hand Axe	*For cutting firewood, etc.*	1.8 / 4
1	• Rope (50m)	*Strong, synthetic material rope.*	2 / 4.4
4	• Coldsuit	*Disposable cold-weather suit.*	1 / 2.2
1	• Survival Manual	*The complete DIY guide to surviving.*	negligible
1	• Hunting Rifle	*Bullpup style hunting rifle.*	3.5 / 7.7
1	• Magazine	*30 round clip for the rifle.*	0.5 / 1.1
		Engineering Locker (lower deck, area L on deckplans)	
		Contains the same survival equipment as the Bridge Locker, in addition to:	
1	Laser Cutting Torch	*Cut or spot-weld 1 m of soft steel per 6 seconds. Internal battery lasts 5 minutes; can be externally powered.*	8.5 / 19
1	Electronic ToolKit	*Tools, diagnostic instruments, small common spare parts*	4 / 6
1	Mechanical Tool Kit	*Tools, adhesives, lubricants, small supply of fasteners*	15 / 33
1	Radiation Counter	*Detects radiation level. Can be set to alarm at a given level.*	0.1 / 0.2
Lots	Ship's Spares	*Various small ship components for minor repair tasks.*	0.1 / 0.2
		Medical Bay Locker (upper deck, area MB on deckplans)	
2	Coldpack	*Palm-size chemical pack which cools to freezing for 1 hour.*	0.1 / 0.2
2	Heatpack	*Palm-size chemical pack which heats to 50°C for 1 hour.*	0.1 / 0.2
1	Med Microscan	*Touch to chest for instant data on vital body parameters.*	0.2 / 0.4
1	Paramedic Kit	*Drugs, surgical supplies and diagnosis kits for serious wounds.*	10 / 22

Ship's Data: *Lintula* class IISS Extended Duration Survey Vessel

Hull: 300 dton, Streamlined, Size Rating 8, Armour 10, Structure 12, TL15, MCr145.9.
(GT: 300-ton SL Hull, Total Compartmentalisation, TL12, PD4, DR 100, EMass 485, LMass 521, HP 33,600, Size Modifier +8.)
Drives: Jump 3, Manoeuvre 2G, Power Plant 5. *(GT: Airspeed 3,207.)*
Weaponry: Fire Control Rating 6. Turret 1: Three Lasers (4/4/3/2) *(GT: 405-MJ)*; Turret 2: Three Missile racks; Turret 3: Three Sandcasters.
Crew/Cargo: 4-5 Crew (Captain/Pilot, Astrogator/Comms, Engineer, Sensors/Gunner, optional Medic/Gunner), 3-4 Passengers (typically Scientists). 8 Staterooms. 8 dton Cargo.
Electronics: Military Standard Controls. Sensor Rating A10 P4 J10. *(GT: Hardened Command Bridge, Radical Stealth, Radical Emission Cloaking, Probe Module, Survey Module.)*
Communicators: Radio 3,000,000 km, Laser 6,000,000 km, Meson 100,000 km.
Sensors: PESA 160,000 km, AESA 320,000 km, Radscanner 6,400 km.
Fuel: Fuel scoops, purification (18 hours), 150 dton fuel.
Sub-Craft: Air/raft.

This craft type is one of several adaptations of the "Fighting Scout" – a design originally produced in response to a demand for a robust starship capable of undertaking long reconnaissance missions in potentially hostile territory. The design uses well-tested, reliable systems and carries sufficient fuel for five jumps, which gives it a useful safety margin when entering unexplored systems. Because of its bulkier nature, pilots of smaller scout ships sometimes use the nickname "Fat Boy" to refer to an EDSV.

Key to Deckplans:

A: Airlocks. Lower Deck: Main airlock, with extending ramp to ground level. Middle Deck: Secondary airlock to hull underside. Upper Deck: Emergency dorsal airlock.
AR: Air/raft. Can be mounted on the cargo hold loading lift or secured to the hold ceiling.
B: Bridge. Positions for Pilot, Astrogator, Engineer and Sensors Op/Gunner. Careful design and a high level of automation allows the craft to be run for short missions using only a skeleton crew of two: Pilot/Astrogator and Engineer/Gunner.
CG: Cargo Hold. Central loading platform extends to ground level when landed.
CL: Crew Lounge. A compact lounge and galley with holo-entertainment suite and wall-mounted fold-out fitness equipment.
JD: Jump Drive. Exxier "Topper 3" fast-ramp drive.
L: Ship's Locker. Contains vacc suits, medical and survival equipment.
MD: Manoeuvre Drive. Two Sabelline RX101 thruster units.
PP: Power Plant. Dual Cytia 1836 installation.
S1-8: Staterooms. Compact crew and passenger cabins with integral fresher cubicles.
SS: Sensor Suite. Dedicated survey, sensors and communications suites.

Lift Shafts:

a: All decks access.
b: Engineering up to Sensor Suite.
c: Engineering down to Cargo Hold and ventral turret.
d: Up to dorsal turret.
e: Manual hatch to forward turret.

Lintula class Scout

— — — ⌐	Wall, door, bulkhead, maintenance panel
☨ ◯ ⊙ ◯	Iris valve (wall, floor, ceiling, both)
⊞ ⊕ ⊕ ⊞	Manual hatch (wall, floor, ceiling, both)
⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠	Lift (down only, up only, up and down)
▢ ◗	Couch (acceleration, normal)
★	Main computer terminal

MIDDLE DECK

0 3 6
metres

UPPER DECK

A

CL

SS

LOWER DECK

L

CG

AR

S1
S2
S3
S4

S5
S6
S7
S8

B
A
e

PP JD PP

MD MD

SIDE VIEW

0 6 12
metres

*This adventure is suitable for use with
all forms of Traveller, in particular **Marc Miller's Traveller**
and Steve Jackson's **GURPS Traveller**.*

The Zhodani...

...view the Imperials as violent, expansionist, mentally disturbed, guilt-ridden liars and thieves. The Imperials view the Zhodani as treacherous, mind-sucking scum.

Delta 3 is down...

...leaving a Zhodani admiral, carrying the latest plans for the Zhodani frontier fleet, stranded on an Imperial border world. The Zhodani crew must use their cunning and psionics to outwit the Imperials and return safely to their Consulate.

This adventure...

...contains pregenerated Zhodani characters, deckplans and statistics for two starships, detailed descriptions and maps of the Imperial border world of Emerald, guidance on playing Zhodani, rules on how to run the adventure as a tournament, and a generic task system compatible with all versions of Traveller.

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