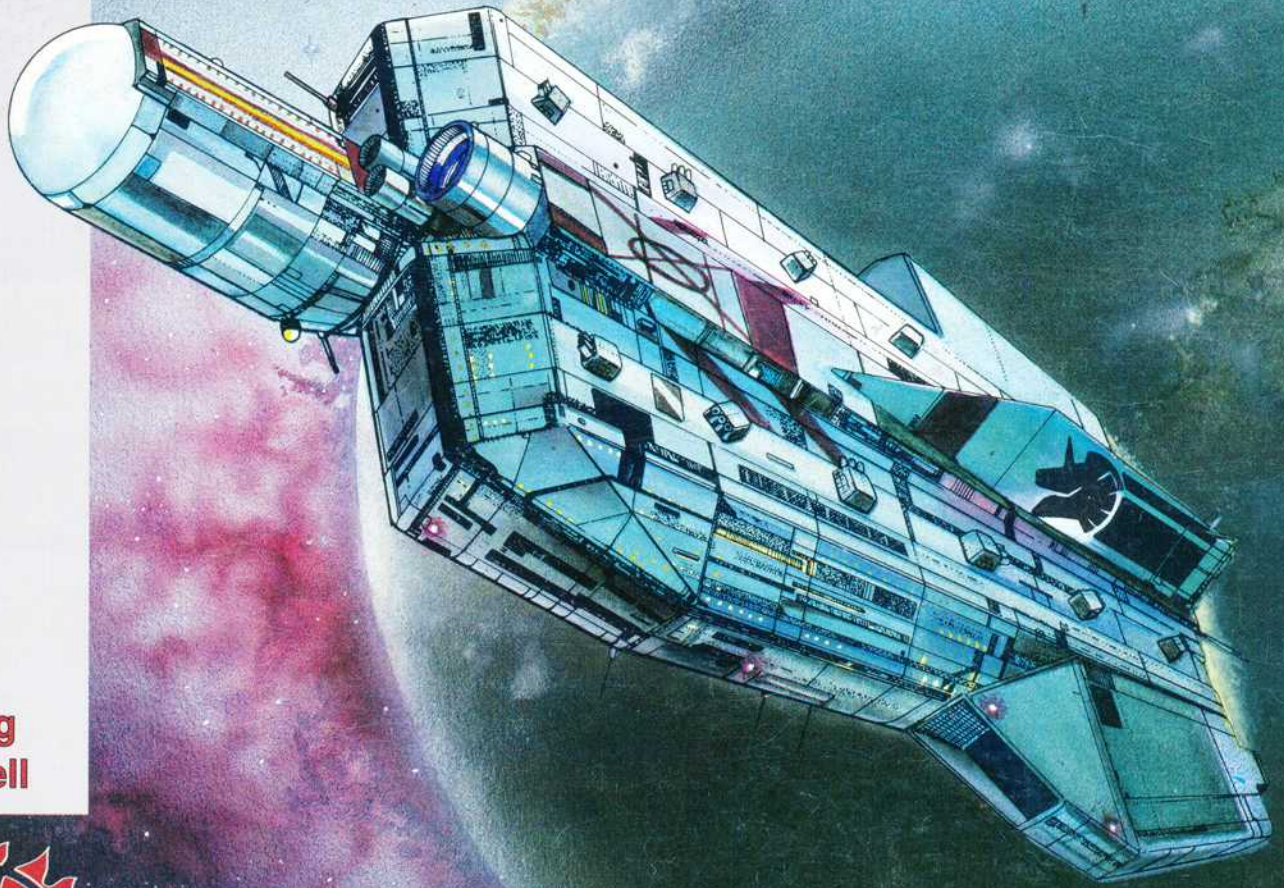


MEGA TRAVELLER

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Arrival VENGEANCE™

THE FINAL ODYSSEY



Greg
Videll

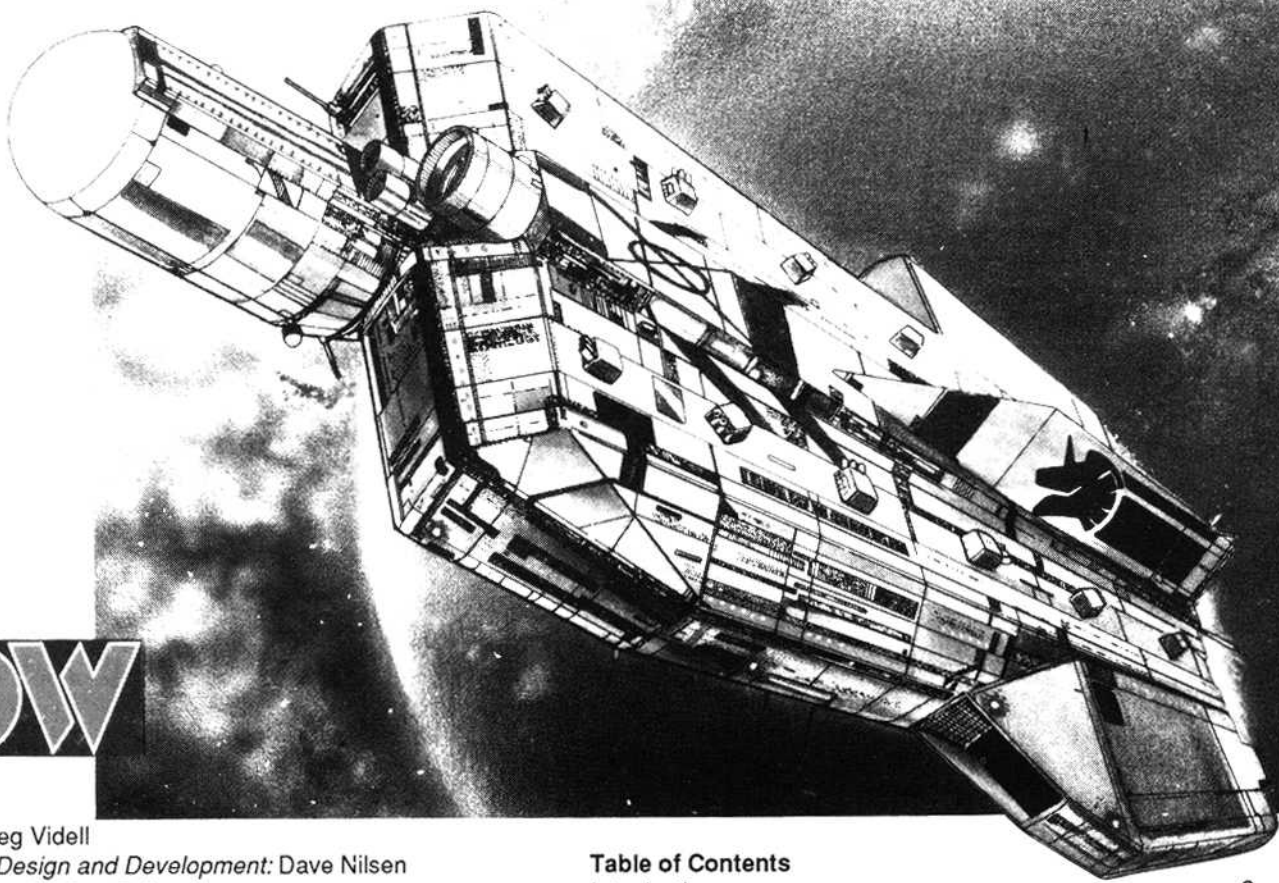


Science-
Fiction
Adventure
In the
Shattered
Imperium



Arrival VENGEANCE™

THE FINAL ODYSSEY



GDW

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Arrival Vengeance

There's a feeling of quiet anticipation among the hand-picked crew as Arrival Vengeance slips her moorings and heads out into the eternal night. Rigged for silent running, the cruiser slowly pulls away from its berth and that of her adjoining sister ship, Bard Refuge. No one is there to see the ship off. In fact, all other traffic has been cleared away from Trin's Inactive Ships Facility. It's an inauspicious start to a daring three-year cruise that could change history. A cruise intended to take Vengeance deep into the heart of what was once the Third Imperium.

Introduction

Arrival Vengeance: The Final Odyssey is a **MegaTraveller** adventure spanning charted space during the Hard Times era. Referees can use **The Final Odyssey** to start a new campaign originating in the Spinward Marches or, with a little extra work, extend an existing campaign. Additionally, this adventure provides a glimpse of events across a wide region of the **MegaTraveller** map, providing referees with inspiration for their own adventures and campaigns.

Also, in response to popular demand, we have included past **Traveller News Service** stories where appropriate in the story to help lend a sense of continuity that is not always possible when reading widely disparate **TNS** stories over a several-month period.

Referee's Information

The Final Odyssey is set in the Hard Times era which runs from the end of 1124 to the early 1130s. Possession of the **Hard Times** sourcebook is not required for play of this folio, but familiarity with the concepts presented there will make for a more complete campaign.

Most of Chartist Space has changed forever due to the upheavals of the Second Civil War. The once unified Third Imperium has balkanized into numerous independent factions increasingly surrounded by damaged and dying worlds. The volume of interstellar trade is declining rapidly due to the destruction of starports and technology levels. Pirates of every stripe roam the dark places between the factional cores or "Safes". Subsectors once familiar to travellers have been rendered unrecognizable as things degenerate.

One bright spot in the gathering gloom, although not without its troubles, is the Domain of Deneb. Isolated by the Great Rift and under the guidance of Archduke Norris Aella Aledon, Deneb survives mostly intact. Because of its isolation, player PCs (PCs), know little of events outside their home space. It is on this basis that the PCs venture out into the darkening remnants of the Third Imperium.

Background Information

Almost from the start of the Rebellion, Archduke Norris has been pressured by the peerage and commercial interests to break with the Third Imperium and declare an independent Domain of Deneb. He's resisted this action for a number of reasons, the most important being that Norris' power derives from the Imperium. To break with it could call into question his authority. Also, the true intentions of the Zhodani remains unknown. The Zhodani Consulate, which adjoins Deneb, has initiated five wars of expansion in the last 600 years. To declare his realm separate could invite a new, unwinnable Frontier War. Lastly, Norris has spent a lifetime serving the empire. He believes in the Imperium and that kind of loyalty doesn't die easily. Despite these compelling reasons, Archduke Norris is a pragmatist. The news reaching Deneb in this, the seventh year of the Second Civil War, is not encouraging. Facing the very real possibility that the Imperium has shattered irrevocably, Norris has come to a decision. A fast ship will be dispatched to assess the state of the Imperium and seek alliances with willing factions. (In the latter case, the Federation of Daibei and Margaret's Domain are seen as the most likely candidates.) Based on this assessment, the Archduke will decide whether or not his Domain will remain loyal to the empire or strike out on its own. Page 3 reproduces the letter Norris

has prepared for the crew (PCs) to present to the factional leaders they meet with. This letter is the formal presentation of Norris' proposal, but is only a starting point. The PCs are authorized to discuss and consider terms of alliance with those they meet, but will not, obviously, sign any treaties. This is a fact-finding mission to lay the foundation for alliance, not to conclude binding agreements.

The ship selected for the mission is the **Azhanti High Lightning**-class frontier cruiser **Arrival Vengeance**. Although considered obsolete, the cruiser possesses Jump-5 capability, embarks several squadrons of light fighters and can transport a battalion of Marines. Such capabilities should stand the cruiser in good stead during its voyage. The selection of **Vengeance** also allows the Domain to keep its more sophisticated warships at home.

Finally, the mission will be initiated with the utmost secrecy. Norris knows that even rumors regarding his decision could have serious political, military and economic repercussions. **Arrival Vengeance**, originally to be recommissioned two years hence for duty with the Aslan crewed Patrol, has been secretly undergoing refurbishment at the Inactive Ships Facility at Trin (3235 Spinward Marches). The use of a ship not currently in active service is expected to add an additional level of security to Norris' undertaking.

Running The Final Odyssey: The scope of **Vengeance's** mission is such that all phases of the journey can't be covered in detail. Thus **The Final Odyssey** is a series of adventure sketches set along the cruiser's route. Each episode is intended to provide enough background information and possible outcomes for the referee to fully flesh out each adventure. The referee is invited to add, delete or expand this folio in order to best suit his or her players' interests. Although the adventure theoretically covers an historical event, the presentation of **The Final Odyssey** allows referees to highlight certain events and introduce unique twists. This allows referees to make **Final Odyssey** a unique experience even for players that have already glanced its contents.

During the course of this folio, **Arrival Vengeance** traces the following route. The ship travels through the Aslan Hierate via the Jump-5 route across the Great Rift and into the Federation of Daibei. Upon leaving Daibei, **Vengeance's** course bends coreward toward Zarushagar, Margaret's Stronghold and Lucan's Imperium before turning toward the desolation of Dagudashag and Gushemege. Finally, driving back to spinward, **Arrival Vengeance** makes for Strephon's Stronghold, recrosses the Great Rift and returns home to Deneb.

Starting the Adventure

The Final Odyssey can be played as either a new campaign or as an extension of an on-going one. Both options are expanded upon below.

In starting a new campaign, PCs have been drawn from Deneb's various services under the utmost secrecy. Characters have been chosen for their knowledge, abilities and loyalty to the Domain. (And its underlying principals as espoused by Norris.) PCs are either active duty personnel or have been recalled to duty from retirement. (Where they may have been pursuing careers as professional adventurers or "travellers.") All participants in the mission have been culled from the best the Domain of Deneb has to offer. To be invited to participate would be a high point in anyone's career.

Note on Player Characters: It will probably be best if each player runs several PCs. For example, playing a member of the command crew allows the player to get in on the big decisions, decisions which are not executed by those occupying such high levels. A lower-ranking officer or NCO carries out the orders coming down from above and experiences the action firsthand. Marine PCs take part in military operations falling within their purview. Several other character types have their own roles to play as defined below. The idea is to have the players realistically experience the adventure at each level it occurs. (This avoids the necessity of having the captain "beam down" with the landing party.) Where applicable, PCs generated using the extended character generation rules will provide greater depth to the folio.

The following career types and positions are required for *Vengeance's* mission:

Navy: *Vengeance's* crew complement will primarily be drawn from the Domain Navy. The full range of branch positions, from command to engineering to flight, take part in the mission.

Marine: Domain Marines comprise the cruiser ship's troop complement which may include commandos should the referee desire. *Vengeance* has been assigned a company of 50 Marines for this assignment. Marine pilots on exchange to the navy or experienced in ground support can also be assigned to one of the two Rampart fighter squadrons embarked aboard *Vengeance*. Such pilots are in addition to the company of ship's troops and displace navy pilots.

Scouts: Domain Scouts are assigned to *Vengeance* to provide additional crew and operate small craft. Commandos from the Security Branch's Special Services Section (S-3) may also be placed aboard by the referee. Additional Scouts, drawn from the Contact and Liaison Branch for example, are included to conduct contact missions and perform analyses on worlds and races encountered.

Nobles and/or Diplomats: As *Vengeance's* mission is primarily one of diplomatic contact, members of both character types are aboard to represent the Domain. As many high ranking diplomats will no doubt be nobles, some PCs will be "dual classed." In any case, the ship's captain is in overall command of the mission and has the final say in all matters.

If the referee wishes to integrate **The Final Odyssey** into an existing campaign, special provisions must be made for the inclusion of PCs. Former military PCs can be recalled to duty if the situation warrants. PCs who are particularly famous and/or familiar to Norris, may be recruited for the mission. It's left to the referee to devise the most acceptable solution.

The Inside Track: In order to assist the referee in the conduct of this folio, a special nonplayer character (NPC) is available. The *Vengeance* mission is considered important enough by the Archduke that he has placed a personal representative aboard the cruiser; his true daughter and heir Seldrian Aledon. (True-daughter/true-son are the current euphemisms in the Imperium for clones.) Seldrian's true identity remains unknown to the PCs, masked by a cover story identifying her as a senior diplomat. Although vague in their wording, orders from Norris instruct the senior naval and diplomatic members of the mission to heed her advice, and if neces-

sary, orders. These orders are classified and handled on a need-to-know basis.

Seldrian is best used by the referee as a conduit for information and helpful suggestions. She can also be used as a final check against reckless PCs, although this approach is best used sparingly if at all. Keep in mind that Seldrian is aboard to keep an eye on things, not dictate what the PCs should do.

Recognition: Any PC that succeeds at a one-time Difficult roll versus his or her average of intelligence and education will realize who Seldrian is. The referee should take any such players aside and explain to them the realization that they have made, and also explain the concept of *noble courtesy*. Noble courtesy, also known as *courtesy fiction*, means that when a ranking noble tells you a relatively harmless falsehood, you do not question it. The noble knows that you know better, but implicitly asks your assistance in maintaining the fiction. Usually this fiction is something that simplifies a situation for both parties, a situation which would become more complicated if attention were called to it. Naturally, people who flagrantly violate these fictions find that their careers are hindered, and those who play by the rules find that they enjoy more success. One useful way of thinking about this is the way a journalist responds to a public figure who is speaking "off the record." A journalist who becomes known for violating such trust finds that no one confides in him anymore.

Seldrian Aledon

867ABF, Age 26 (in 1123), 2 terms.

Admin-1, Computer-2, Persuasion-1, Genetics-1, Handgun-1, Leader-1, Legal-1, Liaison-1, Medical-1, Pilot-1, Vacc Suit-1, Equestrian-0, Grav Vehicle-0.

As Norris' clone, Seldrian is theoretically temperamentally and intellectually matched to him. Because they share identical genetic material, the clone has the same neurological predispositions "hard wired" into its brain as does the parent. These predispositions can be reinforced by training and education to provide the parent with what theoretically amounts to another set of eyes and ears. The vast distances of the Imperium make it difficult for rulers to have firsthand knowledge of all the important issues they need to consider. This makes it very important for a leader to have access to emissaries that are reliable and trustworthy, and, most important, perceive, interpret and report events much as would the leader him or herself. Clones provide this capability, and are much valued by many of the Imperial nobility.



Trin/Spinward Marches (3235 A894A96-F)

Date:329-1123

¶What do you do when you lose a 60,000-ton cruiser? Hope that the Aslan didn't steal it?

¶This is the dilemma facing the personnel of the Imperial Navy Inactive Ships Facility at Trin. The *Arrival Vengeance*, an *Azhanti High Lightning*-class Frontier Cruiser, was one of five of that class mothballed at Trin since 1114. With the establishment of the Patrol, or *Trekhyair*, in 1120, one *Lightning*-class cruiser per year has been reactivated for service with this force, beginning with *Azhanti High Lightning*, *Children of the March*, and *Refractor Loathesome*. The two left, *Bard Refuge* and *Arrival Vengeance*, were scheduled for reactivation in 1124 and 1125 respectively. However, while conducting an inspection of *Bard Refuge* prior to moving her to the shipyard, the inspection team discovered that her sistership, *Arrival Vengeance*, was missing.

¶There are currently no theories or explanations for this phenomenon.



Domain of Deneb



Office of the Archduke
Norris Aella Aledon
Giyachi, Mora/Spinward Marches

276-1123

Fellow Imperial Leader,

It is with regret that I come to write these words. This is because these words invoke the spectre of the death of the Imperium. Yet perhaps by daring to invoke this spectre, we may together create the means to drive it away. If the Imperium is to survive as more than a sullied name, the leaders that remain must unite to reaffirm and restore those values that gave it life.

We in the Domain of Deneb have for seven years maintained our allegiance to no one leader, but to the Imperium itself. I now have to ask, to what do we owe this allegiance? Has there been a purpose to this fealty, or has it been a vain exercise? There are questions facing Deneb that demand answers, but before we can address them, we must know in whose name we are speaking, and in whose name we are acting. Is the Imperium merely our point of departure, or is it still our framework and our future?

As far as Deneb is from your portion of the Imperium, it would be easy to assume that there are no longer any ties that bind us together, save warm memories of a completed era. But the faithfulness of my people demands that we do not abandon hopes of a restored Imperium too quickly. So I ask you to join with me to take hold of the fragments that remain and knit them together. If one faction had the ability to take hold of the empire, it surely would have happened by now. I ask you to tell me if we, together, can do what none of us separately could accomplish.

While the distances between us are great, I can assure you that Deneb has survived almost entirely intact, and our relations with our neighbors continue to be manageable. With your agreement, our powers can be turned to lessening that distance. This would be a difficult undertaking, but surely no more difficult than those accepted by Cleon or Arbellatra. Like them, if we have faith and courage and commitment, the future is ours to claim.

I submit this course of action to your care and wisdom.

Faithfully,

Norris
Archduke of Deneb

WELCOME ABOARD

Most of the PCs probably have not served aboard *Arrival Vengeance* before, and will gradually be filled in on her history during the opening stages of the adventure. One way the referee may wish to do this is by playing the part of a grizzled old NPC petty officer (see Appendix 3 for UPP) who recounts stories of when he served aboard "The Old Girl." Alternatively, the referee may permit one of the players to take the role of the grizzled old petty officer, who can irritate the other PCs with his stories.

"Why I remember the time back in '03, or was it '04? No, it was '03, when we were pulling into Boughene, and this new Ensign—Hey! Are you falling asleep on me? You wake up and listen to this story! You might learn something, you know, save your life. Yeah, you kids, you think you know it all."

Arrival Vengeance was first laid down in 1003 at the Spinward Marches' Yard 11 No. 1. She made her first flight on 037-1006 and subsequently entered Imperial service later that year. The class was officially declared obsolescent in 1048, and many of the class, including *Arrival Vengeance*, were transferred to auxiliary duty as tankers and cargo carriers from 1048 onward.

She was one of 28 of the class selected for refitting as Frontier Cruisers. She was withdrawn from auxiliary duty and her conversion begun on 003-1092. She returned to front-line service on 360-1092, making her the last of the class to be modified, and for that reason, leaving her in arguably the best condition of any ship in the class.

A veteran of both the Fourth and Fifth Frontier Wars (1082-1084 and 1107-1110 respectively), *Vengeance* served with distinction among the auxiliary forces in the Fourth, and with the first-line forces of CruRon 501 in the Fifth Frontier War, present at the Battle of Rhylanor. At the end of hostilities in 1110, the cruiser was assigned lesser duties and then mothballed at the Trin Inactive Ships Facility in 1114 (along with the Marches' four other remaining *Lightnings*).

Arrival Vengeance was scheduled to re-enter service in 1125 with the Aslan crewed Patrol or *Trekhyair*, but by means of a highly compartmented "Eyes Only" program, *Arrival Vengeance* was secretly refurbished and prepared for her mission to the Imperium.

Ship's Crest

Like many ships of the Imperial Navy, *Arrival Vengeance* has gone

through many versions of her crest over the years, reflecting her accomplishments, awards, and honors. This current version is the fifth version of the crest, and is newly authorized for this mission.

It is typical for ships of the Imperial Navy to adopt the crest of the previous ship bearing the same name, but this was not possible for most of the vessels of the *Azhanti High Lightning*-class, which is still remembered in the navy as the most comprehensive collection of Byzantine names devised by the Ship Names Board. Thus, most of the members of this class had no earlier patches to adopt. Most of the class received standardized crests from the Imperial Navy Office of Heraldry (INOH) that consisted of a front perspective view of the ship coming out of a horizontal shield. Superimposed on this was the ship's name and hull number. This was the first version of *Arrival Vengeance's* crest.

The second version came in 1012 when ISS *Vengeance* of the class was transferred to the Darrian Confederation Navy. ISS *Vengeance* was the 17th Imperial vessel to carry this name, and because there was now no ISS *Vengeance* on the Imperial rolls, *Arrival Vengeance's* captain successfully petitioned INOH to adopt *Vengeance's* motto, "Shall not Perish," as *Arrival Vengeance's* own, thus making *Arrival Vengeance* a partial heir to the long tradition of the *Vengeance* name. The addition of this motto scroll created the second version of the ship's crest. Also, from this time on, members of *Arrival Vengeance's* crew began referring to her as *Vengeance* for short, as there was no longer any danger of confusion with the more illustrious member of the class.

The third version of the crest came in 1092 when she re-entered service as a frontier cruiser, and the hull number on her crest was changed from FI-6415 to CF-6415.

The fourth version of the patch came with the 1110 addition of the gold Imperial sunburst on her patch. This is an honor that can only be granted by Sector Dukes and above, in the name of the emperor. The right to bear the Imperial sunburst on the crest in gold (the highest level of this honor) was granted in recognition of her service in the Fifth Frontier War, particularly the Battle of Rhylanor.

The fifth, current, version of her crest dates to her reactivation in 1123 when the Domain of Deneb unicorn symbol was added to the crest on the ship's bow observation dome.



The Vengeance creaks and groans around you much as you imagine the old, wind powered wet navy ships did. It's not that you haven't done plenty of gas giant refueling before, you have. Yet every time the creaking and groaning starts, you're reminded that the Lightnings have a reputation for bursting their seams during such maneuvers. The experts say it works great in simulation. But then again, none of these experts are with you.

Starting Out

As *The Final Odyssey* opens, *Arrival Vengeance* has slipped out of the Trin system and entered Jump without difficulty. Its first stop is the Youghal system where a critical test of *Vengeance's* refitted systems will be conducted.

Action

The *Lightning*-class was designed to refuel by means of gas giant skimming only as a last resort. Instead, the class was meant to be refueled by means of a fuel shuttle (there are four aboard). Unfortunately, the minimum time required to accomplish such a refueling is three days. Under more complex circumstances, such as refueling from an ocean or the loss of a shuttle, it can stretch out even longer. In an attempt to counter this, *Vengeance*, as well as *Bard Refuge*, has had its hull beefed up through the use of new materials and structural members. Since this capability may be crucial to the success of the mission, it will be tested early while the cruiser is still in its home space. This will be the first such test conducted to date. Hence the term "smoke test," an engineering term which means, "plug it in and see if it catches on fire."

The refueling attempt is conducted at Haugial, the only gas giant in the Youghal (3029 Spinward Marches) system, the first stop on *Vengeance's* route. Possible events during this scenario are as follows:

Scenario One: Several PCs are detailed to crew one of *Vengeance's* fuel shuttles which will monitor the skim from a position in formation nearby. Flying the craft through Haugial's violent atmosphere while maintaining visual contact with the cruiser should prove a challenging assignment. Natural hazards include intense radiation, violent electrical storms, static charge build-up and the like.

Scenario Two: A hatch seal in area 15 on Deck 21, a cargo deck, fails during the skim, allowing volatile gasses to enter the ship. The situation must be quickly, and literally, defused before an inadvertent spark causes an explosion.



Scenario Three: Once refueling is complete, an inspection of the hull is undertaken to assess any damage done. This is done by means of fuel shuttle or Rampart fighter and individual EVA. It's during the latter that a PC runs into trouble. A new section of improperly grounded hull has become highly charged after the dive through Haugial's atmosphere. A PC's vacc suit electronics are shorted out when it discharges, leaving the PC without communications or maneuver control. To make matters worse, the PC has lost hold of the ship and is now drifting away into space.

Although the ship's sensors could make an active sweep and pinpoint the drifting body immediately, the energy at such close range of the powerful microwave emitters would surely kill the crewmember. Similarly, until the crewmember is found, bridge officers are reluctant to maneuver the large vessel for fear of also injuring the PC. Therefore the PCs in the cutter must find their EVA companion with a passive sensor search, a difficult task with their equipment.

Scenario Four: Sporadic contact is made at long range with an unidentified vessel. This could be particularly alarming if the detection is made by a handful of PC-manned fighters flying high guard while the cruiser is out of communication with them while skimming. Further analysis of the contact indicates it could be a Zhodani scout ship, although this is far from certain. Further events are up to the PCs.

Referee's Notes

This episode mainly involves physical dangers to *Vengeance* and her crew, and serves as a sort of training period for the PCs to get the feel of *Arrival Vengeance* and how she and her systems work. Other training that could be conducted at this time is fighter tactical coordination and weapons calibration for the cruiser. If PC gunnery crew are assigned to different weapons batteries, the referee might run a ship's competition for high-scoring battery against simulated missile drone targets.

Fortunately the naval architects at Trin have done their job well and no major problems are anticipated. The referee should feel free, though, to insert minor faults throughout the folio. This could include the permanent weakening of the cargo door on deck 21, or difficulties in certain portions of the ship's electrical cabling as a result of the grounding problems. For example, power to certain weapons batteries could routinely fail, requiring the ship to make lengthy field repairs, tearing out entire bulkheads to get at the failed wiring.

Conclusion

The crew breathes a collective sigh of relief as the final inspection and maintenance reports come in. Despite some difficulties, *Arrival Vengeance* has come through the skim much as everyone hoped it would. Minor repairs are being completed and the engineering department plans to keep a weather eye on things, but the senior staff is satisfied, the cruiser's skimming capabilities have been greatly enhanced. Although the use of shuttles remains the preferred method of refueling, gas giant skimming is no longer solely an emergency procedure. *Arrival Vengeance* has passed her first test, and the crew can now turn their attention toward the next stop on their trek.

Hliyh dominates the view through the transparent ceiling on Deck One. The pockmarked, undersized dun colored world conveys no hint of its importance as the headquarters of the "Lord of the New Lords"; the Lakht Aorlakht. A pair of Ramparts make a quick pass as they complete another orbit of Vengeance. The Marine senior NCO acknowledges the comm and calls the deck to order. The crisply dressed Marine honor guard snaps to attention. The spacers present also gather themselves together, if somewhat less smartly. The measured, somber strains of the Imperial Anthem provide the sound track to this first contact as the elevator doors open. Dressed in their ornate robes of office, the Aorlakht diplomatic party enters.

Action

The initial phase of *Vengeance's* mission serves a two-fold purpose. It seeks to avoid the chaos that is Corridor, while at the same time conducting a goodwill mission to the Aslan Hierate. Norris has used both naval force and diplomacy to attempt to contain the Aslan *ihatei*. In its current role, *Vengeance* is primarily concerned with the latter, but the presence of a 60,000-ton warship will no doubt not be lost on the warrior race.

The stop at Hliyh is necessary in order to continue ongoing diplomatic discussions, while also obtaining travelling and reprovisioning rights throughout the Hierate. The Lakht Aorlakht coordinates the settlement of the Hierate's landless sons, or *ihatei*, now called the Aorlakht, "new lords." He enjoys the support of all Aslan settlements in the sector and of the 29 Aslan clans which make up the *Tlaukhu*. The Lakht Aorlakht, through his envoy Reauwais, has the power to grant the rights that *Vengeance* seeks.

The majority of the interaction with Reauwais will take place, by prior arrangement, in the lounge on Deck 1 of *Arrival Ven-*

geance. Among the diplomats and nobles in *Arrival Vengeance's* diplomatic party are those with expertise in Aslan relations. Referees will want to ensure that the PC group is prepared for dealing with Aslan before play in this chapter begins.

If the PCs are inexperienced with playing Aslan, the referee should take the role of an NPC Aslan-expert diplomat who briefs the group on Aslan etiquette before play begins. If some of the players are familiar with Aslan, the referee should see to it that they play diplomats, nobles, or officers who head the human delegation with the Aslan negotiations. It is up to these PCs whether to brief the other PCs on Aslan relations in advance. Possible events in this episode include the following:

Scenario One: One of Reauwais' retinue, Tyear, is an assassin sent by another clan to kill the Envoy (see Appendix 3, NPCs for stats). This incident is not related to *Vengeance's* presence; it is a long-standing conflict between two of the clans whose *ihatei* comprise the Aorlakht. Tyear has spent months infiltrating the diplomat's multiclant staff in order to kill him at a particularly dramatic (i.e., public) moment. By doing so, Tyear creates the great-



est possible audience for the redress of his own clan's honor versus Reauwais' clan, which multiplies the effects of the honor gained and lost. This scenario presents a dilemma for the PCs. PCs that are familiar with Aslan culture know that the Envoy is expected to defend himself without outside help. If the *Arrival Vengeance* crew intervene to prevent the assassin from getting Reauwais, they will irreparably damage Reauwais' honor, who will become unable to represent the Lakht Aorlakh. However, many PCs and members of the honor guard will not know this, because any briefing they received probably did not include the topic of etiquette during an assassination. At the same time, if Reauwais is killed, they will still have no one to negotiate with. A diplomatic incident could end the mission early. Referees would do well to prepare themselves for a mêlée in which members of the Aslan retinue and *Vengeance* officers "in the know" tackle crew members attempting to intervene in the Aslans' duel to the death.

Scenario Two: During the official reception, certain junior members of the envoy's party openly talk disparagingly of the Imperium, the *Fiyiyalr* ("vassals of vassals of one"). They hope to goad the Denebians into a making a miss-step which will bring the reception to a quick end. The junior diplomats hope to show that the Imperials are the dangerous and unstable beings they believe them to be. (A fairly common thought among many younger Aslan these days.) Any PCs that respond properly to these challenges with the Aslan ritual of *Fiyrukhte* (see below) will find that the Aslan are quick to back down from formal challenge, knowing that they are out of line when properly opposed. Simply ignoring the goading will also preserve the Denebian's honor as rising above petty insults. Should tempers get too hot, the envoy and the Domain diplomats will prevent things getting out of hand for the sake of a peaceful visit.

Scenario Three: *Vengeance's* diplomatic staff holds its negotiations with the envoy. The Denebians have come equipped with a list of seven worlds in the Domain willing to accept Aslan ihatei. (Most are underpopulated and will benefit greatly from increased trade with the Hierate and a larger labor pool). The objective of this scenario is to secure the rights sought at the lowest cost. The referee can either establish a set of die rolls, modified by PC and NPC skills, for each side or roleplay the event. Remember that Aslan males have little concept of money or economics. They will likely be more impressed by the amount of land involved than by its true worth. At the referee's discretion, a number of Aslan female observers, all highly placed corporate officers, are present to gently guide the males toward a better deal.

Scenario Four: A party from *Vengeance*, including a number of PCs, are invited to land on Hliyh for an informal tour of the capital city. Events in this scenario consist of seeing an Aslan world first hand. Examples include a ritual duel, a round of storytelling the PCs are invited to participate in, a demonstration by a mercenary unit and the like.

Referee's Notes

The goal of this episode is to provide insight into one of the major races and a powerful neighbor of the Domain of Deneb. The key to success is to deal with the Aslan on their own terms.

Refereeing the Aslan: Refs with access to the *Solomani and Aslan* sourcebook by Digest Group Publications will find a wealth of information on the Aslan. For those who do not, some key points follow.

Aslan males, for the most part, have no conception of money, economics, or administration. These are handled by Aslan females, who essentially run Aslan society while allowing the males to retain the central, most visible positions. Aslan males and females even use a different language and written script, where the female script is precise and technically expressive, and the male script is ornate and expansive. Like most races, the Aslan are cultural imperialists and impose their perceptions onto their neighbors, the Imperial humans. They refer to races who don't understand Aslan culture as, *Tahiwihateakhtau*, "barbarians." The major Aslan motivation is honor, and they are quick to rise to any perceived insult or challenge. These may be responded to by a formal challenge to a duel, which can be to first blood, submission, or the death, as the severity of the dishonor dictates. This honor does work both ways, and they are equally meticulous about repaying debts of gratitude.

Aslan can be quick to treat human behavior based on its unintended meaning in Aslan culture. One example is that an Aslan male will treat a human male in a "female" role, such as a banker or administrative officer, as he would an Aslan female. Aslans unfamiliar with humans (fortunately all of the Aslan in the diplomatic party are familiar with humans) might interpret a human's smile or yawn (both of which show teeth) as a challenge, and challenges, for honor's sake, cannot be ignored. Also, a human, who through misplaced forbearance, refuses an Aslan challenge merely ups the ante of the dishonor just heaped upon the Aslan, and increases the danger of violence. However, it is important to remember that it is a greater Aslan honor to avoid conflict and challenges over misunderstandings and trivialities.

An Aslan ritual to stop conflict short of formal challenge to duel is the *Fiyrukhte*, in which parties exchange insults. Although this does allow either party (usually the one which issued the first insult) to back down, if not handled carefully, it can merely inflame anger and force a formal challenge.

Reauwais and Tyear, the Aslan NPCs, have several skills that referees may not be familiar with. *Dewclaw* is the Aslan equivalent of brawling skill, and refers to the use of the Aslan dewclaw, which extends from its sheath in the palm of the Aslan hand. *Meditation* skill allows the Aslan to perform psionic awareness abilities (with the exception of regeneration) by using the meditation skill level as the psionic strength in awareness. *Independence* is a skill that allows Aslan males to understand the concept of money. *Tolerance* represents an Aslan's ability to put up with human barbarians who do not understand Aslan culture, and to not take offense at unintended slights. Except for Tyear, the entire Aslan diplomatic party has at least Tolerance-1. The referee should use Aslan Tolerance skill as a positive DM for backing down from confrontations with the humans. *Tradition* skill represents an Aslan's mastery of the fine points of Aslan culture, and can be used to persuade or gain advantage in points of honor over other Aslan.

Conclusion

The visit to Hliyh proved to be a success. As a result of *Vengeance's* visit, relations between the Hierate and the Domain were just that much improved. Of course, the groundwork for this encounter had been laid out in advance. *Vengeance's* crew wouldn't have that advantage as it travelled further, but spirits were high as the cruiser plunged onward. Already thoughts were turning to the next major event of the mission; the stop at Warinir.

It's a curious feeling to once again be in Imperial space. Truth be told, it's hard to conceive of anywhere but home, the Domain, as being the Imperium. That's where you grew up and have lived your whole life. Leaving the Domain is a lingering reminder of just how big the empire once was and how drastically the Imperium has changed.

The rounded and calligraphed starships of the Aslan have yielded, although not entirely, to the Solomani and Vilani inspired designs which have plied Daibei for centuries. And there's a new variable in the equation; the sleek, fluid lines of Vegan ships like the one escorting you to Warinir. It's unusual to see Vegan ships here, far from their home in the Solomani Rim. It's even stranger to see them wearing the tricolor of the Federation.

Action

It has taken *Arrival Vengeance* over a year to reach Daibei, gateway to the Old Imperium. Here the PCs will begin their mission in earnest. For the last several weeks the cruiser has been passing through the outskirts of the Federation of Daibei. Along the way the PCs will have had some contact, if only by radio, with other ships and worlds. Although pitted against the largest interstellar human government remaining, the Solomani Confederation, and now facing incursions by Aslan raiders, Daibei continues to achieve its goal of survival.

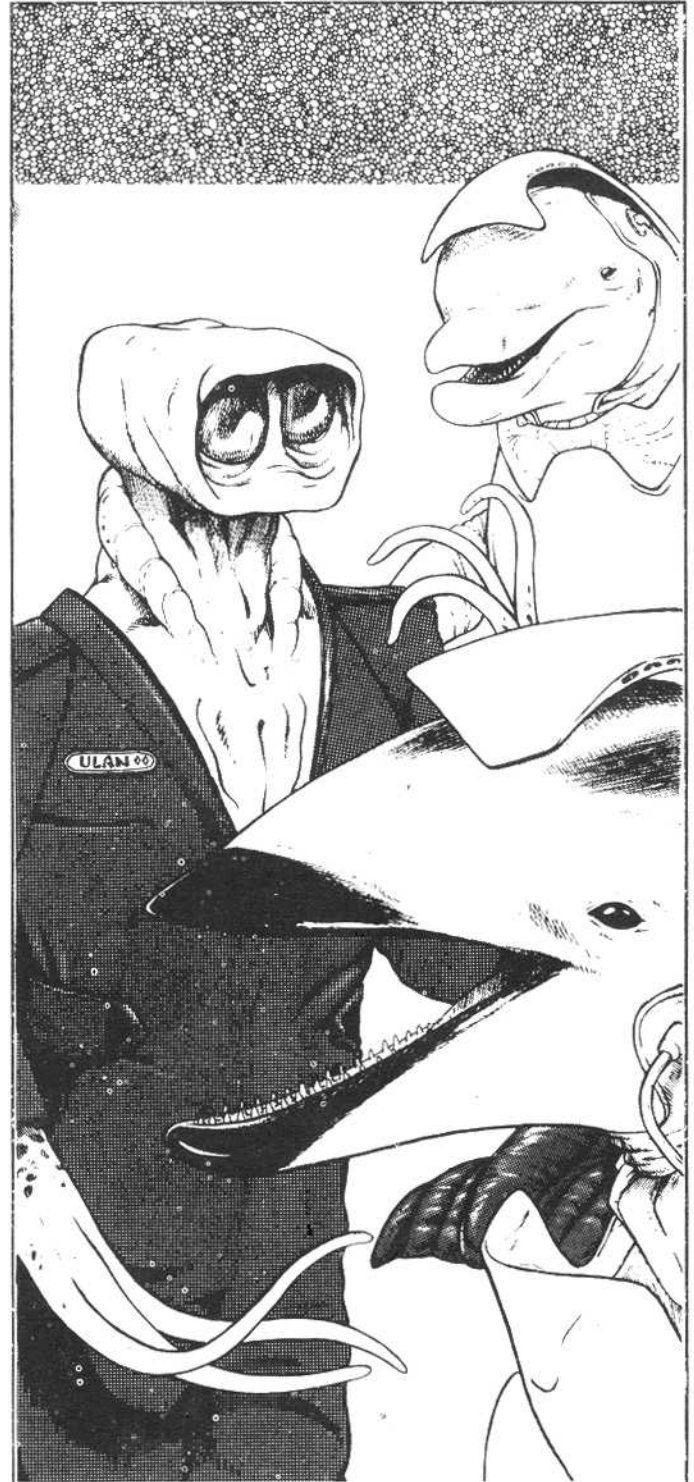
Atmosphere: Most of the populace is aware of the presence of *Arrival Vengeance* in orbit, and of where she is from. They are thrilled at the novelty of visitors from a portion of the Imperium that had been cut off, and are eager for news from beyond their sphere of information. PCs on shore leave find that most everyone recognizes the unicorn insignia on their uniforms, and are quick to besiege them with questions, hoping that the PCs, as emissaries from Deneb, know more about the state of the Rebellion and Imperium than they do. The PCs, of course, feel just the same way, and can only exchange one local perception for another.

The PCs may offer whatever news they like, and in return will hear variations on the following. Since declaring its independence in late 1118, Daibei has found itself aligned with Dulinor and Margaret in opposition to Lucan. However, the conflict between Lucan and Daibei has been primarily verbal. The possibility of getting an ally on the other side of Dulinor is attractive enough to Lucan that he has avoided antagonizing Daibei too badly. Daibei's relations with Dulinor are similarly stiff and cool; Daibei seceded from the Domain of Illelish as surely as it seceded from Lucan's Imperium. Like Lucan, Dulinor can ill-afford to alienate a potential source of support.

Daibei's main enemy is the Solomani, who see Daibei as historically their territory. Fighting with the Solomani has been particularly bitter, but has tailed off of late, no one in Daibei really knows why. Most conversation about the Solomani will refer with disgust to their racist policies, and express sympathy for all of the Vegans who have been driven from their homes in the Solomani Rim.

So far, the spinward frontier (the Reaver's Deep) with the Aslan appears to be secure, and Craig is on very good relations with the Yerlyaruiwo clan. Indeed, a reinforced brigade of Yerlyaruiwo drop troops serve with Craig's forces along the Solomani frontier.

Although the details of circumstances and current events differ, the PCs will find that the attitude of the people of Daibei reminds them of Deneb. Part of this is because both Deneb and Daibei are threatened by expansion on several sides. It might also occur to some of the PCs that the familiar attitude is the faith and affection the population has for their leader, Duke Craig, which is similar to



the prevailing attitude in Deneb for Norris. Among the descriptions of Craig they might be given are that he is steady, trustworthy, temperate, and that he puts his people first.

No matter where they go, the PCs will find it hard to leave: people will insist on buying the PCs one more round of drinks before they go, etc. Scenarios in this episode include:

Scenario One: Daibei has come to champion the Vegans in their fight to keep their homeworlds safe from the Solomani invaders. Unfortunately things have not been going well and hundreds of thousands of Vegans have immigrated to Daibei. They are an increasingly common sight here on the capital world of the Federation. Many have entered Federation service as a way to pay back their new home (information on the Vegans can be found in the *Imperial Encyclopedia*).

The PCs' chance to meet one such young Vegan is while passing through Warinir's ground port. Lt. Ulan, a naval intelligence officer, is talking to a number of dolphins in travel suits as the PCs arrive in the same waiting area. (Travel suits are self-contained, grav-powered superhumid environments). Noticing Norris' unicorn insignia on the PCs' uniforms, he engages the group in conversation. Ulan is as curious about the Denebians as they are likely to be about the Vegans, a race the PCs have probably never encountered before. The lieutenant refers to the dolphins as members of a cultural exchange, but in reality they are dissidents fed up with racist Solomani policies. Dolphin society places a great deal of emphasis on equality, thus they see themselves as the equals of any other intelligent race. Despite the implied debt owed to the Solomani for uplifting them to sentience, these dolphins refuse to be treated as second, or lower, class citizens.

The dolphin party has just concluded talks with the Vegans on forming a covert alliance to combat the racists in the Solomani Rim. Just how much of this the PCs pick up on is up to the referee, although the sight of an Intelligence officer with the dolphins is certainly out of the ordinary. Another give-away is that the lead dolphin is quite vocal in his opinions regarding the Solomani (for details on dolphins, see referee's notes, below).

Scenario Two: *Vengeance's* senior officers and diplomatic staff are invited to present themselves to the nobles who rule Daibei. Duke Craig presides over the meeting (having recovered from the assassination attempt if that scenario was played).

Craig is a quiet and composed individual seemingly unsuited for the historic role he has played. Yet the true force of his personality comes out as soon as he speaks and presents his ideas. There's a quiet power to the man and a true sense that he feels personally responsible for his people. The nobles assembled will listen to the PCs and even deliberate for several days over the wisdom of Norris' proposals. The PCs receive Craig's answer just before *Vengeance's* scheduled departure.

The PCs' first priority in this scenario is to test the waters with regard to an alliance. Failing that they are to attempt to define the terms of some enduring diplomatic relationship with the Federation.

Scenario Three: When word of *Vengeance* and her mission reached the population of Warinir, most were delighted at the idea of contact. However, students at the University of Warinir, mistakenly concerned that Norris' intent is to lay claim to Daibei, have organized a demonstration to "fight reunification." After all, isn't the archduke nothing more than just another factional leader? The leader of Daibei, Duke Craig, has maintained close relations to the academic community on Warinir, and maintains a quite approachable personal style. Therefore, he decides to personally appear at the demonstration to allay the students' fears. The gathering in one of the student union buildings (see map, page 11) is calm and orderly.

The PCs, who are asked by the Duke to accompany him to help answer questions, spot a figure aiming what looks to be an oversized flashlight at Craig. In reality it's a disguised, one-shot laser carbine (A search for obvious weapons was conducted on all who entered the room). The figure is John Blain, a Solomani security agent aligned with hard-line elements of the Solomani government. He has been sent to dispatch Duke Craig in hopes of breaking Daibei's will to fight. The PCs find themselves in an excellent position to capture, or at least aid in the capture, of Blain. Blain also has an auto pistol in his possession with which to defend himself and hopefully effect his escape.

Fortunately for Daibei, the nature of Blain's disguised weapon causes it to be rather inaccurate unless great care is taken in aiming. It falls to the PCs to ensure that the Solomani's aim is thrown off.

Scenario Four: At Duke Craig's request, Professor Ililek Kuligaan, formerly chairman of the Department of Imperial History at Dian University, meets with the PCs. Seldrian Aledon goes along as well. Kuligaan is fleeing an arrest warrant signed by Dulinor for his impolitic remarks concerning the Rebellion. Simply put, the professor is outraged by the wanton destruction of the Rebellion and the Black War that followed. He not only believes that a reunified Imperium is impossible, but morally reprehensible. Kuligaan asserts that to reunify would exonerate those in power of the death of billions of innocents. Many of the nobles in Daibei concur with his analysis, including Craig.

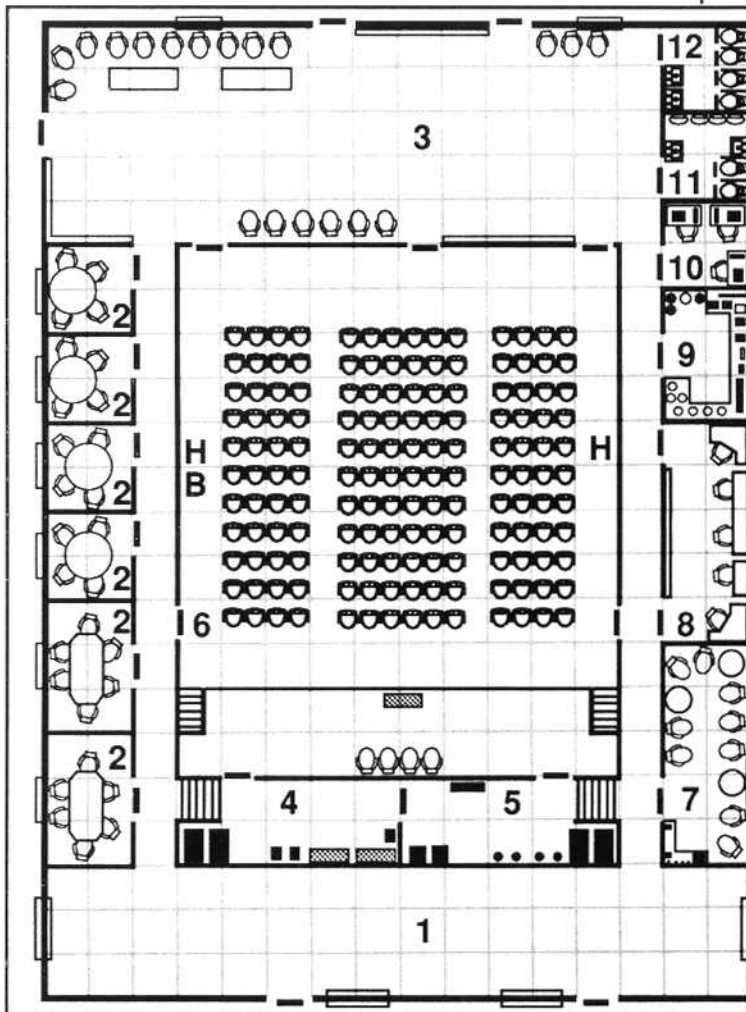
It is at Warinir that the PCs first hear of the suicidal final battles of the Rebellion, where the sole aim was to destroy worlds and people for the sake of denying them to other factions. As to Dulinor, the professor has little but contempt personally for the man who started the Second Civil War and initiated his own Black War strikes. In this respect, Kuligaan and the nobility of Daibei hold the same opinions as Norris. The professor considers the recently signed nonaggression pact with Dulinor to be little more than a codification of a fact of life; very little moves in the dark places between the factions. Due to Norris' views on Dulinor, Illeish is not on *Vengeance's* itinerary.

Referee's Notes

The visit to Warinir serves as a useful introduction to the Rebellion factions in the Hard Times era. Daibei, in many ways, is not unlike Deneb. Both seek security for their worlds and people on their own terms. Both are led by popular and dedicated nobles at a time when the nobility has all but failed the Imperium by putting their interests ahead of the realm's. Lastly, Daibei serves as a counterpoint to the factions *Vengeance* will later encounter.

Refereeing the Leaders of Daibei: These are all universally enthusiastic about opening diplomatic relations with Deneb, although there is some doubt about the ability to keep these channels open, given the fact that the two groups are separated by the Great Rift, Aslan Hierate, and Dulinor's stronghold. On the subject of alliance, some of the sector's leaders are interested, but most realize that again, the mere astrographic facts would make such an alliance meaningful in name only.

On the issue of creating the alliance for the political purpose of maintaining the concept of the Third Imperium, however, there is no interest. Without the power to give an overarching alliance anything but symbolic meaning, it is ultimately a wasteful exercise, and distracts attention from immediate, pressing issues. Duke Craig is tempted by the thought of ties with Deneb, but he realizes that the security of Daibei rests solely with the people of the Federation. As tempting as it may be, he believes the reunification of the Imperium is but a fond dream.



University Auditorium

□ = 1.5 meters

1. Exhibition area
2. Meeting room
3. Main lobby
4. Storage and auditorium utility area
5. Storage
6. Auditorium with raised (1.5m high) stage and podium
7. Waiting room/lounge
8. Broadcast/beamcast facility
9. Building utility closet
10. Public comms
- 11 and 12. Bathrooms
- H Holocamera positions
- B Blain's position
- Door
- Window

Duke Craig Anton Horvath of Dalbel

544DBF, Age 62 (in 1125), 11 terms.

Vacc Suit-1, Navigation-1, Engineering-1, Electronics-3, Ship Tactics-2, Computer-3, Liaison-3, Fleet Tactics-3, Admin-2, Persuasion-1, Leader-1, Instruction-1, Handgun-1, History-1.



Certainly one of the most quietly brilliant men in the Imperium, Craig was a completely unknown quantity to his people when the news of Strepson's assassination arrived in late 1116. A career Imperial Naval officer, Craig had selected the navy's technical branch, and had never once held a command, and never once been decorated. However, retiring as a Fleet Admiral to his fief on Warinir, he brought with him a tremendous lifetime of training in leadership and

organization, proving again the old wisdom, "there is no more fitting preparation for a king than to have been trained in the navy." Since 1118 when he headed the *de facto* secession from the Imperium, he has expertly held off the incursions of the Solomani—the largest remaining human war machine. This he has also done without attracting attention to himself, another skill he learned in the politically charged Imperial Navy.

He is soft-spoken and thoughtful, and encourages others to present their ideas first, so his rank doesn't cut off further discussion of issues.

Professor Ililek Kullgaan

676BB9, Age 54 (in 1125), 9 terms.

History-2, Admin-2, Liaison-2, Interrogation-3, Handgun-2, Computer-2, Persuasion-2, Grav Vehicle-1, Linguistics-1, Forensic-1, Jack-Of-All-Trades-1.

Kuligaan served for years as the the Head of the History Department at the University of Dian. Historically, this post has served as a *de facto* advisor to the Duke of Illeish, whose current holder, Dulinor, became the Archduke of the Domain of Illeish in 1104. Therefore, his public break with Dulinor on 212-1123 was predictably ill-regarded by Dulinor, who is seeking Kuligaan's arrest. This break was clearly planned in advance of the public remarks, as Kuligaan's family was already off-world, and he left the world immediately following the address. Kuligaan is married with grown children, but he will not speak of them, knowing that their safety depends on their lack of notariety.

Kuligaan is bitter and passionate, and his expression of these passions can be sharp-tongued and sarcastic (see **TNS** entries in **Challenge** 58, 59, 64, and 66 for examples). His one burning cause is the education of the Imperial citizenry of the excesses of the



Rebellion, so that the political and social sources of the inexcusable slaughter can be eradicated forever. He firmly believes that the structure of the Third Imperium itself was the cause, and opposes any attempt to rebuild or romanticize it. Any new government, he believes, will have to be built from scratch without the hidden, fatal, genocidal flaws of the Imperium.

Dolphins: During the last years of the Rule of Man, Solomani geneticists of the GenAssist Sophontology program succeeded in genetically modifying true intelligence into the bottlenose dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*, with the new form described as the subspecies *Tursiops truncatus galactus*. This is the race of dolphins most familiar to humans, and are seen not uncommonly travelling in their T- (travel) suits. These mobile, grav-powered environment suits contain computers and heads-up displays, and are equipped with waldos, or mechanical arms. These waldos are used at a -4 Dexterity penalty at Tech Level 9, -2 at TL 12, -1 at TL 13, and no penalty at TL 14+.

When rolling up dolphin PCs or NPCs, apply a +2 DM to Strength and Endurance characteristics, and a -4 to Social Standing. There is a -2 DM to enlisting in the Army, Marines, Navy, Flyers, and Law Enforcers, a -1 DM for enlisting as Bureaucrats or Rogues, and cannot enlist as Barbarians, Merchants, Nobles, or Pirates. Dolphins may not receive skills in Bribery, Broker, Equestrian, Gambling, Legal and Trader, as they have no concept of money, sharing all of their possessions communally. Skills available only to dolphins are Waldo Operations (taken in place of +1 Dexterity), Travel Suit (taken in place of Vacc Suit or Vehicle), and Underwater Combat (in place of Brawling).

Two other less well-known intelligent relatives of the dolphin are other products of Solomani genengineering: the Orcas, (*Orcinus*

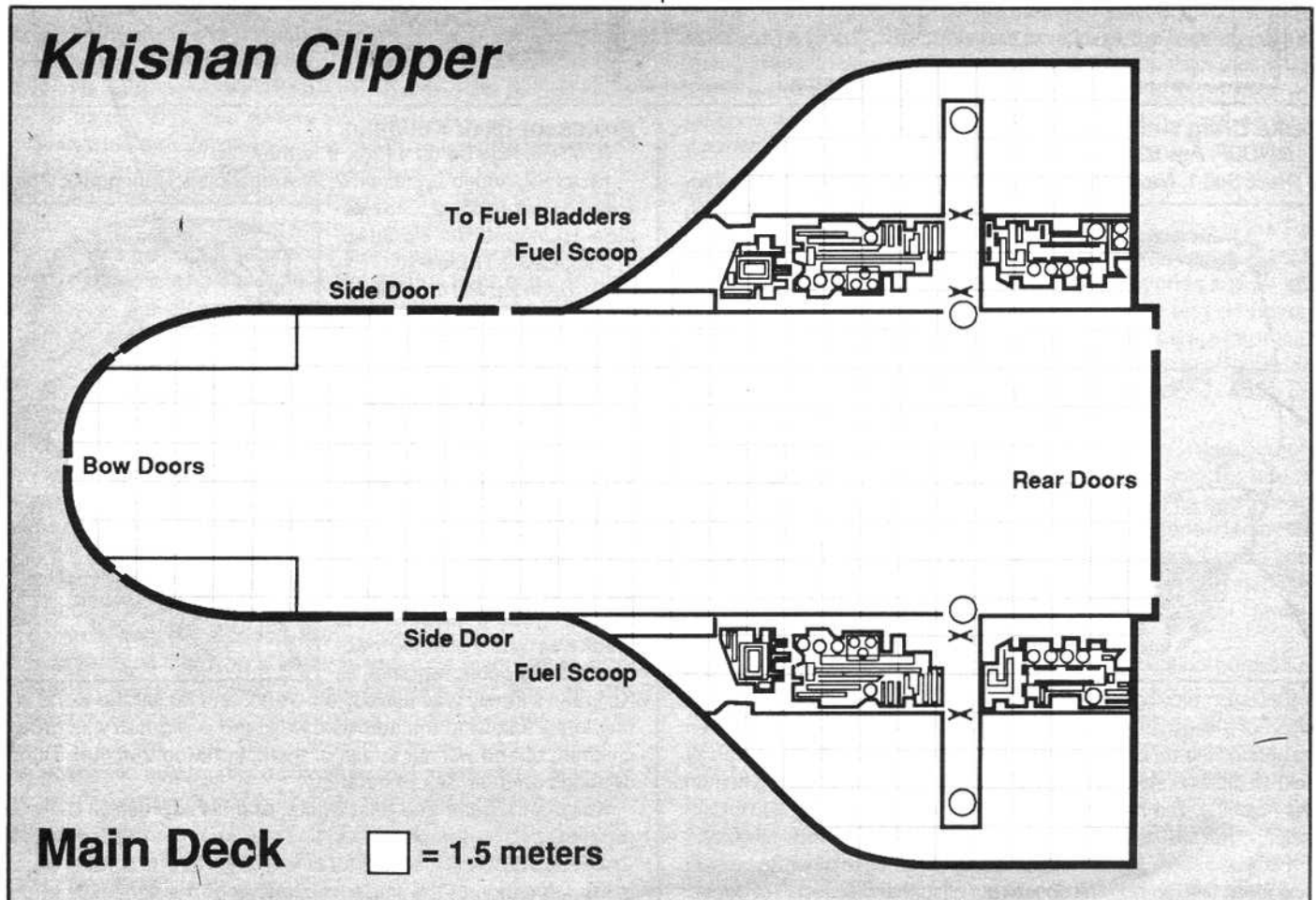
orca sapiens) a terminated branch of the original GenAssist cetacean program which currently live only on Sufren (2004 Diaspora), and the whiteside dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens galactus*). These latter are not as well known as their larger bottlenose cousins. This race is much younger, resulting from work completed shortly before the Solomani Rim War. The intention was to create a race of dolphins smaller and more easily transportable than the bottlenose species, and was based on the Pacific Whiteside Dolphin. These dolphins reach a length of 2.1 to 2.4 meters and mass up to 150 kg, in contrast to the three- to four-meter, 200-400 kg bottlenoses. Because of their smaller size, they have only a +1 DM to Strength, but otherwise are treated like the more common *Tursiops truncatus galactus*. The two dolphin races are natural and enthusiastic allies of each other.

Library Data: Warinir (0517 Daibei) A889978-F

Diameter: 13,280 km; Density: 0.98; Mass: 0.98; Gravity: 0.98; Orbital Period: 376.7 days; Rotation Period: 13 hrs, 26 mins.; Atmospheric Density: 1.5 (nitrogen/oxygen mix); Hydrographic Percentage: 89% (water); Base Temperature: 12 degrees C; Native life present.

Conclusion

Although marred by violence and perhaps not as successful as many would have liked, the visit to Warinir opened a dialog with a surviving remnant of the Third Imperium. Although Norris knew there was little chance of the Federation agreeing to an alliance, the issue of reunification demanded that the question be asked. The *Vengeance* crew still had to try. In the end, Daibei seemed to have already chosen to chart its own course into the future. Perhaps *Vengeance* would succeed with the next faction it planned to contact; Margaret's Domain.



The approach to Anzius brings you in above the gas giant's system of moons and rings. Not far "below" is a gnarled piece of rock, a former traveller of interstellar space captured by the planet's immense gravity. One of the rings is visible ahead as a thin opalescent band floating above the ruddy rippling jet streams of Anzius' atmosphere. It's a routine approach until commo signals an incoming message. "Unidentified ship! Signal GK! SOS! We are being pursued by pirates. Can you assist?"

Action

During a routine gas giant refueling in the Veny (2211 Massilia) system, *Vengeance* receives a distress call from a lone merchant vessel. The ship in trouble is the subsidized merchant *Khishan Clipper*, which is owned by Keratu Lines (a local subsidiary of the former megacorporation Tukera Lines). Captain Notoro of the *Clipper* erroneously assumed that *Vengeance* was a warship of Margaret's fleet, otherwise he wouldn't have called attention to himself here in the lawless Outlands of Massilia. The *Clipper* needs to refuel at Anzius before it can continue. Possible scenarios in this episode include:

Scenario One: *Vengeance* and the *Clipper* rendezvous above Anzius. The "pirates" in pursuit are still a number of hours away and slow once they detect the cruiser, but do not stop or flee. Notoro describes his cargo as refugees being transported to Margaret's Stronghold. The PCs should, in keeping with the current Hard Times, inspect the Keratu vessel to verify the captain's story.

What the PCs find is a cargo deck (see deckplan, page 12) packed with men, women, children and a few minor aliens. They are clearly travelling in steerage conditions; sleeping on the deck plates, eating food they brought with them, packed into the hold, shoulder to shoulder and possessing few personal effects. They quickly confirm Notoro's story. The captain then requests that *Vengeance* fire on the approaching pirates before they can come too close. If the PCs think about it they'll realize that if the approaching ships are pirate vessels, they should have fled at the sight of the cruiser. Instead they're still approaching.

Scenario Two: Before the approaching ships close on Anzius, *Vengeance* receives an IFF squawk from the Type C mercenary cruiser *Kukri*. This identifies the ship as belonging to a licensed starmerc company; Burning Falcon Enterprises. Accompanying *Kukri* is a Type S scout, *Valiant Dream*, registered to the same starmerc band. Commander Guaarin, the starmerc leader, hails *Vengeance* requesting a parley. The PCs are to dispatch a ship's boat to meet one of *Kukri*'s cutters midway between the two groups. Captain Notoro warns the PCs that all too many starmerc bands have turned pirate.

The meeting follows what has become standard procedure for a Hard Times encounter. Hostages are exchanged after the two craft link up via a flexible boarding tube. Once satisfied that no threat to either side exists, Guaarin begins the meeting. Burning Falcon seeks to eliminate a thriving slave trade in the region. Guaarin claims that the *Clipper* is a slave ship operating with the full knowledge and support of its parent company. (By extension, Tukera condones Keratu's actions. Note that Tukera is owned by Margaret's husband Blaine.) The starmercs goal is to transfer the "refugees" aboard the *Clipper* to a safe port where they can resettle.

During the encounter, Guaarin's people are contemptuous of the PCs, as the Denebians haven't faced the rigors of the Rebellion and Hard Times. The starmercs don't consider Vargr and Aslan incursions, or even the Fifth Frontier War, to be on par with what they've experienced. They do give the PCs some respect because they are part of a navy and a government which still respects the rule of law. The referee should let the PCs see that the mercs in

no way act like pirates. For example, they follow military discipline, smartly salute their officers, and wear proudly maintained, though not lavish, uniforms.

Scenario Three: Having heard Guaarin's side of the story, Notoro makes a crucial admission. In return for being evacuated from the Wilds and Outlands of Massilia, the refugees have signed long-term labor contracts with Kumish Technologies, LIC in Delphi sector (the megacorporation Hortelez et Cie holds a majority of this company's stock). If the PCs don't think of it themselves, Guaarin or Seldrian can tell them that such contracts often turn into a lifetime of indentured servitude, especially in these dark times. Notoro asserts that the refugees are being given a life where they had none and that the contracts are legal. Commander Guaarin calls it inhuman to prey upon poor unfortunates who are desperate just to find food and shelter. The PCs stand at a seeming impasse.

Scenario Four: Notoro refuses to relinquish his "passengers" and Guaarin stands ready to take the *Clipper* by force. He'd prefer not to risk the refugees, but if pressed, the starmercs may take that chance. The only variable in the equation is *Vengeance*. She can stop either or both parties and it's up to the PCs to decide how to proceed.

If the PCs can't come to a decision, Seldrian will recommend consulting the refugees. Surprisingly, they agree to go with the *Clipper*. After what they've been through, they'll take the sure bet of starting over from scratch somewhere else, rather than running the risk of piracy and starvation back where they came from. Guaarin will acquiesce in this case, although not happily, bowing to the will of the people he seeks to help. This episode will certainly not keep Burning Falcon from attempting such missions in the future.

Referee's Notes

This episode shows that despite the disintegration of the Imperium, there are individuals who still believe in what's right. In the Wilds and Outlands, quite often the only law and the only force holding off another Long Night are the starmercs. Starmercs were once protectors of interstellar shipping licensed by the Imperium. Hard Times starmercs are the remnants of those former companies, survivors of factional fleets or even just individuals with the right skills and the will to serve. They continue to protect the fragile links of trade which keep civilization from crashing down altogether.

Although all starmercs need capital to survive, there are more than a few bands willing to take on "pro bono" work when able. Burning Falcon, which once served Dulinor in Zarushagar, has been successful enough in protecting local shipping that it can afford to make regular sweeps for slave ships.

Conclusion

The encounter with the Burning Falcon mercs showed that there were people willing to step in where the Imperium's successors failed to do so. They may not have won this round, but it's a sure bet that they won't stop trying. In an era where the term "acceptable losses" is casually thrown about, even by its victims, the emissaries of Deneb were much heartened that such keepers of the flame of civilization remained.

You haven't seen this kind of space traffic since leaving Daibei four months ago. Here inside Margaret's Domain, the trains apparently run on time. Traffic control is well managed, customs and security craft are on station and there's not one, but two, emergency channels with which to summon assistance. It's a sharp contrast to the Outlands and Wilds you've been passing through where the only law is the starmercs and there is no chatter on the comm channels.

The noble naval officer who is your liaison and harbor pilot stands behind the con providing approach instructions. The great arcologies of Zukhimie can be seen from space through the meager atmosphere. The officer points to the simulated view in the holotank, indicating what appears to be a cruise ship surrounded by smaller naval vessels. "You're quite fortunate to be at Zukhimie at this time. It's not often that Her Highness leaves Anaxias."

Action

Margaret is currently on a tour of her realm and her presence at Zukhimie saves *Vengeance* a trip to Anaxias, capital of Margaret's Domain (Margaret's government began referring to her area of control as her "Domain" in 1125, in effect giving her an unofficial and largely irrelevant promotion to Archduchess). The Duchess has something of an "ivory tower" mentality and is uncomfortable when away from her capital. The tour is a result of her personal advisors' perception that the Duchess needs to get out among the people and be seen, even if she is disinclined to do so.

Zukhimie is technically in the Outlands of Margaret's territory, yet it displays an affluence out of proportion with its location. Part of this may be the fact that it's a high population world with an abundance of cheap labor, but it also indicates the Duchess' abilities as an economic leader. It should be evident, at least on the surface, to the PCs that things do work here in Margaret's Stronghold. The scenarios which make up this episode are as follows:

Scenario One: Upon learning of *Vengeance's* arrival, Margaret orders a lavish state reception to be held at the noble residence she is occupying while in Zukhimie's capital city arcology. PCs who are senior naval officers, nobles and/or diplomats will fare the best as they garner the majority of the Duchess' attention. She is certainly polite to all she encounters, but her preference is clearly for those higher in the social strata. Margaret's main topic of conversation is the economic state of the Domain, under her guidance. Discussions of military matters leave her cold.

At some point during the evening the subject of the encounter with the *Khishan Clipper* will come up. (If necessary, the referee can have Seldrian or a member of the Duchess' staff mention it.) Margaret comments that she considers it important to help those adversely affected by the Hard Times. Should someone press the point and emphasize how the refugees are being helped into a life of indentured servitude, the Duchess looks somewhat blank before responding. She then says something to the effect that "those who don't work can hardly expect to eat. After all, they have to contribute something to the economy." Ibrihim Chu, a representative of a Zukhimite nation-state, goes ballistic at this comment and harangues the Duchess on her "gross insensitivity." He is quietly asked to leave by Margaret's bodyguard (and forcibly ejected if he fails to do so). Further events are at the referee's discretion, although Margaret does not seem to be bothered that Chu was removed. In fact, she seems relieved that the cause of the disharmony was eliminated. She will not mention the *Khishan Clipper* issue again.

Scenario Two: An orderly demonstration takes place in the plaza outside Margaret's temporary residence (it would have to be orderly, as security is out in force). All of those present are veterans possessing cybernetic limbs and organs. They are protesting the Duchess' continued inaction in securing better conditions for those of them who have fought in the Rebellion and the Black War. Many appear in uniform and several are highly decorated. They have sent a small delegation into Margaret's residence



to request that she briefly appear to confer with the veterans. Margaret declines to address, or even acknowledge, the demonstrators, as she has other appointments. The PCs, who *do* have an appointment with the Duchess, arrive just as things turn ugly. The mob is ordered to disperse, but soon a fight breaks out. The PCs are caught in a wide-open melee which security attempts to put down through the use of anti-riot gas and nightsticks.

The demonstration garners only minor media coverage and a Margaret staffer later allows that social issues are perhaps not given as much attention as they deserve.

Scenario Three: *Vengeance's* diplomats get their chance to deliver Norris' letter and make their pitch to Margaret, and a series of pre-meetings are held in anticipation of a formal presentation. While in the residence's garden chamber, the PCs chance upon the Duchess and two children who look to be about five years old. Margaret introduces the twins as her daughter Julia and son Paulo. It should be something of a shock when Margaret points out that Julia is technically the daughter of the late Emperor Strephon as well by means of artificial insemination (the children were mentioned previously, but the connection to Strephon wasn't). Margaret announces her intention to act as regent for Julia until such time as her daughter can be crowned Empress of the Imperium. She also claims the full support of IRIS, the Imperial Regency for Intelligence and Security.

IRIS, the PCs may have heard, claims the right to confirm the credentials of those in the line of Imperial succession. In 1122, IRIS announced that it had suspended the confirmation of Lucan as emperor, because of the circumstances surrounding the death of his older brother Varian. In Lucan's place, they maintain that Margaret is the best qualified successor to the Iridium Throne. They have similarly rejected the claim of the man claiming to be Strephon, because he refused to submit to an IRIS investigation.

Although by law it lacks the power to enforce its declarations, there is a strong IRIS presence among the Duchess' bodyguard and staff. If the PCs are particularly astute, they'll also have noticed they've been under almost constant surveillance by IRIS since their arrival. This could complicate matters should the PCs wish to talk to someone like Ibrhim Chu from Scenario One.

Scenario Four: The formal presentation by *Vengeance's* diplomats is attended by Margaret, members of her staff and several other notable observers. Many are megacorporate officers of Horteletz et Cie and of course Tukera, who are readily identifiable from their presence at the reception. Representatives of IRIS are also on hand. Bolstered by IRIS' claim that she is the most qualified noble to succeed to the Iridium Throne, Margaret seems less intent on establishing an alliance with Deneb than she is in asserting her authority over it. Given the vast distance to the Domain, she's hardly in a position to press the issue. The senior IRIS representative also appears committed to having the PCs acknowledging Margaret's status, even if only verbally. The *Arrival Vengeance* diplomatic mission is not authorized to do any such thing, but can agree to present Margaret's position upon arriving home.

Referee's Notes

There's no denying that Margaret has done much to insure the safety and prosperity of her realm. Unfortunately, her views of what it is to be a noble and her role in history set her apart from certain segments of the population. She is an able leader but lacks an element of understanding when it comes to the average citizen (unlike Norris or Craig of Daibei). The amount of influence such groups as Horteletz, Tukera and IRIS have over her is cause for further concern.

Refereeing Margaret and her Advisors: If the PCs had expected a mere duchess to defer to the emissaries of a full arch-

duke, they are in for a surprise. Because *Vengeance* has come to see *her* and not vice versa, she regards Norris' delegation as supplicants, and continues to refer to potential accommodations with Deneb in which Norris would be one of her most trusted advisors, and first among her archdukes. In preliminary meetings at which Margaret is not present, her political officers are intently focussed on which heir to the Iridium Throne Norris supports, or supports unofficially, or would support among certain choices, or might be convinced to support given certain assurances. It should become clear to the PCs that any alliance between Margaret and Deneb will be contingent on Norris making some kind of endorsement of Margaret's or Julia's legitimacy. However, if the PCs refer to this apparent *quid pro quo*, Margaret's advisors will all deny that it is any kind of condition.

Similarly, the megacorporate officers in Margaret's retinue will delve into the organizational status of Deneb's industries. Has Norris nationalized any companies yet? Have the megacorporate fragments been sold off or reorganized, or are they still setting aside or investing funds owed to the megacorp owners?

Duchess Margaret Tukera of Delphi

597ADF, Age 44 (in 1125), 6 1/2 terms.

Admin-3, Leader-2, History-2, Linguistics-1, Computer-1, Interview-1, Guard/Hunting Beasts-1.

Margaret has been the favorite of the survivors of the 1116 Imperial Moot for some time now. However, as this body was dissolved by Lucan's order in 1116, it has had no formal opportunity to voice its preference. A large number of the anti-Lucan nobles of the pre-Rebellion Moot have fled to Margaret's Stronghold, where they still meet regularly as Margaret's advisors. These have all long since been stripped of their lands and titles by Lucan, and are popularly known as the "Moot Moot."



Margaret, as the great-granddaughter of Emperor Gavin (946-1031) is a first cousin (once removed) of Strephon. Because she is married to Count Blaine Trulla Tukera (of the Tukera Lines megacorporation Tukeras), she has had a unique opportunity to combine political and economic methods in preserving and strengthening her faction. However, she has been criticized as having an inadequate grasp of social and cultural issues, and a tendency to see her subjects as components of an economic equations rather than as people.

Library Data: Zukhimie (0313 Delphi) A427979-B

Diameter: 6,080 km; Density: 0.98; Mass: .123; Gravity: 0.492; Orbital Period: 4.1 years; Rotation Period: 37 hrs; 14 mins.; Atmospheric Density: 0.10 (industrial pollutants); Hydrographic Percentage: 66% (tainted water); Base Temperature: 30 degrees C.

Conclusion

Many gave Margaret little chance of surviving the Second Civil War, but she eventually proved her critics wrong. It was thought that military might and not economic acumen would carry the day. What the *Vengeance* crew found at Zykhimie was an empire which worked, although in different ways from their own. Different or not, Margaret had proven herself a survivor. It was time for *Vengeance* to set course for Lucan's Imperium.

Sensors confirm that the light cruiser hanging over Cadion is of the Geonetti class, but there's no evidence of an active transponder or, for that matter, any power at all. There are also indications that the thin ring of debris around the planet is all that remains of Cadion's orbital port. The ship's scopes show a shattered navy base hosting a limited number of small ships, none above 400 tons. There seems to be little to threaten Arrival Vengeance here. It's as likely a place as any to make contact with Lucan's Imperium.

Action

No one expects *Arrival Vengeance* to go to the heart of Lucan's Imperium, knock at the front door and ask to have a chat with the emperor. Lucan's mercurial and deadly reputation precedes him to say the least. Thus it falls to the PCs to seek out a likely world on which to take the pulse of his empire. Cadion, an average world with a small population on the Frontier, has been selected as that world.

Cadion was an "incidental" target for an Illeish Black War task force which passed through the system in 1122. This means Cadion was only moderately damaged instead of glassed over by nuclear warheads. The orbital port, most of the navy base, and several population centers were targeted for tactical strikes. Many died and Lucan's Imperium lost most of its military capabilities on a planet where the navy was the planet.

Today, Cadion Navy Base is a shell of its former self. It is a forward facility devoted to providing fuel and logistical support to what remains of Lucan's Fleet. And it has a unique set of problems all its own.

Scenario One: Captain Gustav Irunu, the commanding officer of Cadion Base, invites *Vengeance* into orbit and its crew down to the planet. Standard naval courtesy calls for *Arrival Vengeance's* senior officers to pay a courtesy call on the base commander.

The PCs that attend this call find that Irunu is a former crack-jack fighting captain who, through a political *faux pas*, found himself permanently assigned to a ground command. He is a gifted tactician, but a poor administrator and is smart enough to know not to antagonize a fully functional cruiser. Besides, he finds the Denebians' presence somewhat farcical given the current situation on Cadion. Irunu pours all of the *Vengeance* officers a drink, and clearly expects them all to sit down and shoot the breeze with him.

While they enjoy their drinks, the conversation will continually be interrupted by vidcalls to Irunu reporting brawls in startown and updates on "the payroll situation." One call will even report that one of the shore patrol detachments Irunu has dispatched is now held under arrest by Imperial Ministry of Justice (MoJ) officers for failing to get MoJ clearance to pass through a security area of the naval base.

Over the course of these calls (which Irunu greets with tired good nature) and Irunu's conversation, the following details emerge. No one at the base has been paid in the last two months due to a payroll snafu and morale is suffering. To make matters worse, the crew of the cruiser in orbit, *Ringii Ahkromeyev* (a *Geonetti*-class light cruiser, also referred to as the SEH [Starburst for Extraordinary Heroism]-class, see **Rebellion Sourcebook**, page 81), has been overpaid three months salary. They are now enjoying extended shore leave (read: a record drinking binge) while awaiting a fleet tender to arrive to repair their ship (if that's even possible). Suffice it to say that the *Ahkromeyev* crew is quite happy not to be in space and under Lucan's orders at the moment. The base staff, on the other hand, is openly envious of the

spacers' relative wealth. It takes very little provocation for trouble to start. Meanwhile, the locals in Startown are enjoying an economic boom fleeing the spacers.

Having finished their drinks, Irunu invites the PCs to enjoy the Cadion hospitality and returns to putting out fires. Events in this scenario center around Irunu's attempts to keep the peace and the antics of the *Ahkromeyev* crew and the base staff. Should the PCs encounter the cruiser's crew they'll learn something interesting; *Ahkromeyev's* power plant coolant system suffered a meltdown. It seems someone put a slow acting corrosive in the coolant reservoirs.

Scenario Two: The chief Ministry of Justice (MoJ) political officer on Cadion, Colonel Landesberg (whom Irunu calls "that zampolit brownshirt" although no one understands the reference) orders *Vengeance's* senior officers and diplomats to Irunu's headquarters. There he serves the PCs with an Imperial Warrant laying claim to the frontier cruiser and its crew. He is incredulous when the PCs refuse, as they no doubt will, as he can't conceive of anyone questioning Imperial authority. Landesberg even threatens to impound the ship before Irunu reminds him he has no way of doing so. The political officer then storms out of his own office still muttering threats. The MoJ agent will likely console himself with rounding up the usual treasonous suspects and writing reports on the *Ahkromeyev* crew while fuming over the whole matter.

At the referee's discretion, Landesberg may try something stupid like taking hostages or bombing a ship's boat in order to coerce the PCs into surrendering. The political officer has 10 junior agents under him with which to strike.

Scenario Three: The PCs enter a Startown bar, and meet a group of *Ahkromeyev's* crew that have been dying to meet any sailors wearing a non-*Ahkromeyev* ship's patch on their right shoulders. They are quite drunk, so their strategy is a simple one:

1) Taunt the *Arrival Vengeance* crew by asking them if they're lost, and making fun of the advanced age of their ship. Remarks such as, "Hey, my grandma had a *Lightning*-class cruiser, but she traded it in to get an ox-cart," are greeted with hysterical laughter and mutual back-slapping by the inebriated *Ahkromeyev* gang.

2) If the *Arrival Vengeance* sailors don't respond to 1), they start announcing that they must be afraid. Then one of them, perhaps the same genius that generated the ox-cart remark above, says, "You know, I think they've got *Ahkro*-phobia!"

3) If 1 and 2 above fail, they will start throwing bottles at the *Arrival Vengeance* crew, yelling, "incoming!" The time-honored Imperial Navy response is for the victims to throw ashtrays and bowls of peanuts back, yelling, "sandcasters!" Thrown bottles and ashtrays have penetration of 2 and do 2 points of damage; peanuts are just a nuisance.

If the players try to leave, another group of *Ahkromeyev* sailors arrive and block the exits. There *is* going to be a brawl. Adjust the size of the *Ahkromeyev* party to the size of the PC group. Drunk sailors have their Strength increased by 2, and their Dexterity and Endurance each reduced by 2.

Scenario Four: While walking through Cadion City, the PCs are approached by a young woman carrying a small child. Both have "refugee" written all over them. The woman, Shura Haid, leads the PCs to a shanty town in the shadow of the base. The population of the encampment, about 3,000 adults and children, is a mixed bag of naval dependents, former bureaucrats and other unfortunates evacuated from many nearby worlds. All were transported by Lucan's Navy to Cadion's "transition camp" prior to relocation to the Safe. They've been here four years.

The picture they paint of the Imperium and the Black War, which they experienced first hand, is grim. The Imperial Moot is a shell of its former self, filled with dilettantes and toadies. Dissent is dealt with swiftly and finally by the Ministry of Justice, which is everywhere. The Restored Vilani Empire is the current recipient of Lucan's anger in the form of battle fleets although this could change at a whim. Closer to "home," the camp administration is a corrupt lot more interested in selling food shipments to the thriving subsector black market than distributing it.

Haid, a sort of self-appointed leader for the camp, asks the PCs' assistance. Medical aid, food, anything *Vengeance* can do would be welcome. Naturally, anything the *Vengeance* crew does do will be looked askance at by Landesberg and his agents.

Scenario Five: While in a Startown eating or drinking establishment, a lone woman in off-planet garb sits down at the PCs table without an invitation. (It's likely she's from the privately owned scout ship which recently made port.) Dani Shurnimir says she noticed the PCs and is curious to discover from whence they came. She then suggests that *Vengeance* depart within the next five days before a squadron of missile frigates arrive from coreward. Apparently Naval High Command feels it's time to beef up convoy protection in the area and clean up Cadion. Shurnimir then has an interesting story to tell.

It seems Shurnimir is actually Baroness Shurnimir, a field agent of a subfaction of the Brothers of Varian. It was her people who disabled *Ahkromeyev* during its last maintenance cycle, "lost" the base payroll and overpaid *Ahkromeyev's* crew. She came to Cadion to check on the status of her latest operation, which was executed by Varian's agents in the Admiralty.

Despite platitudes to the contrary, the noble cares little for justice. Her primary motivation is revenge, ostensibly for the murders of Strephon and Varian. What really drives Shurnimir is up to the referee. Perhaps she lost someone she loved, or the Rebellion destroyed a cushy life or she's just in it for the thrill. Whatever the reason, she figures once it's all done someone will pick up the pieces and restore the Empire. (Although her subfaction has no idea who that might be, not even a candidate.) Shurnimir makes one final chilling point; as long as Lucan lives, the Brothers of Varian will continue to strike.

Referee's Notes

This episode, while providing some potentially humorous asides, demonstrates how far the Imperium and its once proud navy have fallen. To be sure, Cadion is a backwater and not all of the empire is in such disheveled straits, but it's indicative of the deterioration common along a factional Frontier. Commerce, industry and the military forces protecting them have contracted into the Safes leaving the outer regions increasingly isolated.

Another aspect of this episode is the role the Brothers of Varian continue to play. With the Rebellion over and the Hard Times in full swing, Varian is not so much harming Lucan as it is the people its nobles are supposed to serve. Shurnimir's organization has hurt the navy, the only force protecting trade and therefore, technology and civilization in the region. This sets them on a par with

the man they hate most.

Library Data: Cadion (0531 Core) B655264-A

Diameter: 8,960 km; Density: 0.92; Mass: 0.39; Gravity: 0.69; Orbital Period: 15.8 years; Rotation Period: 37 hrs., 22 mins; Atmospheric Density: 0.78 (nitrogen/oxygen); Hydrographic Percentage: 47% (water); Base Temperature: 14 degrees C.

Conclusion

Cadion could hardly be held out as a shining example of Lucan's success as emperor, but like Margaret's, his empire seems to still be surviving according to its own rules. Then again, history is replete with such empires. For the crew of *Arrival Vengeance*, it was a sobering look at what the once proud Third Imperium had become.

Midu Agashaam-class Destroyer (see next page)

Craft ID: Destroyer, Type DD, TL 15, MCr 2240.2

Hull: 2700/6750, Disp=3000, Config=2SL, Armor=40G Unloaded= 37,641.2 Loaded= 39,221

Power: 353/588, Fusion=37033/63540Mw, Duration=28/84

Loco: 918/1148, Manuver=6, 270/338, Jump=4, Agility=0, EmerAgil=2

Commo: Maser=System x2, Radio=System x2

Sensors: PassiveEMS=Interstellar x2, ActiveEMS=Far Orbit x2, Densitometer=HiPen 1 km x2, Neutrino=10 kw x2, EMM, EMS Jammer=FarOrbit ActObjScan=Routine, ActObjPin=Routine PasObjScan=Routine, PasObjPin=Routine PasEngScan=Simple, PasEngPin=Routine

Off: Hardpoints=30

PartAccel=050Beam Laser=xx5 Missiles=x06

Batt	1	4	1
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Bear	1	4	1
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Def: DefDM=+9 (+11 with EmerAgil), EMSJammer, EMSMask, NucDamper=4, MesonScreen=2, Sancaster=xx5

Batt	3
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Bear	3
------	---

Control: Computer=9/fib x3, Special=HoloHUD x8, Large HoloDisplay x1, Environ=Basic env, Basic Is, Extend Is, grav plates, inertial comp in occupied areas only

Accomm: Crew=46 (Bridge=4, Engineer=5, Gunner=17, Ship Troops=3, Command=4, Steward=1, Medical=1, Frozen Watch=11)

Other: Fuel=1579.8 tons, Fuel Purification Plant (Full load in 22.76 hours), Fuel Scoops, ObjSize=Ave, EmLevel=Faint, Battery Round=18 missiles, 900 missiles on board, Battery Rounds=50, Electronic circuit protection

Note: Power output is listed as cruising/full combat power. Endurance is at cruising output levels. Combat consumes fuel at 1.7 times cruising levels (1.7 hours of cruising endurance are used per hour of combat). Maximum combat time is 16.3 days without eating into jump fuel. These ships do not have internal small craft stowage, so on patrol duty will typically carry a boat, pinnace, or cutter in an external sling mount, which reduces jump and maneuver performance accordingly.

"In the name of the Emperor Lucan you will stand to and prepare to be boarded. You will receive a prize crew and accompany this task force to the nearest Imperial port. Should you fail to comply, you will be fired upon. Survivors will be charged with high treason and executed. You have one minute to comply."

Action

The "task force" is actually a battered pair of *Midu Agashaam*-class destroyers (see page 17) which approach *Arrival Vengeance* prior to her refueling in the Ferot (0328 Core) system. The task force commander will level all manner of threats at *Vengeance* although his command is obviously overmatched by the cruiser's firepower. Possible outcomes of this scenario include:

Scenario One: A boat is dispatched from one of the destroyers. A Commander Burkhart comes aboard and immediately requests political asylum for herself and the other eight individuals aboard the small craft. As a gesture of good faith she brings with her copies of the latest tactical codes and fleet dispositions for the region. Burkhart and her people want no part of Lucan's Black War insanity. The problem is the Ministry of Justice political officers aboard her ship, some under cover, have made escape impossible as they are constantly on the watch for treasonous activities (it seems the MoJ agent placed aboard the boat with Burkhart has met with a fatal accident). The Commander and her group will do anything in their power to aid the *Vengeance* crew.

Scenario Two: As above, Commander Burkhart and company request asylum, except in this case they are loyal agents of Lucan sent to seize the cruiser. Failing this, they plan to cripple the ship in such a way that it can later be salvaged. They will seemingly aid the cruiser to escape the task force and refuel. During the dive into the gas giant, the Imperials attempt to secure Deck 46, the Lower Power Plant Deck, in order to coerce *Vengeance* into surrendering.

Scenario Three: Commander Burkhart comes alone to *Arrival Vengeance*. She claims that her ship is armed with a super weapon capable of vaporizing the cruiser. At the same time, a massive power increase is detected aboard one of the destroyers. The most likely explanation for the power source is an antimatter reactor. Rumors of Lucan ordering the development of such advanced weaponry are widespread and have bullied more than a few opponents into submission. Whether or not *Vengeance* is actually in danger and by what means is left to the referee to decide.

Burkhart in this scenario is an interesting study in the kind of person

who serves Lucan. Her loyalty to the Emperor stems not from ideology or love of the Imperium, but rather as a justification for her past actions: she's the veteran of a number of grisly assignments, some when she still believed in the Imperium. Burkhart has little regard for her safety, although she will not do anything obviously foolish. The possibility of being vaporized along with *Vengeance* causes her little concern.

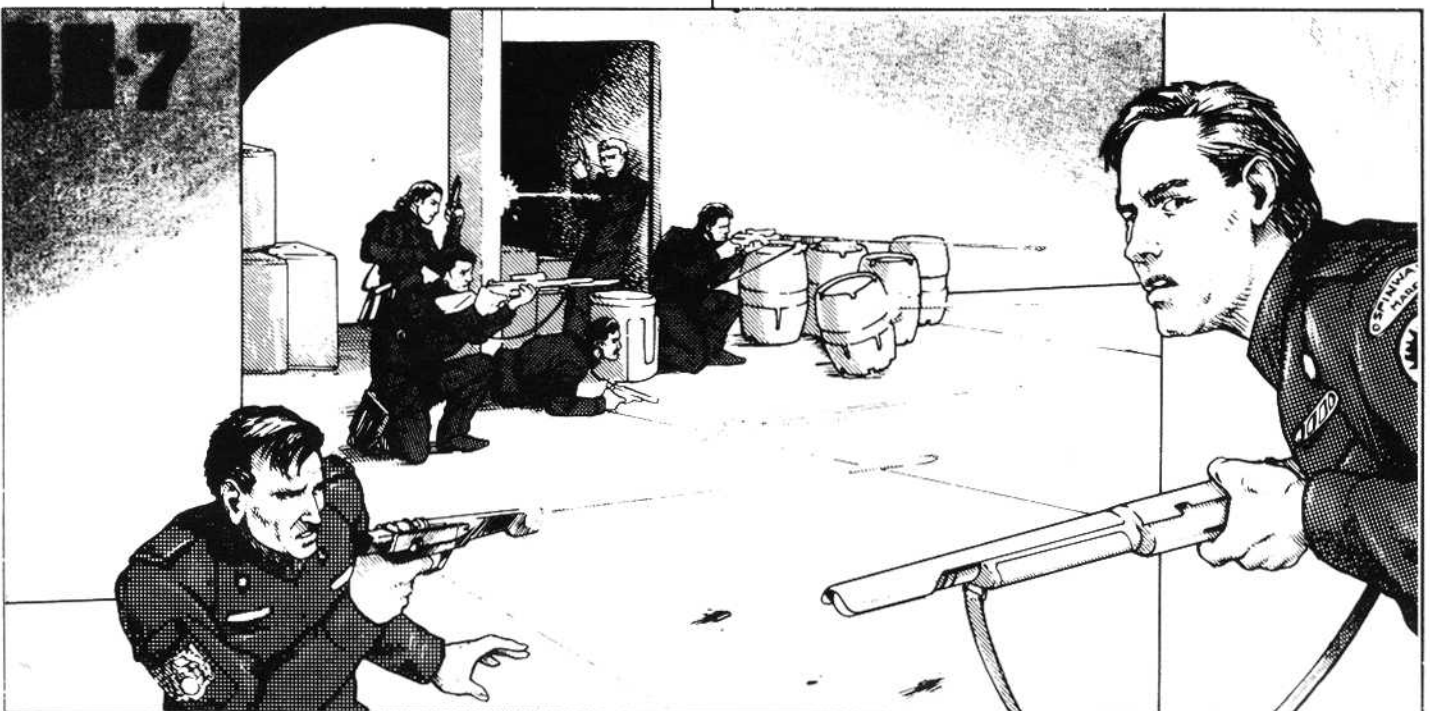
Scenario Four: As above, Burkhart comes aboard alone to threaten *Vengeance*. In this case, no super weapon exists. Rather, the commander is buying time for the Marine strike force aboard her boat. Their plan is to force an airlock (Decks 20-21, 46, 69, or 71 are their most likely targets) in order to capture the ship. Once this is accomplished, a second team from the other destroyer attempts to seize the bridge (Deck 17). These troops are fully equipped for zero-G combat, with TL-14 battle dress and laser rifles, and have powerful shaped-charge limpet mines with which to easily blow their way through *Arrival Vengeance's* hull. Of *Vengeance's* crew, only the 50 Marines have TL-14 battle dress and FGMPs, the remainder of the crew have no armor and fire 7mm ACRs. Each Imperial destroyer could have as many as 28 Marines aboard if using high-density accommodations.

Referee's Notes

While Commander Burkhart has the potential to help *Arrival Vengeance*, it is much more than likely that she will attempt to harm it. Her inability to be perceived as a positive figure is a predictable end to their time spent in Lucan's realm. A man capable of murdering his own brother would more than likely attract unsavory PCs to do his bidding. Even if Burkhart did manage to help *Vengeance*, her behavior could be viewed as a fluke rather than the norm.

Conclusion

The contacts the PCs have made in Lucan's Imperium have reinforced his already tainted image. Although the crew could hope otherwise, they were left with the feeling that Lucan's "Third Imperium" would survive in its present state for some time to come.



"Shelling continues...reports that...dead and at least 300 injured. No...reaching the Anur section of the city. Relief convoys organized...World League...fired upon with peacekeeping for...12 dead and five vehicles des...". At that point the voice fades to static despite the noise filtering and signal boosters. A moment later the carrier signal disappears also. That was apparently Radio Anur's last broadcast.

Action

Arrival Vengeance has just entered the Halthome (2725 Dagudashag) system to refuel and take on water. All water aboard the cruiser is constantly recycled, but a small amount is lost over time. Two fuel shuttles are to be dispatched to top off the tanks. On approach to Halthome, *Vengeance* picks up a number of radio broadcasts, one of which is detailed above. Over the course of several hours, a picture of recent events on-planet begins to develop.

Not long ago the central government of Halthome collapsed under the weight of the Hard Times. Without a central authority to check them, old ethnic hatreds once again flashed into open conflict. Members of the former government and several neutral, newly formed nations formed a coalition in an attempt to restore the peace. Unfortunately for this misnamed World League, they lack the military power to make it stick. By far the worst, but not only, spot on the planet is the former capital city of Huasin. There the Soli majority has surrounded and laid siege to the so-called Anur District. They hope to shell and starve the Anur out. Possible events in this episode include:

Scenario One: Skaim Hovcik, nominal leader of the Anur, puts in a desperate call to *Arrival Vengeance* requesting the ship fire on his enemies and supply him with weapons. Failing that, he'll ask for food, medicine and medical assistance. Hovcik will not hesitate to goad representatives of "the true Imperium" into action. If the PCs agree to aid Hovcik, the proper personnel, forward observers and/or medical teams, will have to be dispatched to the surface. In each of scenarios 1-3, the faction begging for help will immediately take a half-dozen of the *Vengeance* crew dispatched to help as hostages to ensure further cooperation from the cruiser. Although they will not harm these hostages, they will threaten to kill them if *Vengeance* does not continue to assist them. Furthermore, the landing parties will find themselves harassed by the enemies of those they were sent to help.

Scenario Two: The World League contacts the *Vengeance* with a request that it provide the muscle needed to impose its will on Huasin. In addition, the League is very interested in having the cruiser stay permanently. It may even attempt to seize the ship "for the good of Halthome."

Scenario Three: As above, the League contacts the cruiser with a request. It asks that a corridor be cleared out of the Anur District. Hovcik and his people will use the route to escape the siege and head for a neutral nation.

Scenario Four: The Soli will brook no interference in what they deem a private matter. Should *Arrival Vengeance* help in any way, they will unleash their ace in the hole; a 400-ton *Dragon*-class system defense boat (see the *Imperial Encyclopedia*, page 85, for stats). While the craft is not space-worthy, it is flyable. Attacks will be made against PCs onplanet and the fuel shuttles in hopes of raising the stakes and driving off the cruiser.

Referee's Notes

The episode at Halthome presents a moral dilemma to the PCs. They have the power to enforce the will of any of the on-planet factions, but only at the expense of another. None of the groups are clearly in the right. The League is dominated by Halthome's former leaders wishing to regain their lost stature. The Anur, while clearly victims at present, are just as selfish and self-centered as their counterparts the Soli. The PCs represent the best of what was once the Imperium and may wish to correct matters, but to become involved will merely mire them further in the chaos that is Hard Times. Any aid given will only lead to more requests and more bloodshed.

Military Technology: Personal military technology on Halthome is rated at 8 (slugthrowers, cloth armor and some examples of early laser carbines are in use). Heavy military technology is rated at 5 (mortars, artillery and some armored vehicles). Higher tech level weapons still exist, but are only used in critical operations.

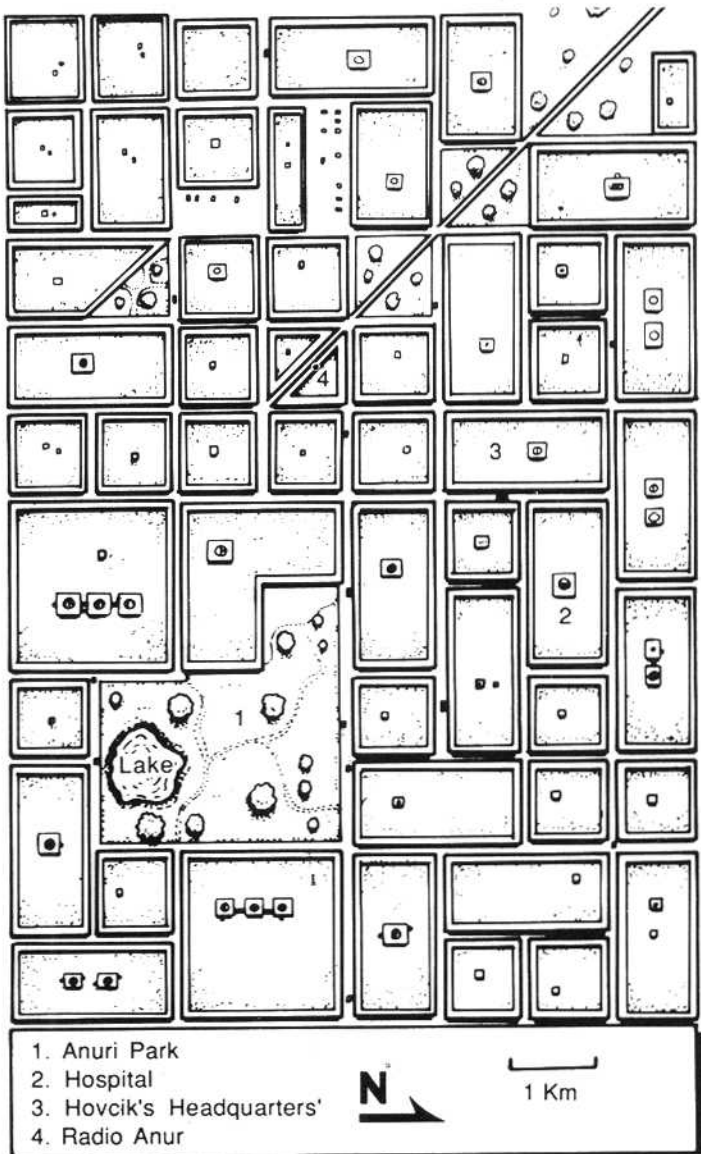
Arrival Vengeance Equipment: The Marine company is equipped with TL-14 Battle Dress and FGMP-14s, and four G-Carriers (page 77, *Imperial Encyclopedia*), which can be deployed from orbit. These are stored on Cargo Deck 21.

Library Data: Halthome (2725 Dagudashag) E342670-8

Diameter: 5,600 km; Density: 1.1; Mass: 0.058; Gravity: 0.42; Orbital Period: 43.2 days; Rotation Period: 25 hrs., 21 mins; Atmospheric Density: 0.75 (oxygen taint); Hydrographic Percentage: 20%; Base Temperature: 20 degrees C.

Conclusion

It was night in Huasin as *Arrival Vengeance* left orbit and already the fires were burning. Some of them could even be seen from space (see folio cover). At a time when worlds had to unify to face the Hard Times, the people of Halthome turned against each other. Perhaps they had another year, perhaps not. To those aboard *Arrival Vengeance*, they seemed without redemption.



There's a palpable feeling of déjà vu as you stand in the Grand Court yard of the Imperial vacation palace on Usdiki. You've seen this place many times in holos, but until now you've never really believed you might be standing here. Overhead the thick grey overcast is broken in places by shafts of sunlight. They reach down to touch the imposing edifice looming over all. High above the Courtyard is the Imperial sunburst, somehow anachronistic in this time and place; a hollow reminder of things as they were.

A shouted command echos through the great open yard breaking the hushed, reverential silence of the Arrival Vengeance crew. The Imperial Guard comes to spine-jarring attention. Your thoughts turn to Hliyh and Deck One two years ago as the Imperial Anthem begins to play. The great portals of the palace roll back with a whisper and a single small figure strides forth. It's at that moment that the sunlight again fades, leaving Emperor Strophon in shadow.

En Route to Usdiki

After the strain of the Halthome operations, the road to Usdiki through Dagudashaag continued to be a rough one, and includes some events that referees might wish to play out. The first incident, however, is not amenable to roleplaying. It took place in the Higashi system (1919 Dagudashaag) during a routine gas giant refueling. The incident was over almost as soon as it began.

Sensors are severely degraded when skimming fuel deep in the atmosphere of a gas giant, and collisions are not unheard of. Fuel shuttle 3 flew through a group of five *Roughneck*-class fuel harvesters (see **Assignment: Vigilante** for details) and collided with one of them, severing its lift envelope. The shuttle sustained severe damage to its cockpit and became uncontrollable. Both craft began the long fall toward the heart of the gas giant to where the pressure became so great that it crushed them. Crews of both craft continued to broadcast until their transmissions were overwhelmed by static. The fuel shuttle engineer thought it would be important to gain data on the crush-depth of the craft, so he kept calling off his altitude and the external pressure readings until his transmissions were lost in the static. *Vengeance* lost three of her own, and the *Roughneck* carried ten down with her. The crew began referring to "Damned Dagudashaag."

Gildirur: On Gildirur (1218 Dagudashaag), *Arrival Vengeance* picked up traces of a huge defensive outpost much larger than anything that had ever been built in the Domain of Deneb. This ruined, seemingly abandoned planetary defense citadel was an artifact of the titanic three-sided struggle that took place in this unfortunate sector between forces of Lucan, Dulnor, and Strophon. Indications were that it was a former Illeish citadel, and *Vengeance* put down troops to see what could be learned from the wreckage. While on the surface, this group (a squad of 14 Marines and eight naval crew members in a G-Carrier and two enclosed air/rafts, both on page 77, in the **Imperial Encyclopedia**) was ambushed by as many as 50 fanatical Illeish rear-guards (equipped with Combat Armor-12 and Laser Rifle-9s). It was only the quick response of the two-Rampart covering section that allowed the force to be withdrawn to the shuttle with six wounded and two dead. (Referees will have to handle different approaches with larger numbers of crew, or the commitment of ground troop reinforcements to root out the Illeish defenders. If the PCs wish to make a fight of it, referees might consider giving the Illeish troops G-carriers of their own, or a system defense boat.) It was now "Double-Damned Dagudashaag."

Kamurinmur: While nearing the formerly high-population world of Kamurinmur (2224 Gushemege), *Vengeance* came under very long-range fire from a deep-sited planetary defense meson gun, followed by volleys of nuclear missile fire, directed

by data-linked forward sensors on Kamurinmur's belt of moonlets. Fortunately the Kamurinmur fire control computer had been degraded to only level 6, and *Vengeance* was able to neutralize the weapons with prompt counter-battery fire and fighter sweeps that found and destroyed the moonlet-mounted sensors. When the ship approached the world, it found that the defenses must have been automated: Kamurinmur's surface was razed; radiation levels were horrifying; the planet was dead. "Goddamned Gushemege" was the new slogan.

The Kamurinmur battery is a code G meson gun and five code A missile batteries directed by a code 6 computer, which has an additional -2 DM applied to it as it firing via data-link to sensors 300,000 kilometers away. *Vengeance* comes under fire when she is 500,000 kilometers from Kamurinmur, but only 200,000 kilometers from the moonlet belt. There are four sensor emplacements in the moonlet belt, all with the following sensor characteristics: PassObjScan=Routine, PassObjPin=Routine, PassEnScan= Simple, PassEnPin=Routine. When handling *Vengeance's* return fire, the moonlet sensors and planetary missile bays are Faint emission level targets with Armor 40, and the deep meson gun and computer installation is a moderate emission level target with Armor 120. The emplacements have no defensive DMs, screens, nor active defenses. If *Arrival Vengeance* uses her emergency agility, only her spinal gun, particle accelerators, and fusion guns are unpowered. Her laser, missile, and sandcaster batteries are all powered and usable, as are all of her screens at full level.

By their arrival at Usdiki, the crew had become somewhat grim and embittered. They had lost some of their shipmates, and the succession of blasted and blackened planets they visited sickened them. They saw with their own eyes and learned with their own dead that the heart of the once glorious Imperium had become, not only deadly, but in fact, dead.

Action

Perhaps the greatest mystery of the Rebellion era is the true identity of one man on Usdiki; the Emperor Strophon. Having heard rumors on Zukhimie that Strophon still lives, the PCs would be remiss in their duties if they didn't attempt to confirm or disprove the man's identity. This leads to complications on getting home. Unless the secret navy refueling bases the Imperium once maintained in the Great Rift remain intact, *Vengeance* will be forced to either retrace its steps through the Aslan Hierate or venture into Vargr-occupied Corridor. Possible scenarios in this episode include:

Scenario One: *Arrival Vengeance's* diplomats are summoned to a formal audience with the Emperor to present their credentials. The referee should roleplay this event as an awkward

moment for the PCs. If this is truly the Emperor, the representatives of Deneb technically owe their loyalty to this man and must follow his dictates. If the "Emperor" is an imposter, they need not heed him, but do they take that chance? Keep the

players in suspense waiting for the other shoe to drop. Strephon questions the diplomats on the state, as they left it, of Deneb and Norris' leadership. He also asks for a brief review of the mission thus far. Interestingly, Strephon makes no demands on the Denebians.

Strephon smiles cryptically at the first mention of "Archduke" Norris, but moments later is enraged by Margaret's claim regarding the identity of her daughter's father. He quickly composes himself, thanks the group and dismisses them. While leaving the Throne Room, one PC thinks he hears the Emperor murmur the words "Iolanthe and Iphegenia."

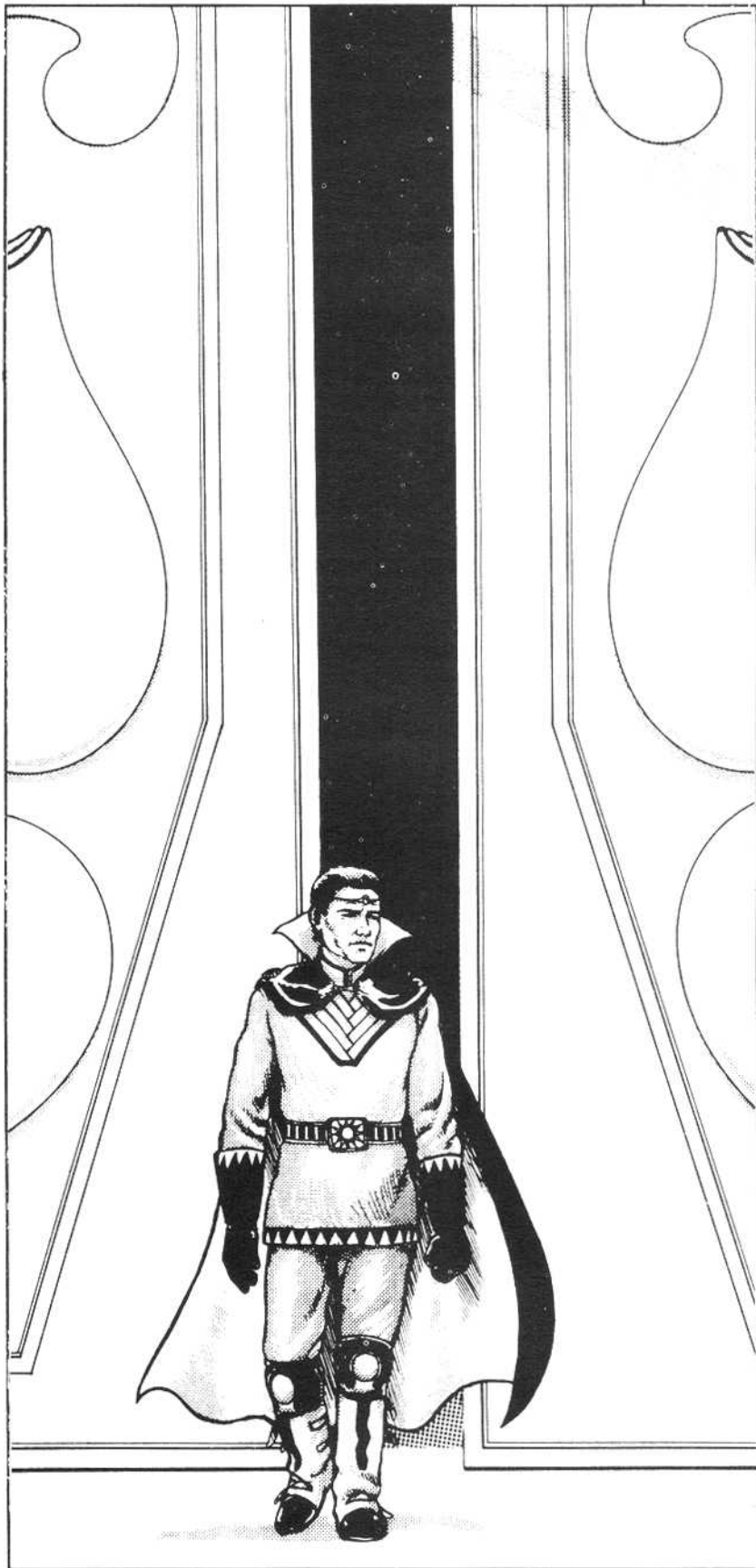
Scenario Two: *Arrival Vengeance* receives an invitation from "the Office of the Emperor" to attend an "informal reception" to be held at the estate of the Marquis of Usdiki. All high-ranking PCs (all nobles and all of **Traveller** rank 4 and above) are required to attend.

When the PCs arrive, they will be disappointed to learn that the Emperor will not be attending. However, moments later, the doorman announces the arrival of "Marquis Usdiki." It is, in fact, Strephon.

All PCs present will immediately recognize this as another example of courtesy fiction (see page 5), in which Strephon, who is also the Marquis of Usdiki, wishes to interact with people without the additional complications of his Imperial rank. This is one way for Strephon to take something of a vacation, and just "be himself" without having to represent his office as well. The PCs will be well-advised to not break the fiction. After all, if the Emperor himself tells you that he is not the Emperor, are you going to call him a liar to his face in front of a room full of people? That dilemma is the bottom line of courtesy fiction.

Over the course of the evening, Strephon will actually seek out to engage the PCs in conversation. Most of Strephon's questions will involve current affairs in the Domain of Deneb. Have the Vargr incursions been stemmed? How is the Zhodani Consulate responding to the Rebellion? What of the Asian? Are they taking advantage of the power vacuum to seek new lands? How is Norris dealing with these issues? Is Norris married yet? If the PCs are able to accurately report events in the Domain (referees should allow them to consult **MegaTraveller** source material to assist them in their answers), Strephon will nod approvingly. The only exception to this is for the answer that Norris is still unmarried, at which he laughs and shakes his head indulgently, then says seriously, "He really *must* see to it that he has a strong clear, line of succession in place. If not..." Strephon allows the obvious conclusion to hang in the air un-said, with a troubled expression.

During these conversations, the PCs will find that Strephon is quite personable, with a dry, gentle sense of humor. However, Strephon will not spend all of his time with the PCs, but must also spread his attention over the dozens of NPCs present at the party, many local leaders of Usdiki. But when talking to the PCs, Strephon seems hungry to talk to these outside, impartial observers and tell his story so that the truth might survive.



He will tell the story of how he came to be on Usdiki, and a clone was assassinated, but in telling it, will refer to himself in the third person, as "the Emperor." Later in the evening, he brings up the issue of clones, and, relaxed, refers to himself in the first person. "They were right, though, I did have clones, and the mere fact of them proved to be my undoing. How else can one rule a realm this size? One can't be everywhere. It was a white lie, but there is no such thing as a small lie, ultimately. Once the clones and the lies about my identity were in place, how could the public know who is there and who is not, who was killed, and who lives? I allowed that circumstance to happen, where the public would lose their ability to believe me. Of course, I didn't have the clones created. My father created them for me my first year, feeling I'd need them someday the way he did. But I didn't have to use them. I could have given them new lives and let them become real, I suppose, but it never occurred to me. They're very unsettling to have around, you know. I'd always avoided mine. They raise difficult existential questions that keep coming back."

Later, in a moment alone with the PCs when Seldrian is just out of earshot, Strephon remarks, "Norris had the right idea. It's quite obvious it's not him, and she won't give him the same problems I found in a room full of me. He doesn't make an attractive woman, though, poor girl."

During the evening, the PCs notice that Strephon is accompanied by a young boy, perhaps eight years of age. The boy is dark-haired, quiet, and apparently serious and bright. Strephon will occasionally rest his hand affectionately on the boy's head when the boy is nearby, but the boy is only introduced as "a young refugee from the Civil War" that Strephon's household has adopted. No one on Usdiki can, or will, offer more details.

If any PCs attempt to inquire for more details of the boy's identity, or slip up and refer to Strephon as the Emperor (or another *faux pas* as ruled by the referee), they will receive a quick, sharp look from the Emperor. This is a sharp look like none the PCs have ever seen. It is short, it immediately and permanently cuts off any issue that Strephon disapproved of, but it does not linger, and is not followed by any further disapproval toward its target. Any PC who receives the look will know, beyond any doubt, that this Strephon is Emperor Strephon. The PC will feel that Strephon has distilled and encapsulated all of the strength, power, and dignity of a millennia of emperors and shot him or her a tiny glimpse. The ability to do something like that cannot be faked, it can only be done by someone who has lived it.

Scenario Three: Strephon learns (perhaps at the Usdiki reception) that the PCs need information on the secret refueling bases in the Great Rift. He puts the PCs in contact with a navy liaison officer on his staff as well as one of his Imperial Interstellar Scout Service (IISS) intelligence chiefs. At one time there were a number of deep space caches in place to cut down on travel time to Deneb, the region "behind the claw." One such base was used to carry the news of the assassination to the Marches. According to reports, all of the covert routes have been put out of commission. Some on this side of the Rift were exhausted or destroyed by Rebellion factions; principally Lucan and the re-formed Ziru Sirka. The Vargr pillaged those closer to Deneb and Corridor. It looks like *Arrival Vengeance* will have to take the long way home until the IISS chief digs deeper into his files.

Many years ago, an IISS survey ship on a deep recon located a comet at 3234 Deneb. The chief had been keeping its exist-

ence a secret in case Strephon ever needed a "back door" out of Gushemege (given the relative military strength of the Stronghold compared to other factions, a number of contingency plans were drawn up). A route to the comet is available if Strephon releases enough tanker support to assist *Vengeance* on this side of the Rift. The navy liaison, Captain Ashiir, says she'll forward the plan to the Emperor.

She also mentions in passing that she can't understand why Strephon hasn't headed for Deneb yet. In her opinion, the Emperor isn't doing a lot here beyond attending ceremonial functions and advising the peerage. The Stronghold's nobles and bureaucracy run almost everything. She figures Strephon would be much better received there. That is, if people in Deneb believe he is who he says he is. Ashiir says that sometimes she has her doubts. After all, if he's truly Strephon, why hasn't he worked harder lately at reclaiming his Empire? In a few days, the Emperor approves the request for tanker support.

Scenario Four: Dr. Enli Kagamira, chief of Strephon's personal medical staff, secretly contacts the PCs requesting a very private meeting. He claims to have vital information to pass to Norris. The meeting is preceded by a complicated set of maneuvers designed to shake any possible surveillance (he's learned quite a few tricks from one of the most hunted men in Charted Space). Kagamira presents evidence that Strephon is neither an android nor a clone as many have asserted. Medical records clearly show the Emperor to be human and not a machine. Furthermore, the doctor is privy to a secret known only to him and Strephon.

When Strephon's clones were created in his youth, all of them were given a deeply planted post-hypnotic command. When the proper command sequence is spoken, a clone is compelled to reveal all the pertinent information regarding its creation, such as "birthdate," serial number and the like. Kagamira has used the sequence on Strephon here on Usdiki with negative results. The doctor believes that such evidence should be used to restore Strephon to the Iridium Throne, yet the Emperor has sworn him to secrecy. Kagamira has recorded the command sequence on a holo crystal accessible only to Norris, which he gives to the PCs. He leaves it to the Archduke to decide what to do with the information. Finally, the doctor also tells the PCs that he's sure that IRIS would have to be aware of the clone programming, but of course not the command sequence. He can't understand why IRIS didn't push harder to investigate Strephon.

Scenario Five: As the PCs are preparing to depart Usdiki, Strephon calls for one last audience. He wishes the group well and shakes hands with all present (certainly a departure from Imperial protocol). While shaking hands with one PC, the Emperor presses a small holo crystal into the PC's palm and whispers: "Tell Norris I'm sorry." The crystal is embossed with the Imperial sunburst and Norris' unicorn symbol. A little further down the line, he pauses, as if he notices the *Arrival Vengeance* patch on the PC's uniform for the first time. He struggles for a moment, trying to remember something, then looks directly at the PC. With what the PC can only describe as an anguished smile, Strephon haltingly says, "Government of the people...by the people...for the people, shall not perish. *Shall not perish.*" PCs farther down the line will confirm that the Emperor had tears in his eyes. Without further proceedings, the members of the *Arrival Vengeance* party are dismissed.

As the *Arrival Vengeance* party prepares to board a shuttle for orbit, they are asked to wait. Dr. Kagamira approaches,

holding the hand of the young boy the PCs met earlier. Kagamira passes on Strephon's request that they take the boy, Avery, to Deneb and provide for his safety. The PCs can do nothing but accept, and Seldrian will speak for the group, promising in Norris' name that the child will be safe. Strephon has watched all of this from a distance, and then turns to walk away, alone. The PCs are left to wonder what has transpired.

Referee's Notes

This episode, of course, centers on the question of whether or not the real Strephon is alive and well and living in exile on Usdiki. While the PCs may never know the truth, the referee can take heart knowing that, yes, it is the Emperor.

Emperor Strephon Aella Alkhalikol

6578CF, Age 77 (in 1126), 14 ³/₄ terms.

Admin-5, Leader-3, Ship's Boat-2, Artisan-2, Persuasion-1,

Linguistics-1, History-1, Small Watercraft-1, Science-1, Robotics-1, Robot Ops-1, Genetics-1.



The PCs should be surprised at what a truly humble man is Emperor Strephon. They should also be impressed by his decency, and most of all, by the fact that he is an infinitely sad man. This does not come across through anything resembling moping or complaining or bursting into tears. He is always absolutely composed and graceful. But by the softness of his voice, by the press of his lips, and the silence with which he surrounds his few, carefully chosen words, it is readily apparent.

He blames himself for the Rebellion. First, for appointing Dulinor, and second, compounding the first error, by challenging Lucan. He particularly hates himself for the latter, for this stupid, arrogant (as he sees it) appeal to his subjects only guaranteed the death of all his supporters in Gushemege under Lucan's guns. It eventually dawned on him that the best service he could do for the empire would be to allow his claim to slowly fade and die, because by eliminating the need for further conflict, it would save lives, the lives of his people. Although he could no longer control events, he knows in his heart, that they are all, the living and the dead, still *his people*. And the fact that he had unthinkingly betrayed them to death by encouraging them to fight for him, is a crime for which he will never forgive himself. This is why he eventually refused to assist the IRIS attempts to examine his claim in 1121. He knew that by refusing, he would confirm public suspicions that he was a fraud, and that would allow the killing to end.

Strephon's Story: On 132-1116, a clone of Strephon was gunned down by Archduke Dulinor on Capital. The real Strephon was meanwhile *en route* to the Core Naval Depot on a matter of utmost importance to the empire. When news of the "assassination" reached his cruiser, Strephon was spirited away to Usdiki by his loyal crew. There he decided to make his stand. Strephon believed that by announcing himself in public in 1117

he could gather the remaining Imperium to himself and end the Second Civil War quickly. Unfortunately that was not to be. The majority of the nobility, both military and civilian, failed to flock to his banner as they made their own "one clear choice" for their new factions closer to home. Some individuals did heed the call, but they were too few in number. Strephon became just another voice in the crowd.

After years of war and bloodshed in his name, the Emperor had had enough. He reflected upon the subjects everywhere he had lost, directly and indirectly, and the damage done to his empire. Strephon decided he would be responsible for no more destruction in his name. Today he consoles himself with the idea of keeping a small part of the Imperium alive in this far corner of Gushemege, and hoping that one day, an Alhalikoi might step forward to correct the errors he made.

Norris' Message: The holo crystal given to the PC contains a personal message for Norris thanking him for keeping the dream of the Imperium alive. Tacked on to the end of the message is an Imperial warrant formally confirming Norris as Archduke of Deneb and recommending the *Arrival Vengeance* crew for patents of nobility (knighthoods for lesser crewmen, baronies for senior officers. Obviously these are titles in name only as he has no fiefs to grant). Strephon does not necessarily believe Norris will act on the recommendation, given the Emperor's past performance, but believes the crew should be rewarded for their daring. The crystal is encrypted in a personal code known only to the Archduke. There is no mention in it of the boy.

Avery

34484F, Age 8, 0 terms.

Avery's Social Standing comes from the fact that he was adopted by and lived in Strephon's household. Avery cannot answer any of the obvious questions about who he really is, and too much pressing on these points will make him unhappy, which will make Seldrian very unhappy, as she has taken a special interest in him. Avery is, for all intents and purposes, a normal little boy, who likes dogs and is very interested in building model spaceships and exploring the real thing.

Library Data: Usdiki (1015 Gushemege) A6649EF-F

Diameter: 9,440 km; Density: 1.0; Mass: 0.42; Gravity: 0.74; Orbital Period: 381.4 days; Rotation Period: 21 hrs., 49 mins.; Atmospheric Pressure: 0.95 (nitrogen/oxygen mix); Hydrographic Percentage: 36% (water); Base Temperature: 22 degrees C. Native life present.



Conclusion

The encounter with the man on Usdiki who called himself Strephon answered few questions. It was evident though that here was a man who would lead no rescuing fleets to reunify the Shattered Imperium. And if the Emperor would not act, what future could the Empire have? The answer was, "none." All that remained was to go home.

There it is, right where Strephon's people said it would be. For all the romantic images people have about comets, they're actually pretty dreary and forlorn in their usual state. Out in deep space, they are just dirty little balls of ice with no proud tails gaily marking their passage. Although it's the size of a few dozen *Arrival Vengeances*, it's still miniscule by interstellar standards. But as ugly a duckling as it might appear to the uninitiated, it is a swan to you and your fellow crewmembers, because the dirty little mote is all that stands between you and being stranded forever in the Great Rift.

The bridge made an all-compartments announcement when they spotted the comet, and you could hear the cheering all through the ship. You're going home.

A few hours is all it will take to carve off enough frozen material to refine down to fill up *Vengeance's* cavernous fuel tanks. The refueling team is going to leave a little sign on the comet, with *Arrival Vengeance's* name and the date. After you leave, it might be thousands of years before the comet gets another visitor.

Action

At the conclusion of this episode, *Arrival Vengeance* makes her way to the point along the Great Rift at which she will begin her crossing. Along the way, elements of Strephon's Navy link up with the cruiser to form a convoy. Through a combination of tanker support and visits to the few worlds in the Rift, *Vengeance* makes her way to the comet at 3234 Deneb and thence home. The referee may wish to insert further episodes along the way, but for the most part the journey home passes without incident. While reducing a comet for fuel is not often done, neither is it without precedent. Navy doctrine has the procedure well covered.

Vengeance's course through Deneb has been plotted to avoid the more populous and well-travelled worlds. On 323-1126, the cruiser returns home to the Trin Inactive Ships Facility. The naval forces at Trin are able, through normal transponder routine, to establish that the incoming ship is *Arrival Vengeance*, but the mysterious nature of her departure leaves them with no idea of how to treat the approaching vessel. It could just as easily be a hostile vessel or a Trojan horse of some kind. Therefore, the base goes on alert and broadcasts a warning for the ship to stand clear and identify its intentions. As per orders, *Arrival Vengeance* uses a special "Argon Blue" verbal code to gain access to the facility (remember that due to the secrecy surrounding the preparations for the mission, no one knows who took the ship).

The PCs are to present the admiral at the Facility with a sealed document provided by Seldrian vouching for the use of the ship. She then reveals her true identity (although PCs that succeeded in recognizing her earlier and officers that spoke with Strephon at the reception will already know this) and informs the PCs that they are to proceed next to Mora (3124 Spinward Marches) for debriefing at the capital.

Argon Blue Codes: These are a rarely used one-time ID system once used by Imperial nobles, but now limited in use primarily to the Domain of Deneb. Each Imperial Naval base had a set of

several thousand challenges and responses, and each noble of ducal rank or higher had his or her own portion of the set. The noble and the base exchanged certain pre-arranged challenges and counter-challenges which were only valid on a certain day and void after that. A new set was created and distributed each year, under the authority of the Imperial Navy.

Argon Blue codes have fallen into disfavor in the Imperial Core because of the disintegration of the navy and its means to update and authenticate the codes. However, they are still used in the Domain of Deneb. As with Imperial Warrants, there is a certain recognized possibility of abuse associated with this system. However, as the penalties for unauthorized use (i.e., by someone not on legitimate ducal business) are stiff; the system relies on each duke or duchess' self-interest to keep his or her set of Argon Blue codes safe.

Once at Mora, the crew and passengers of *Arrival Vengeance* are met personally by Norris, sequestered by Naval Intelligence and debriefed as to the results of their mission. The Archduke is present during as much of the debriefing as he can make time for, often speaking to the PCs individually.

Rewards: There are a number of tangible rewards for the PCs aside from having experienced the historic journey of *Arrival Vengeance* first hand. All PCs in the service of Deneb receive three years back pay, promotions and choice of their next assignment. Travellers recruited for the mission receive a TAS membership endorsed by Norris' household (application fees are waived and only minimal background checks are performed). Norris has the power as the Archduke of Deneb to issue patents of nobility to deserving individuals. How Norris treats Strephon's recommendations for rewarding the PCs is for the referee to decide, based on the performance of each PC in the adventure.

Perhaps one of the more interesting rewards accrued is a front row seat on the Giyachii grand esplanade on Mora on 110-1127, if the PCs have chosen to stay at the capital that long. On that date, Norris an-

Trin/Spinward Marches (3235 A894A96-F)

Date: 324-1126

¶ Routine traffic at the Trin Naval Base was interrupted yesterday by the unexpected arrival of an *Azhanti High Lightning*-class frontier cruiser in the traffic pattern. Although there has been no official acknowledgment of the ship's visit, naval officers speaking off the record have allowed the following story to be pieced together.

¶ Officers at system traffic control report that when it was first detected, it was thought that the cruiser was a *Trekhyair*-operated ship, cruising outside of its normal patrol area. The *Trekhyair*, the Aslan-crewed "Patrol," operates four examples of the class, recommissioned from 1120 to 1124. However, its transponder code was not a *Trekhyair* ID code, but was rather an older, pre-Rebellion Imperial Navy ID code. Permission to enter orbit was initially denied, as forces of Lucan's Imperium are believed to still operate a handful of the *Lightning*-class vessels. Officers were then surprised when the mystery vessel transmitted a verbal "Argon Blue" identification code which allowed the vessel to dock at Trin's Naval Inactive Ships Facility. The little-known "Argon Blue" codes are said to be a system of one-time ID codes which involve the verification of the contents of sealed documents, sets of which are present at all Imperial Naval Bases. The rare use of these codes is thought to be associated with high-ranking Imperial nobles.

¶ Upon docking, the ship, which proved to be *Arrival Vengeance*, missing since 329-1123, disgorged a small party of officers who proceeded directly to the commanding officer of the Inactive Ships Facility. There, they presented a sealed document to the commander, Rear Admiral Brian Gou, and returned to their ship. *Arrival Vengeance* was refueled and departed the base several hours later.

¶ The sealed document is reported to have contained a voucher for the use of the ship, and an apology. Witnesses state that both documents were dated in 1123 and signed by Archduke Norris.



Mora/Spinward Marches (3124 AA99AC7-F)

Date: 110-1127

¶Archduke Norris Aella Aledon arrived this morning at the Giyachii grand esplanade to find it packed with over 200,000 spectators, all eager to hear the message he was scheduled to deliver. There had been tremendous speculation about the content of the message since it was announced three weeks ago that Norris would address the entire Domain of Deneb. The dozens of remote recording drones floating above the crowd focused on Norris' balcony belonged to news services and also to the Domain government which will distribute recordings to every world of the Domain.

¶"My sisters and brothers," Norris began, "it is time to put away the trappings of childhood. The past, no matter how vivid, no matter how *preferable*, is not ours to grasp. We must let it go. The Empire will not save us. The Emperor, luminous and gallant, will never lead a relief fleet through the raiders to reclaim us, to return us to our rightful place in an Imperial family. Because there is no Empire. There is, I must myself admit, no Emperor. The Empire is populated, where it is still populated at all, increasingly by madmen. They cannot save us, *nor can we save them*. We in the spinward extents must chart our own future."

¶During the course of his address, the Archduke explained that his government has made exhaustive efforts to regain contact with other portions of the "Empire"—it is notable that throughout the address he avoided all use of the word "Imperium"—and discussed the possibility of reunification. "These efforts have not been rewarded," he reported. "We should not, indeed, we will never, close off our options to reunify. But we cannot simply wait for that to happen. We must do more than merely keep the ends out for the tie that binds."

¶He then moved to a general discussion of his positive visions. This touched on the need for a new government and new relationships with surrounding powers. Norris described the isolation of the Domain "behind the claw" as an advantage which could give time to explore "our local potentials: our worlds, our stars, our creatures, our own minds."

¶The crowd, which immediately recognized the address as a major turning point in their own history, was attentive and virtually silent throughout the delivery. It will take several months for copies of the address to reach the most distant Domain worlds, and for the responses to return. But here on Mora, Norris was greeted with an 18-minute ovation at the end of the address, during which time he graciously acknowledged the crowd before finally leaving the balcony to return to his duties.

¶"Somewhere, lost in time, someone first asked the question, 'Am I my brother's keeper? Am I my sister's keeper? If I don't act to secure and defend the well-being of my neighbor, won't someone else do it for me? I ask you, every citizen of the Marches, of Deneb, of Troy and Reft. Look around you. *We are those who are left to carry on whatever work the Empire began.* Am I responsible for you? Are you responsible for me? Am I my brother's keeper? The answer then, now, and always, is 'Yes.'

nounces to the Domain that "We in the spinward exterts must chart our own future," thus bringing to an end the era of the Imperium in Deneb.

The Archduke

The players will have an opportunity to meet Norris during the debriefing, and to observe first-hand his watershed address of 110-1127. Norris projects an aura of vigor, intelligence, and commitment to whatever it is he is doing. When speaking to someone, regardless of their rank or position, he does not create the emotional sense of distance as do many other nobles. He gives his full, unaffected attention to whom-ever he speaks with, but his constant energy keeps him moving on to the next important topic or next person, so that his accessibility does not allow his time to be monopolized. To his subjects, this familiarity does nothing to diminish his authority; rather, it makes his vigor and intellect that much more impressive for being personalized.

Archduke Norris Aella Aledon of Deneb

654AEG, Age 63 (in 1126), 11 1/4 terms.

Admin-2, Leader-2, Legal-2, Navigation-2, Rifleman-2, Strategy-2, Vacc Suit-2, Computer-2, Handgun-1, Hunting-1, Liaison-1, Medic-1, Persuasion-2, Ship Tactics-1, Survival-1, Equestrian-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Sensor Ops-0, Tactics-0.



Norris was a second son, and had no intention of becoming a duke. He was enjoying a successful career in the Imperial Navy, having attained the rank of Commander with Imperial Naval Intelligence. However, the accidental death of his older brother in 1097 during their father's last year of life forced Norris rapidly into the unaccustomed role as the impending heir. As Norris was unmarried and had no heir, one precaution

that Norris was convinced to take during this period was the creation of a clone, which he insisted be female. This clone is Seldrian, still his heir. Norris acceded to the Dukedom of Regina in 1098, but it was not until the Fifth Frontier War was won thanks to his predictions and forethought in requisitioning reinforcements before the fact from Emperor Strephon that his reputation as a leader of the first rate was established.

His leadership was again demonstrated by his response to news of Strephon's assassination. While it was assumed that Strephon was planning to elevate Norris to Archduke of the new Domain of Deneb, Norris used his supply of Imperial Stationery to appoint himself to the post in Strephon's name, pre-dating the appointment back to 1114. Although this was strictly speaking deceitful, it was the sort of decision that great leaders are sometimes required to make. We have seen that Strephon himself has approved of Norris' initiative, and history has judged that the decision was a good one. By creating one clear line of authority in the Domain of Deneb, Norris ensured the ability to effectively organize and coordinate its defense once it was cut off, surely saving millions of lives.

Mission Statistics

During her 1194 day mission, *Arrival Vengeance* travelled 453 parsecs (1476 light years) at an average jump of 4.31 parsecs/jump. She made a total of 105 jumps.

Arrival Vengeance consumed 25,515,000 kiloliters or 1,786,050 tons of jump fuel, and burned approximately 2 million kiloliters (140,000 tons). Her crew consumed almost 1.5 million meals, and her pool team sank an estimated 430,000 billiard balls.

Timeline

The following listing provides a general timeline for the events in this folio. Some of these events are not depicted in the folio, but are placed here to provide referees further ideas to add detail to the adventure, and to more fully detail the historical journey. (Referee's note: the hex numbers for Cadion and Ferot printed on this list and elsewhere in this booklet are correct; the hex numbers for Cadion and Ferot printed on the folio cardboard cover are in error.)

- 225-1123: *Arrival Vengeance* departs Trin Inactive Ships Facility (3235 Spinward Marches).
 307-1123: Arrival at Hliyh (1323 Trojan Reach), headquarters of the Lakht Aorlahkt.
 025-1124: *Arrival Vengeance* begins transit of Great Rift at Aulryakh (0507 Riftspan Reaches).
 142-1124: Port call at Esui (2729 Riftspan Reach) and Aslan Shrine of Heroes honoring those who died exploring beyond the Rift.
 316-1124: Arrival at Garrison (2221 Reaver's Deep), outpost of the Old Imperium.
 331-1124: Encounter with Virushi merchant ship
 007-1125: Arrival at Warinir (0507 Daibei), meetings with Duke Craig.
 098-1125: *Arrival Vengeance* enters the Duchy of Oasis at Charon (formerly Tagend, 3030 Zarushagar).
 181-1125: Encounter with Burning Falcon starmercs in Veny system (2211 Massilia).
 211-1125: Arrival at Zukhimie (0313 Delphi), meetings with Margaret.
 311-1125: Encounter with Droyne refugees fleeing Core aboard free merchant *Osyupkut*.
 344-1125: Arrival at Cadion (0531 Core).
 002-1126: Encounter patrol from Lucan's Navy which demands surrender of *Arrival Vengeance* in Ferot system (0328 Core).
 019-1126: Arrive at Halthome (2725 Dagudashaag).
 050-1126: Fuel shuttle collides with frontier fuel harvester in the Higashi (1919 Dagudashag) system.
 073-1126: Landing party is ambushed while investigating former Illeish base on Giidirur (1218 Dagudashag). Fighter escort manages to pin down attackers long enough for party to escape.
 126-1126: *Arrival Vengeance* attacked by what is assumed to be an automated defense station on Kamurinmur (2224 Gushemege). A close approach to the once high-population planet failed to reveal any signs of life. Damage to the ship was minimal.
 156-1126: Arrival at Usdiki (1015 Gushemege), meetings with Strephon.
 180-1126: *Arrival Vengeance* departs Usdiki for the Great Rift.
 240-1126: *Arrival Vengeance* refuels from comet at mid-Rift (3234 Deneb).
 323-1126: *Arrival Vengeance* returns to Trin, enters Inactive Ships Facility using "Argon Blue" code.
 364-1126: Arrival at Mora (3124 Spinward Marches), crew sequestered by Norris during debriefing.



APPENDIX 1: ABOARD ARRIVAL VENGEANCE

The seven deckplans (six of *Arrival Vengeance* decks and one of the fuel shuttle) on the folio cover are specific to ISS *Arrival Vengeance* herself, and are also, with variations in detail, applicable to other members of the *Azhanti High Lightning*-class. The section view shows where these six decks are located in the ship, as well as the location of the docked fuel shuttles on the ship's belly (marked as "A"). Some of these decks, the crew quarters, hangar, bridge, and cargo decks, appear more than once. Because most of the actual time spent on *Arrival Vengeance*'s three-year journey is spent aboard the ship (two years are spent in jump space alone), referee's should encourage their players to roleplay their daily lives aboard the vessel, not only their duty hours on the bridge, power plant, or hangar decks, but also their off-duty time in their quarters and various recreation areas.

LOUNGE DECK

This deck was originally intended as an auxiliary bridge, but has been converted for use as a lounge. The hemispheric dome above this deck is transparent, and gives an impressive view of surrounding space. The room is softly and indirectly lit, by light sources in the deck and bulkheads. The central portion of the deck is sunken, and can be used for dancing. There is a bar along one portion of the bulkhead which is equipped to dispense drinks and light snacks. Any attempt for full-scale dining on this deck would require food and serving equipment to be brought up from elsewhere. The floor is decorated with the symbol of the Domain of Deneb and the ship's crest, which greets those stepping from the elevators.

FUEL SHUTTLE

Arrival Vengeance has four of these. Normally the entire area labeled 5, 6, and 10 is given over to fuel. The deck plans given here show the shuttle optionally fitted out for cargo and passenger carriage.

1. **Bridge:** The pilot operates the shuttle from here.
2. **Air lock:** This provides access to the shuttle when it is docked in its ventral semi-recessed slip.
3. **Passenger area:** This small compartment is always available for passengers and cargo, even when skimming fuel.
4. **Scoop mechanism:** This pumping and compressing equipment fills the shuttle's fuel tanks with the hydrogen atmosphere of the gas giant that is being skimmed.
5. **Passenger area:** These acceleration couches are built to be quickly installed and removed when converting the shuttle from one function to another.
6. **Cargo area:** Like the passenger area, this is only a temporary configuration of the fuel storage area.
7. **Accessway:** This area (the top edge of the shuttle when it is docked) provides access around the fuel storage area to the engineering section.
- 8 and 9. **drive controls:** The engineer monitors and controls the shuttle's maneuver drives from these areas. Access between the port and starboard sides is by use of a tunnel beneath the loading tunnel.
10. **Loading tunnel:** When the shuttle is configured for cargo, it is loaded through this tunnel, accessed by the ramp at the aft end, between the maneuver drives.

CREW QUARTERS DECK

This is one of three such decks in use for this mission. Many of the staterooms shown are double occupancy, either by the two crewmembers working opposite watches, or by using stacked bunks that are not visible from this top view. Each stateroom has its own head whose toilet, sink, and shower all work from a common water and drain complex. The toilet and sink fold into the wall when the shower is in use.

1. **Main elevator access area:** The two elevators in the ship's main central elevator core embark and disembark passengers here.

2. **Dining area:** The crew eats their meals here. The tables and chairs can be removed to create a recreation area.

3. **Galley:** Automated equipment here dispenses food for the crew.

- 4 and 5. **Maintenance equipment storage compartment.**

6. **Vertical shaft access trunk.**

- 7 and 8. **Recreation areas:** These areas can be separated by a collapsible partition (seen partly opened) or used as one large area. This area contains card tables, a bar, and the ship's two pool tables. *Arrival Vengeance* held the Santanocheev Cup, the biannual pool trophy of the Spinward Marches Fleet, from 1108 to 1114.

9. **Game compartment:** This area contains numerous electronic games for use by off-duty crew.

10. **Frozen watch supervision area:** Medical monitors here display and control the functions of the low berths in areas 11 and 12.

- 11 and 12. **Frozen watch compartments:** Low berths in these compartments maintain crew of the frozen watch, used to replace crew casualties.

13. **Computer monitoring station:** Consoles in this room allow the monitor and control of all systems on this deck.

14. **Deck office:** The Deck Duty Officer (DDO) stands watch in this compartment.

- 15 and 16. **Officer's staterooms.**

17. **Officers' lounge.**

18. **Starboard maintenance area.**

19. **Meeting compartment.**

20. **Shaft A elevator access trunk.**

21. **Maintenance storage compartment.**

22. **Crew's weight room.**

- 23 and 24. **Enlisted staterooms.**

25. **Starboard Enlisted lounge.**

- 26-47. **Enlisted staterooms.**

48. **Port enlisted lounge.**

- 49-52. **Enlisted staterooms.**

53. **Maintenance storage compartment.**

- 54 and 55. **Enlisted staterooms.**

56. **Medical office:** This office is used for minor injuries and diagnosis, rather than major surgery. Crewmen requiring extensive medical treatment are often placed in low berth.

57. **Port maintenance area.**

58. **Shaft G elevator access trunk.**

- 59 and 60. **Maintenance chambers.**

- 61 and 62. **Fighter launch tube access stations.**

63. **Air lock.**

64. **Spinal gun mount:** The circular catwalk contains equipment to focus the weapon beam.

BRIDGE DECK

Arrival Vengeance has two of these decks; deck 17 being the primary, and deck 40 the auxiliary bridge. This specifically shows deck 17; the stateroom assignments on deck 40 are different. Most of the staterooms are used by ship's senior officers and their aides.

1. **Captain's sleeping compartment.**

2. **Captain's den.**

3. **Captain's office.**

4. **Captain's reception compartment.**

5. **Executive Officer's office.**

6. **Executive Officer's den.**

7. **Executive Officer's sleeping compartment.**

8. **Stateroom.**

- 9 and 10. **Starboard maintenance area.**

11. **Wardroom:** Primary meeting area for ship's senior officers; they often take their meals here.

12. Fighter launch tube access station.
13. Maintenance chamber.
- 14-17. Staterooms (Captain's aides, valets, clerks).
18. Ship's computer control center.
19. Galley: Automated food preparation for crew quartered on this deck.
20. Ship's administrative office.
21. Visitors' head.
- 22 and 23. Officer's bar and lounge: This area is often used for receptions of ship's or officer's guests.
24. Security compartment: All who arrive on the bridge deck must undergo a security check before being allowed to enter this sensitive area. This area is always occupied by two Marine guards and a junior officer or NCO.
25. Deck office: This and area 24 comprise the duty area of the deck duty Officer.
26. Bridge: See accompanying diagram for the crew positions. The dotted area in the center is the main holotank, in which 3D representations of tactical and strategic situations are presented.
27. Storage.
- 28 and 29. Marine office and ready room: The Marines who guard this deck maintain an office and a lounge where Marines may take short breaks from guard duty. The Marine Officer of the Day (MOOD) occupies the office and supervises the Marine guards. Between those Marines currently standing guard and their reliefs in areas 28 and 29, there are always at least nine Marines on the bridge deck at any time.
30. Orderly room: Enlisted orderlies who provide services to officers standing bridge watch wait here.
31. Port maintenance area.
32. Maintenance and storage compartment.
33. Maintenance chamber.
34. Fighter launch tube access station.
35. Spinal gun mount: The circular catwalk contains equipment to focus the weapon beam.
36. Air lock.
37. Bridge head: for use by personnel standing bridge watch.
38. Bridge shower: During lulls in extended combat, officers sometimes wish to take a short break to eat, shower, and change into a fresh uniform without straying too far from the bridge in case an emergency develops.
39. Captain's day cabin: The Captain can use this area to rest or relax while remaining near the bridge during critical periods.
40. Bridge lounge: This area can be used by watch standers for impromptu conferences or to grab a drink and quick bite to eat.
41. Bridge galley: This area contains compact facilities to prepare snacks, coffee, etc., for watch-standers, usually prepared by orderlies from area 30.

THE BRIDGE

Arrival Vengeance has a new bridge, installed during a refit period, which incorporates lessons learned with the bridge configuration originally fitted. This new horseshoe-shaped bridge allows better communication and eye contact between crewmembers, and has subordinate department members seated in the interior horseshoe a level beneath their superiors, who can observe and oversee their control panels from behind. This two-level arrangement requires that the upper portion of the bridge area be set up from the deck level over the remainder of the deck. Two Marines stand guard at the top of the steps at all times.

The duty stations, within their departments, are as follows.

Environmental and Damage Control:

1. Environmental Control Officer
2. Damage Control—Atmospheric
3. Damage Control—Radiation
4. Damage Control—Structural

5. Damage Control—Ship's Systems

Gunnery and fire control:

6. Defensive Systems Officer
7. Chief Gunnery Officer
8. Offensive Systems Officer
9. Screens and Dampers
10. Anti-missile Controller
11. Primary Targeting Controller
12. Secondary Targeting Controller
13. Tertiary Targeting Controller

Combat Information Center:

14. Executive Officer
15. Analysis desk
16. Tactical Display Control
17. Profile desk

Command:

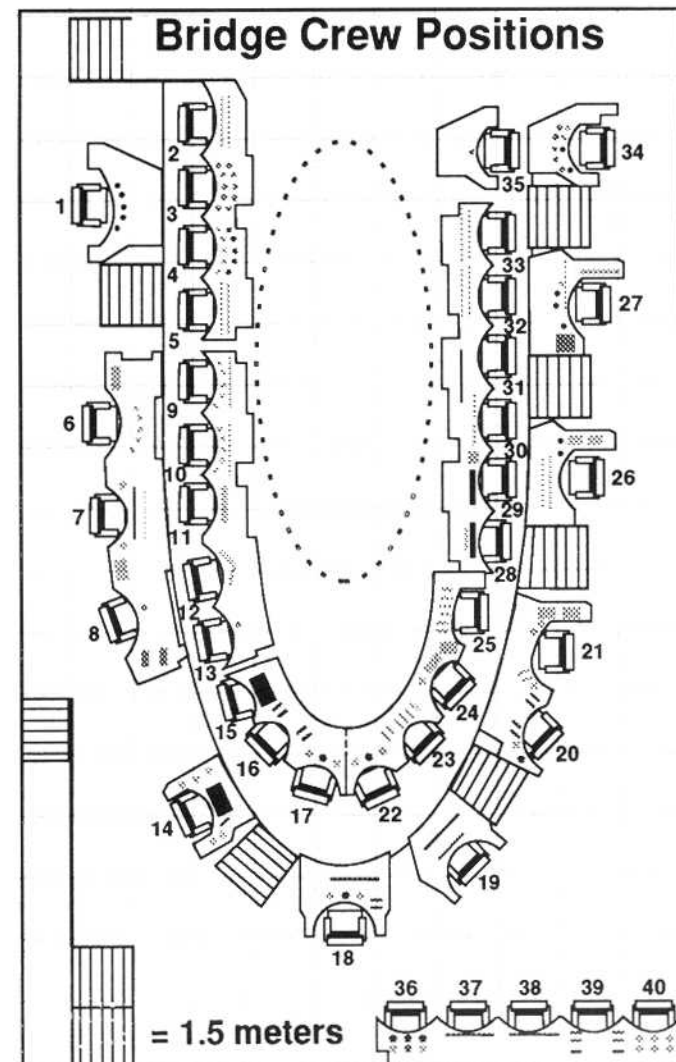
18. Captain

Maneuver and Engineering:

19. Maneuver Officer
20. Chief Engineer
21. Jump Control Officer
22. Astrogator
23. Helm
24. Power Plant Repeaters
25. Jump Drive Repeaters

Flight control:

26. Flight Control Officer
27. Launch Control Officer



28-33. Squadron Flight Controllers**Extra:****34-35.** Extra station for observers/advisors**Electronics:****36-37.** Sensors Operators**38.** Electronic Warfare Officer**39-40.** Communications Operators**Cargo deck:**

1. Pressurized safety compartment: Decks which can be depressurized, like the cargo and hangar decks, have pressurized compartments which prevent the loss of pressure to other areas, such as elevator shafts, and in which personnel may take shelter during depressurization.

2. Deck duty office.**3. Pressurized safety compartment.**

4. Cargo area: This area is divided into sub-areas, called bays, marked A, B, and 1 through 10. These bays are not physically separated from each other, but are merely different areas in which cargoes are sorted and stored.

5. Access lock.**6. Port maintenance area.****7. Access lock.****8. Starboard maintenance area.****9 and 10. Maintenance access chambers.****11 and 12. Flight launch tube access stations.****13. Air lock.****14. Spinal gun mount.**

15. Cargo transfer air lock: This is used for the transfer of large cargoes to or from other ships or small craft.

LOWER POWER PLANT DECK

This is the bottom-most of the six power plant decks, and is the foundation of the huge power plant fusion cores that tower six decks high. Note that although the crew are able to move about among the machinery of the main area, they perform most of their duties behind the heavy shielding of areas 2 through 6. Catwalks and ladders allow access to the machinery, all of which is about two meters in height, with the exception of the two fusion cores which extend up through the overhead. Conduits at the dorsal end of the deck carry excess heat to the large cooling fins along the top of the ship that run from decks 41 to 46. Note that *Arrival Vengeance* has larger, higher performance fins than were installed on earlier units of the class.

1 and 2. Vertical access areas.

3. Main engineering control station: The ship's power plant functions, including the routing of power to all ship's systems, is controlled from this compartment. In an emergency, its rudimentary controls even allow the vessel to be conned from here. This is the battle station of the assistant engineering officer.

4. Performance analysis station.**5. Drive power monitors.**

6. Relief rest area: This is not a stateroom, but a day cabin for engineering relief crew.

7. Performance monitoring station.**8. Crew assembly and briefing area.****9. Vertical access area.**

10. EVA equipment storage area: The lockers store vacc suits, zero-G maneuver equipment, and tools for exterior hull work.

11. Engineering control computer installation.**12. Pressurized and shielded safety compartment.****13 and 14. Maintenance access chamber.****15. Fighter launch tube access station.****16. Air lock.****17. Spinal gun mount.****18 and 19. Air locks.****HANGAR DECK**

This is one of two hangar decks installed on the cruiser. Only one of these is operational on this mission, the other is shut down to save on power and manning. As illustrated, the deck shows its full complement of three squadrons of one- and two-place Rampart fighters plus three gunboats. On this mission, *Arrival Vengeance* only carries two squadrons, 16 single-seat and 4 two-seat Ramparts.

This deck is 18 meters high (from the bottom of the well to the overhead), unlike the ship's other decks which are 4.5 meters high. Its most prominent feature is the "racetrack" shaped well that allows the fighters to be moved around among the arming, maintenance, and repair areas. The 12-meter-long fighters sit on their tails so that their cockpits are even with the deck level, allowing easy boarding by their pilots. The fighters are moved in a generally clockwise direction, coming aboard via the launch tubes or ventral air lock, then moved to debarkation, inspection, disarming, and maintenance areas. From here they are moved as they are ready to the rearming and embarkation areas for launch again.

The deckplan shows that *Arrival Vengeance* has the retro-fitted cylindrical air locks by the launch tubes, as the lateral launch tube air locks initially installed in the class proved inadequate.

1. Main elevator shaft access area and flight crew lounge: This area contains a small galley for preparing drinks and low-residue snacks for pilots awaiting launch.

2. Pilot check-in: Pilots report in to clerks here before preparing to fly.

3. Flight uniform storage: After checking in, pilots draw their flight helmets and survival kits prior to manning up.

4. Embarkation platform: Pilots wait here for their fighters to come around the track, and board them.

5. Ready room: Pilots are briefed here and await orders to move to area 4 to man up for launch.

6. Retractable bridge: These allow personnel and equipment to cross the deep well, and retract to allow passage of craft in the well.

7 and 8. Craft maintenance and repair siding.**9. Spare parts storage.****10. Missile magazine.****11. Vertical access area.****12. Spares storage.**

13. Medical office: This medical compartment is used to treat wounded pilots removed from fighters that have reboarded the ship via area 16.

14 and 15. Craft inspection and maintenance area.**16. Ventral fighter recovery air lock.****17. Lift and vertical access area.****18. Electronic spares and maintenance storage.****19. Main maintenance, inspection, and arming area.****20. Electronic module repair shop.****21. Gravitic module repair shop.****22. Missile magazine.****23. Spares and maintenance storage.****24. Vertical access trunk.****25. Spares storage.****26. Port maintenance area.****27. Port access passage.****28-30: Craft disarming, inspection, maintenance, and repair area.****31. Pilot debarkation platform.****32. Pilot debriefing compartment.**

33. Medical office: This compartment is used to treat wounded pilots removed from fighters that were recovered through the launch tubes.

34. Pilot check-out area: Pilots returning from completed missions turn in their mission reports here before going off duty.

35. Fighter launch tubes: These extend completely through the length of the ship, allowing fighters to leave from the forward end and return through the after end.

36. Spinal gun mount.**37 and 38. Maintenance access chambers.**

APPENDIX 2: LIGHTNING-CLASS CRUISERS**The Azhanti High Lightning Class**

The *Azhanti High Lightning* class was the result of an Imperial requirement for a new, heavily armed, highly mobile fleet intruder. The class proved especially useful in the closing days of the Solomani Rim War (990-1002). First laid down in 991, the *Lightnings* enjoyed a long and distinguished career before finally being declared surplus in 1048. Although no longer fit for front line duty, some *Lightnings* continued to serve the Navy. Others were transferred to the Scout Service, sold to commercial concerns or modified. Between 1078 and 1090, 28 fleet intruders were modernized and refurbished as frontier cruisers. One of these was *Arrival Vengeance*.

Craft ID: Frontier Cruiser, Type CF, TL 14, MCr 47184.441
Hull: 54000/135000, Disp=60000, Config=4SL, Armor=60G Unloaded= 717,229 Loaded= 775596
Power: 11201/14934, Fusion=270771/1008000Mw, Duration=30/90
Loco: 4050/5400, Manuver=2, 4860/6480, Jump=5, Agility=0, EmerAgil=4
Commo: Maser=System x4, Radio=System x4
Sensors: PassiveEMS=Interstellar x2, ActiveEMS=Far Orbit x2, Densitometer=HiPen 1 km x2, Neutrino=10 kw x2, EMM, EMS Jammer=Far Orbit
 ActObjScan=Routine, ActObjPin=Routine
 PasObjScan=Routine, PasObjPin=Routine
 PasEngScan=Simple, PasEngPin=Routine
Off: Hardpoints=600
 MesonGun=N0x PartAccel=050 Missiles=x07

Batt	1	24	12
Bear	1	19	9
FusionGun=x09	BeamLaser=xx9		
Batt	4	10	
Bear	3	8	

Def: DefDM=+7 (+11 with EmerAgil), EMSJammer, EMSMask, NucDamper=5, MesonScreen=9, BlackGlobe=2, Sancaster=xx9

Batt	10
Bear	8

Control: Computer=8/fib x3, Panel=HoloLink x5952, Special=HoloHUD x180, Large HoloDisplay x16, Environ=Basic env, Basic Is, Extend Is, grav plates, inertial comp
Accomm: Crew=815, (Bridge=19, Engineer=130, Maint=14, Gunner=58, Flight=162, Ship Troops=150, Command=88, Steward=21, Medical=13, Frozen Watch=160), Passengers=20 (40 with double occupancy)
 Subcraft=fighter x60, fuel shuttle x4, gunboat x6
Other: Cargo=400 tons, Fuel=28358 tons, Fuel Purification Plant (Full load in 12 hours), Fuel Scoops, ObjSize=Large, EmLevel=Moderate, Pool Tables x2, Foolsball Table x1, Battery Round=360 missiles, 5760 missiles on board, Battery Rounds=16 (11 additional, total 27 if cargo space is used for missile reloads), Electronic circuit protection

Note: Power plant output indicates cruise output (maneuver, life support, commo, sensors, maximum output (full combat consumption plus redundancy). The duration figure given reflects the fact that the design has been optimized for 30 days (720 hours) of cruising with sufficient additional fuel for four additional days (96 hours) of continuous combat. Time spent in combat over the four day figure consumes fuel at a rate 3.72 times that of the cruising figure (each hour of combat used fuel equivalent to 3.72 hours of cruising). Maximum additional combat time is eight days (193.5 hours) without eating into the jump fuel.

Referee's Note: Due to constraints placed upon the mission by the need for secrecy and a desire not to rob Deneb of much needed personnel and equipment, *Arrival Vengeance* is not operating at full capacity in this folio. Only 63% of the normal crew required are aboard and only one Marine company out of three is embarked. Four of the cruiser's Rampart squadrons are in use elsewhere in Deneb. The excess space aboard the cruiser is being used to store provisions, spare parts and the like. Empty decks are maintained at minimal life support levels unless personnel plan to enter those decks. Crew quarters have been consolidated so that the troop and flight quarters decks

are not in use. This allows a savings in life support expenditures so that the ship's endurance is actually about 33 days plus four days combat for this scenario. Also, contrary to the current de-emphasis of frozen watches, *Arrival Vengeance* is running with most of her low berths full because she will be too far from home to make up crew losses any other way if she suffers casualties. The following are the actual crew figures for the mission: Bridge: 19, Engineer: 130, Maintenance: 14, Gunner: 58, Flight: 36, Troops: 50, Command: 51, Medical: 10, Frozen Watch: 220, Total: 588.

THE RAMPART-CLASS LIGHT FIGHTER

There are two models of Rampart, the FL-128 and -128/2, the former a single seat version and the latter a two-position command and control version. The standard Rampart squadron consists of 10 fighters, eight single seat and two twin seat models. *Arrival Vengeance* embarks only two squadrons for this mission, VF-12 (Vindicators) and VF-35 (Night Stalkers).

Craft ID: Fighter Light, Type FL, TL 15, MCr 14.23
Hull: 9/23, Disp=10, Config=3AF, Armor=40G, Unloaded: 4.6, Loaded: 18.7
Power: 1/2, Fusion=186Mw, Duration=5/15
Loco: 1/2, StdGravThrust=1173 tons, NOE=120 kph, Cruise=2835 kph, Top=3780 kph, Agility=6
Commo: Radio=System x1
Sensors: PassiveEMS=Interplanetary x1 Active
 EMS=Planetary x1
 ActObjScan=Difficult, ActObjPin=Difficult
 PasEngScan=Routine
Off: BeamLaser=xx2

Batt	1
Bear	1

Def: DefDM=+10
Control: Computer=2x3, Panel=HoloLink x47, Special=HUDx1 (2), Environ=Full Environment
Accomm: Crew=1 (2), Seats=Roomy x1 (2)
Other: Cargo=6.75 kl (2.75kl), Fuel=33.6 kl, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Faint

Note: Figures in parenthesis above are for the FL-128/2 command and control model of the Rampart. Some of the cargo space of the single seat version is deleted in favor of the second seat for the weapons systems operator/controller.

FUEL SHUTTLES

Craft ID: Tanker Shuttle, Type TY, TL 14, MCr 204.205
Hull: 360/900, Disp=400, Config=3SL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=2248, Loaded=4069.6
Power: 13/26, Fusion=1800Mw, Duration=Variable
Loco: 18/36, Manuver=2, Agility=0
Commo: Maser=System x1, Radio=System x2
Sensors: PassiveEMS=Interstellar x2, ActiveEMS=Far Orbitx1, Densitometer=HiPer/1 km x1, Neutrino=10 kw x1, EMM, EMS Jammer=Far Orbit x1
 ActObjScan=Routine, ActObjPin=Routine
 PasObjScan=Routine, PasObjPin=Routine
 PasEngScan=Simple, PasEngPin=Routine
Off: None
Def: DefDM=+9
Control: Computer=8Fib x3, Panel=HoloLink x4, Special=HoloHUD x1, Environ=Basic env, Basic Is, Grav plates, Intertial comp
Accomm: Crew=2, (Bridge=1, Engineer=1), Passengers=10, Roomy x15
Other: 4500 kl of fuel, up to 1620 kl of fuel may be replaced by cargo, ObjSize=Ave, EmLevel=Faint, Fuel scoops

Note: These are very basic craft, intended to collect fuel for return to the cruiser, while maintaining a minimal electronic signature, consistent with combat operations. Their duration when filled with their maximum 4500 kl of fuel would be over half a year. However, these craft are designed for missions of only 24 hours or less, and have no long term accommodations. In case of need, however, the cargo hold could be configured with self-contained living quarters, although this is not normal procedure.

APPENDIX 3: NPCS

Below is a listing of the UPPs for important NPCs who appear in this folio; they are broken down by scenario in which they appear. Other NPCs, or "extras," can be generated using the Quick NPC system in the Referee's Manual or, if the referee wishes, using the standard character generation rules.

Envoy

Reauwais: 98898C, Age 50, 5 terms

Liaison-3, Tolerance-3, Admin-2, Dewclaw-2, Leader-2, Handgun-1, Meditation-1, Rifle-1, Tradition-1, Independence-0.

Tyear: BA9899, Age 38, 3 terms

Dewclaw-3, Meditation-2, Personal Weapon-2, Tactics-2, JOT-1, Recon-1, Ship's Boat-1, Survival-1, Stealth-1, Tradition-1.

Federation

John Blain: A96897, Age 34, 4 terms

Intrusion-2, Laser Weapons-2, Rifleman-2, Stealth-2, Computer-1, Disguise-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Medical-1, Recon-1, Small Blade-1, Vacc Suit-0.

Keepers of the Flame

Captain Notoro: 588776, Age 46, 7 terms

Bribery-2, Computer-2, Pilot-2, Admin-1, Broker-1, Liaison-1, Legal-1, Navigation-1, Streetwise-1, SMG-1, Vacc Suit-1, Engineering-0.

Commander Guaarin: 6A8A97, Age 41, 5 terms

Leader-3, Gunnery-2, Ship's Tactics-2, Pilot-2, Rifleman-2, Admin-1, Computer-1, Engineering-1, Instruction-1, Navigator-1, Sensor Ops-1, Vacc Suit-1, Grav Vehicle-0.

Hand of Varian

Captain Irunu: 587975, Age 38, 5 terms

Ship's Tactics-3, Computer-2, Leader-2, Pilot-2, Commo-1, Gunnery-1, Screens-1, Vacc Suit-1, Zero-G Environ-1, Admin-0, Grav Vehicle-0.

Colonel Landesberg: 665887, Age 43, 6 terms

Computer-2, Forensic-2, Handgun-2, Interrogation-2, Admin-1, Bribery-1, Forgery-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Interview-1, Recon-1, Streetwise-1.

Shura Haid: 779797, Age 31, 3 terms

Survival-2, Trader-2, Admin-1, Computer-1, JOT-1, Leader-1, Medical-1, Wheeled Vehicle-0.

Baroness Dani Shurnimir: 88697C, Age 38, 5 terms

Admin-3, Leader-2, Liaison-2, Computer-1, Disguise-1, Forgery-1, Handgun-1, History-1, Interview-1, Grav Vehicle-0.

MoJ Agents: 786997, Age N/A

Handgun-2, Computer-2, Admin-1, Streetwise-1

Shore Patrol: 787765, Age N/A

Cudgel-2, Handgun-1, Streetwise-0

Vengeance Is Mine

Commander Burkhart: 698997, Age 34, 4 terms

Sensor Ops-3, Commo-2, Computer-2, Navigation-2, Ship's Tactics-2, Leader-1, Pilot-1, Ship's Boat-1, Vacc Suit-1, Zero-G Environ-1.

Imperial Marines: 888777, Age N/A

Vacc Suit-2, Intrusion-2, Rifleman-2, Zero-G Environ-2, Brawl-1, Tactics-1, Computer-0, Lrg. Blade-0.

World In Flames

Skaim Hovcik: 978875, Age 38, 4 terms

Leader-2, Mechanical-2, Rifleman-2, Tactics-2, Brawl-1, Demolition-1, Electronics-1, JOT-1, Small Blade-1, Survival-1, Computer-0, Grav Vehicle-0.

Shadow of Greatness

Dr. Enli Kagamira: 494CDA, Age 53, 8 terms

Medical-4, Computer-3, Admin-2, Biology-2, Chemistry-2, Genetics-2, Surveillance-2, History-1, Equestrian-0, Small Water Craft-0.

Supporting NPCs

In order to cut down on referee overhead, the following typical NPCs have been provided to fill out the ranks of *Arrival Vengeance* or serve in those roles in which a PC is not available. The referee should feel free to add or delete skills as required. Experienced referees will note the high skill levels of the NPCs below. We *did* say they were a hand-picked crew.

Bridge Crew: 787AA7

Computer-3, Commo-2, Sensor Ops-2, Gunnery-1

Grizzled Old Petty Officer: 9857C5, Age 46, 7 terms

Brawling-1, Carousing-2, Gambling-2, Vacc Suit-2, Ship's Boat-1, Engineering-3, Computer-2, Gunnery-2, Instruction-1, Mechanic-1, Electronics-2

Engineering/Maintenance Crew: 8878B8

Computer-3, Engineering-2, Commo-1, Electronics-1, Gravitics-1, Mechanical-1, Sensor Ops-1.

Flight Crew: 79AA98

Pilot-3, Computer-2, Navigation-2, Commo-1, Engineering-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Sensor Ops-1, Vacc Suit-1, Zero-G Environ-1.

Marine NCO: 7C6985

Energy Weapons-3, Battle Dress-2, Gunnery-2, Tactics-2, Rifleman-1, Medical-1, Tac Missile-1, Zero-G Environ-1, Intrusion-1, Computer-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Lrg. Blade-0.

Marine Trooper: A76B97

Energy Weapons-2, Zero-G Environ-2, Battle Dress-1, Brawl-1, Rifleman-1, Computer-0, Grav Vehicle-0, Lrg. Blade-0.

Noble Diplomat: 984AAC

Liaison-3, Admin-2, Computer-2, Gambling-1, Legal-1, Linguistics-1, Persuasion-1, Grav Vehicle-0.

Mora/Spinward Marches (3124 AA99AC7-F/Green)**Date: 280-1128**

¶Archduke Norris Aella Aledon presided today at the decommissioning ceremony of ISS *Arrival Vengeance* (CF-6415), the *Azhanti High Lightning*-class cruiser that was the subject of such speculation when it disappeared from the Trin Inactive Ships Facility in 1123.

¶Shortly after the Archduke's historic address of 110-1127, it was announced that the ship had been "borrowed" by the Archduke for a dangerous mission through the shattered Imperium to contact other leaders to assess the possibility of a reunited Imperium. As Norris himself explained in the address, these attempts were unsuccessful. The 122-year old ship is again being decommissioned, but will remain in orbit around Mora with a full-time skeleton crew, as Norris' ceremonial flagship.

¶The ceremony, conducted at the Mora Highport, included the 600 crew that took *Vengeance* on her final three-year mission through the Aslan Hierate, Daibel, Delphi, Core, and Gushemege. They and the 20,000 other invited guests were privileged to see the unveiling of the new Deneb Navy symbol—the Deneb unicorn within an Imperial Sunburst—on *Arrival Vengeance's* rudder. Norris explained that the symbol will soon be worn by all vessels of the Domain, and that "the old girl," as he referred to the cruiser, had earned the right to be the first to bear the symbol by "her courageous mission which established the foundation for the Domain's future."

¶Norris also honored the ship's crew, explaining that "by their courage and confidence in undertaking an impossible mission, they have become the pilots for this Domain, leading us through dangerous shoals and uncharted waters. We owe them all a debt of gratitude, for they have helped us find our future." The Archduke announced that they would all be awarded the Legion of the Bridled Steed, the Domain's highest non-combat decoration.

¶When the time came for the decommissioning itself, Norris invoked the ancient litany of decommissionings, and exhorted the ship to "rest well, yet sleep lightly, and hear the call, should we ever have need of your powers again. You will hear the call, and thanks to your magnificent crew, you are ready."

¶The ceremony was also attended by Seldrian Aledon, Norris' true daughter, and the newly-promoted Vice Admiral Brian Gou, the officer in command at Trin when the ship disappeared, and whose career was placed in jeopardy during the three years the ship was missing.

TRAVELLER

This is the last MegaTraveller product that GDW will publish.

The next product in the 15-year old **Traveller** line will be **Traveller: The New Era**, in the early spring of 1993. This will be a new edition of the **Traveller** game, taking it in directions it has never gone before.

Why a new edition?

Since the original publication of **Traveller** in 1977, we have been constantly refining the skill-based roleplaying game mechanics first introduced to the hobby with that game. In the years since, modifications to increase realism and ease of play have resulted in other game lines, such as **Twilight: 2000**, **2300 AD**, and **MegaTraveller**. The ultimate result of those refinements is the GDW "House System," as seen in the D20 up-dates to **Twilight: 2000 2nd Edition** and **Dark Conspiracy**. **Traveller: The New Era** will bring the **Traveller** system up to date with these other lines, so that characters, weapons, and vehicles from all three games will be fully compatible with each other. **Traveller** will also benefit from the

quick, clean task resolution system of the house rules.

What of the campaign background? **The New Era** opens in the year 1200, 70 years after the final disastrous conclusion of the Rebellion. The remnants of Imperial civilization are ripe for re-awakening. Of the vast Imperium, only the Domain of Deneb survived intact. The rest largely fell back into pre-stellar technology or worse, with only a few small pockets of civilization left to preserve the fruits of science and technology. The player-characters in **The New Era** are the enterprising merchants, scouts, and explorers from these pockets of civilization who are re-exploring and re-contacting the former Imperial worlds, and who will rebuild interstellar society. But there's more. For the first time, **Traveller** will encompass all different modes of science-fiction technology, and not just address itself to the one Imperial universe. The Imperium will follow the same assumptions it always has, but players can create their own campaigns that operate under different assumptions, all of which are covered by the **Traveller** rules.

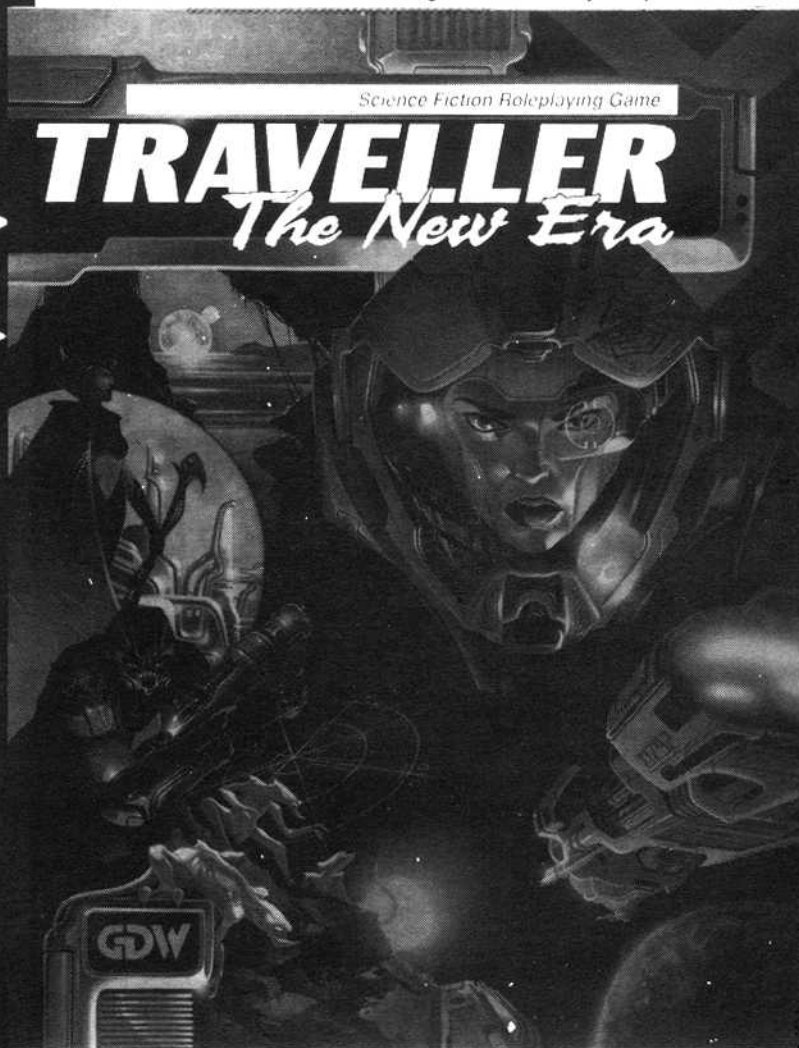
Each campaign will have its own universe profile which describes what is possible there. Is anti-gravity technology physically possible? What is the most efficient means of interstellar travel in this uni-verse? Jump drive? Stutterwarp? Stargates? Is matter transport possible? When was artificial intelligence created? In the universe of the Imperium, stutterwarp is

physically impossible, but jump drive and anti-gravity are easily discovered physical principles.

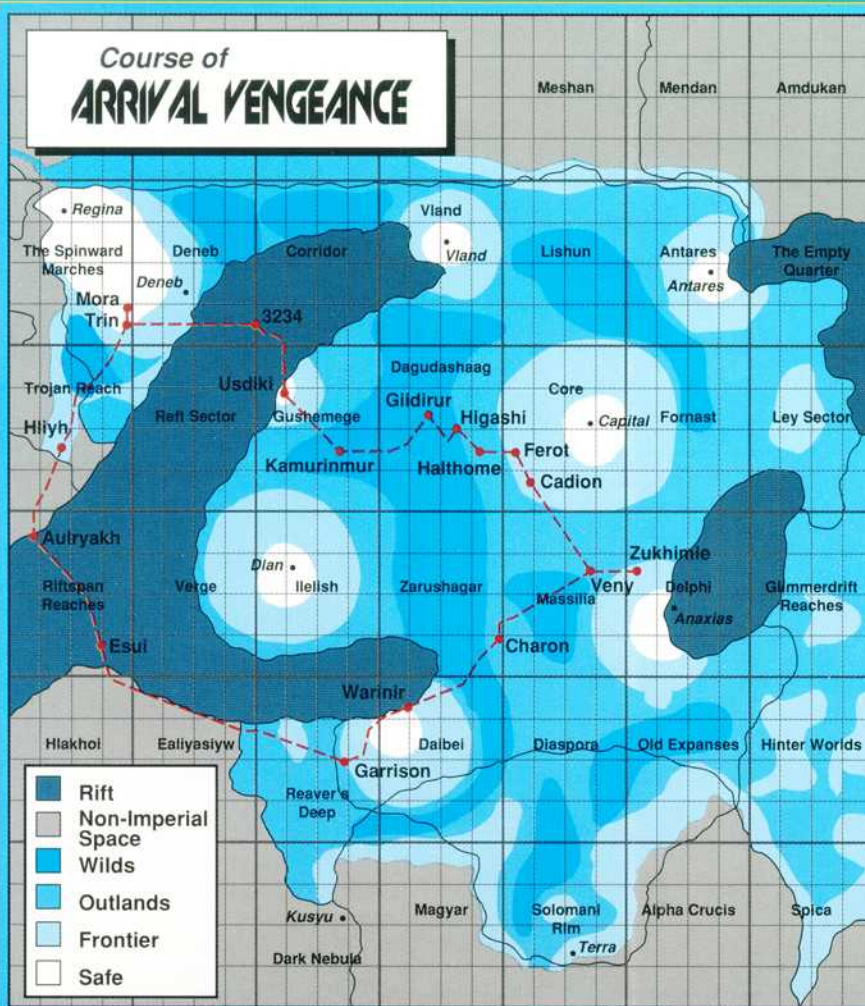
What else does **The New Era** give you? True self-aware artificial intelligence. Cybernetics. Clones. A new, detailed, straightforward vehicle design system. Exciting, dynamic starship combat. A new line of miniatures, including character figures and starships. New worlds, new horizons, new challenges.

The Imperium is dead, long live the New Reformation!
MegaTraveller may be gone, but **The New Era** is here!

TRAVELLER IS BACK!



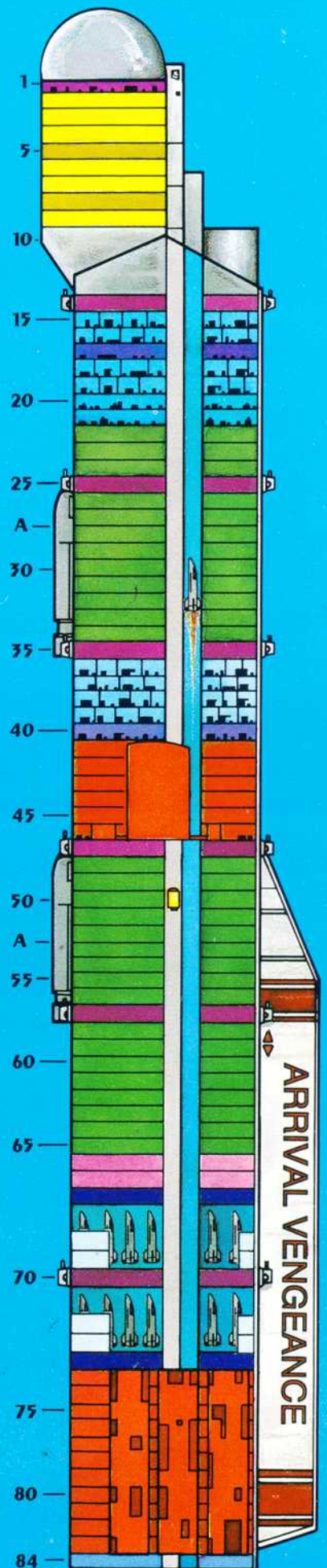
Course of ARRIVAL VENGEANCE



- Trin (3235 Spinward Marches), Depart Inactive Ships Facility 225-1123.
 Hliyh (1323 Trojan Reach), arrive 307-1123.
 Aulryakh (0507 Riftspan Reaches), begin transit of the Great Rift, 025-1124.
 Esui (2729 Riftspan Reaches), port call at Aslan Shrine of Heroes, 142-1124.
 Arrive at Garrison (2221 Reaver's Deep), outpost of the Old Imperium, 316-1124.
 Warinir (0507 Daibel), arrive for meetings with Duke Craig, 007-1125.
 Charon (3030 Zarushagar), enter Duchy of Oasis, 098-1125.
 Veny (2211 Massilla), encounter with Burning Falcon starmercs, 181-1125.
 Zukhimie (0313 Delphi), arrive to meet with Margaret, 211-1125.
 Cadion (0530 Core), arrive 344-1125.
 Ferot (0325 Core), encounter patrol from Lucan's navy, 002-1126.
 Halthome (2725 Dagudashaag), arrive 019-1126.
 Higashi (1919 Dagudashaag), fuel shuttle collides with frontier fuel harvester, 050-1126.
 Gildirur (1218 Dagudashaag), ambushed while investigating abandoned base, 073-1126.
 Kamurinmur (2224 Gushemege), attacked by automated defense station, 126-1126.
 Usdiki (1015 Gushemege), arrive to meet with Strephon, 156-1126, depart 180-1126.
 Refuel at comet (3234 Deneb) to cross Great Rift, 240-1126.
 Trin (3235 Spinward Marches), return to Inactive Ships Facility, 323-1126.
 Mora (3124 Spinward Marches), arrive and begin debriefing, 364-1126.

Arrival Vengeance Deck Plans

1 LOUNGE	20-21 CARGO DECKS	57 GUNNERY DECK
2-4 AVIONICS DECKS	22-24 FUEL DECKS	58-65 FUEL DECKS
5 CARTOGRAPHY DECK	25 GUNNERY DECK	66-67 MAIN WEAPON DECKS
6-7 AVIONICS DECKS	26-34 FUEL DECKS	68 FLIGHT CREW QUARTERS
8 CARTOGRAPHY DECK	35 GUNNERY DECK	69 HANGAR DECK
9 AVIONICS DECKS	36-39 CREW QUARTERS	70 GUNNERY DECK
10-13 FUEL DECKS	40 AUXILIARY BRIDGE	71 HANGAR DECK
14 GUNNERY DECK	41-45 UPPER POWER PLANT	72 FLIGHT CREW QUARTERS
15-16 CREW QUARTERS	46 LOWER POWER PLANT	73-83 JUMP DRIVE DECKS
17 RUNNING BRIDGE	47 GUNNERY DECK	84 BOAT DOCK DECK
18-19 CREW QUARTERS	48-56 FUEL DECKS	


















LOUNGE DECK

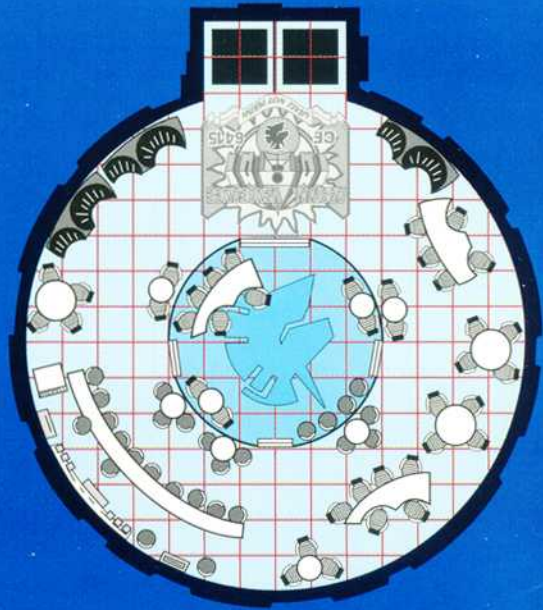
Color Codes

- Pressurized Personnel Area
- Vacuum
- Fuel
- Engineering Plant
- Structural Members
- Computer and Controls
- Machinery
- Weapon Beam
- Drop (No Deck)

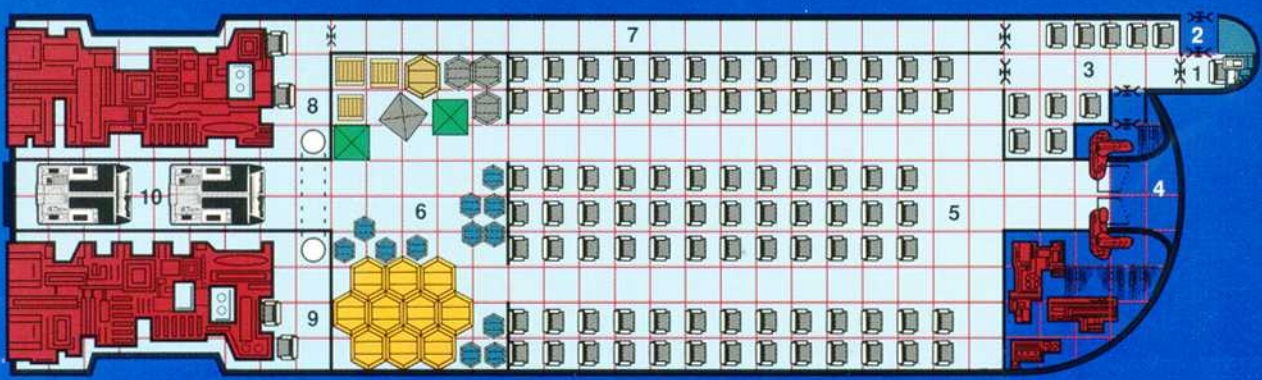
Deck Plan Symbols

	Bulkhead		Interior Door
	Wall or Partition		Elevator of Lift Shaft
	Maintenance Hatch		
	Iris Valve		Hatch
	Horizontal		
	Overhead		
	Deck		
	Overhead and Deck		

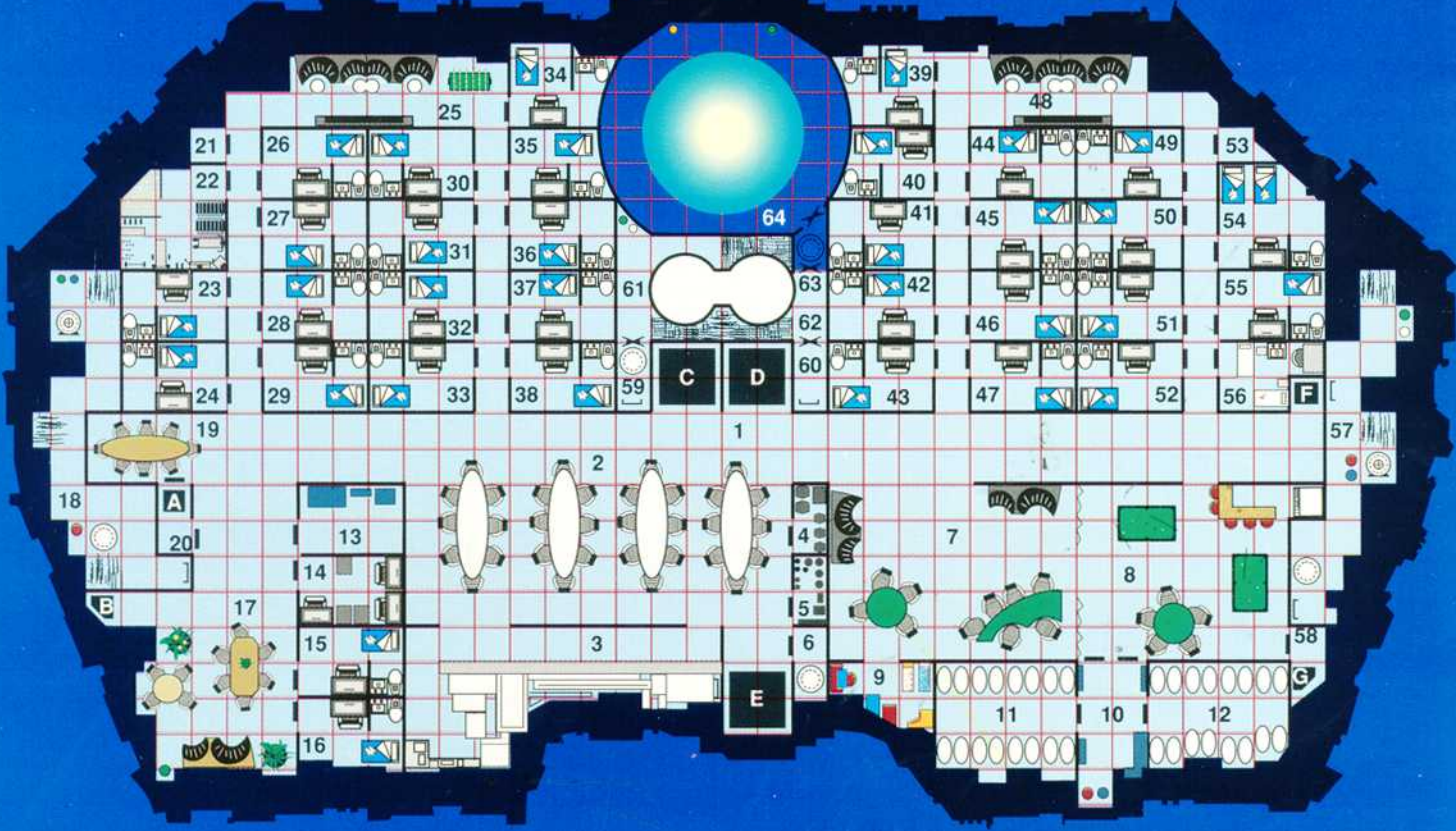
 = 1.5 meters



FUEL SHUTTLE

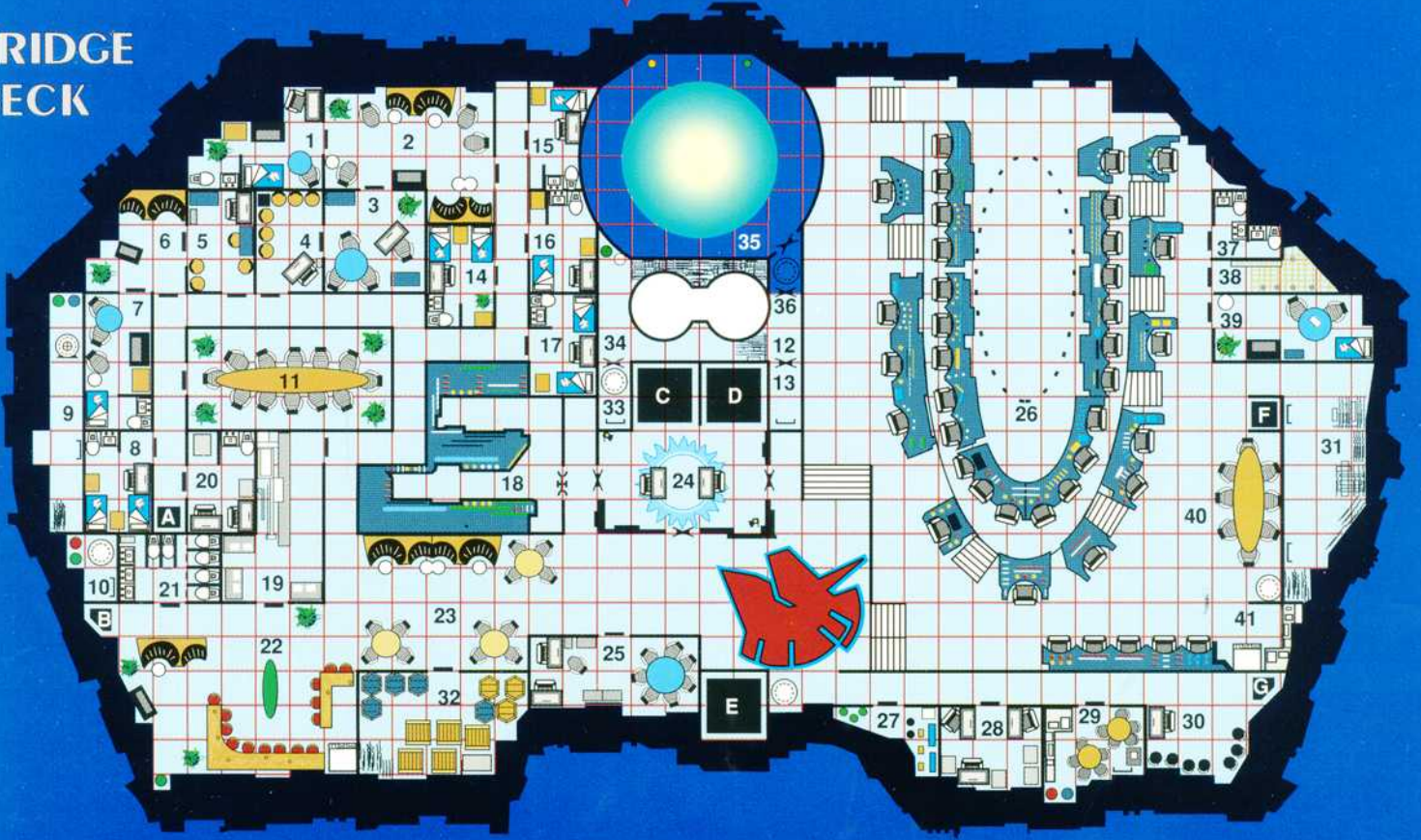


CREW QUARTERS DECK



Arrival VENGEANCE™

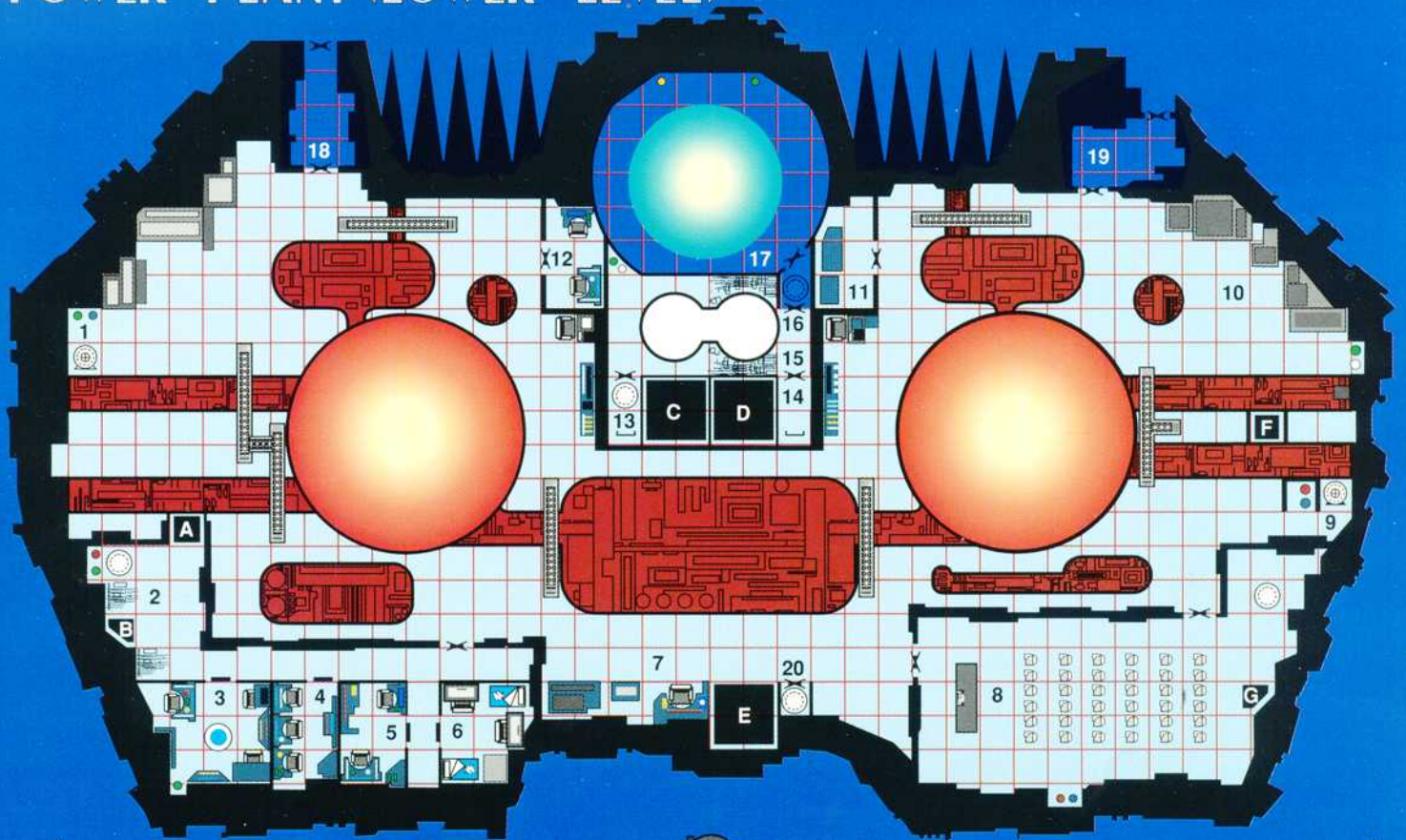
BRIDGE DECK



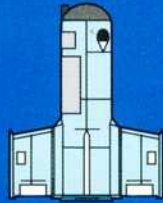
CARGO DECK



POWER PLANT (LOWER LEVEL)



RAMPART RF-128
SINGLE PLACE FIGHTER

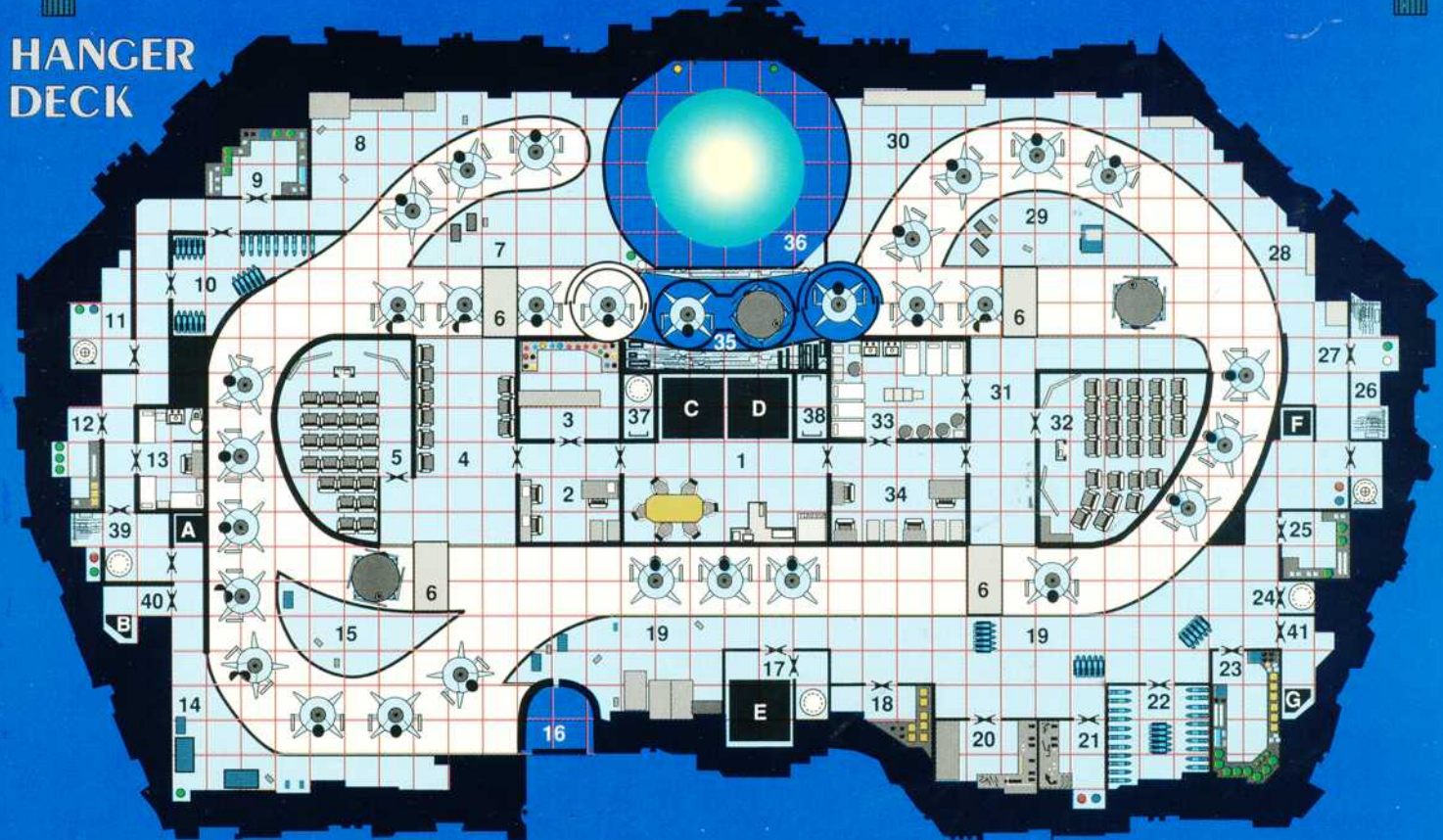


GUNBOAT

RAMPART RF-128-2
DUAL PLACE FIGHTER



HANGER DECK



Arrival VENGEANCE™

"Tell Norris I'm sorry."

This is Emperor Strephon's last message, given to the crew of *ISS Arrival Vengeance* to take back with them to the Domain of Deneb. Strephon was the last stop on *Arrival Vengeance's* three-year mission to save a civilization. It is 1126.



Three years earlier, 1123, Archduke Norris, ever faithful to the Imperial Ideal, ordered a top-secret mission.

A hundred-year old cruiser was "borrowed" from a mothball fleet and assigned a hand-picked crew. It was prepared for a three-year cruise.

The ship: *ISS Arrival Vengeance*, a 60,000-ton *Azhanti High Lightning*-class cruiser.

The course: Cross the Great Rift to Daibei, run trailward to Delphi, then coreward to Core and Gushemege. Contact Craig, Margaret, Lucan, and Strephon.

The mission: Penetrate the war-torn shattered Imperium in search of some hope of a reunified Imperium.

Join the crew of *Arrival Vengeance*, be a custodian of the future of the Domain of Deneb—perhaps that of the entire Imperium. The mission is ambitious, but surely it must succeed. The Imperium can't really be dead, can it? Can the dream really be over?

As a member of the hand-picked crew, you will negotiate with Aslan nobles, witness the slave trade in the depths of Massilia, meet with the Hand of Varian, and have a show-down with Lucan's forces. You will also meet with Duke Craig, Duchess Margaret, and learn the truth about Strephon.

Tough times demand tough people. Accept the challenge of *Arrival Vengeance*.

This 32-page, 6 full-color panel folio adventure includes:

- Six full-color deckplans for *Arrival Vengeance* and other *Lightning*-class cruisers.
- Map of *Arrival Vengeance's* final odyssey through the shattered Imperium.
- UCP Stats for the 60,000 ton *Arrival Vengeance*.
- UPP Stats for Norris and Seldrian Aledon, Duke Craig, Margaret, and Strephon.



0225 7.00



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